TRUTH-TELLING AND MYTHMAKING IN POST-SOVIEt RUSSIA:
Pernicious Historical Ideas, Mass Education, and Interstate Conflict

by

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Submitted to the Department of Political Science
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

Can pernicious views about history exacerbate conflict among states, and if so, how? How can we prevent such ideas from emerging, or dampen their more malevolent effects? Despite a long history of scholarly writing on nationalism that assumes that distorted, mythologized history can be dangerous, we still know little about how pernicious historical ideas lead to interstate conflict, if at all. This study clarifies that relationship by identifying a number of hypotheses on the malevolent effects of pernicious ideas that are empirically grounded in the recent experiences of post-Soviet Russia. It examines popular Russian historical ideas widely purveyed through mass public education, assesses their perniciousness, and details the mechanisms by which they have precipitated or exacerbated recent conflicts in Russian foreign policy.

Pernicious historical ideas precipitate or exacerbate conflict in two general ways: First, through "emotional" mechanisms, whereby pernicious myths instill resentment and animosity, and manifest grievances over real or perceived injustices. These feelings then lead to violent retaliation or demands for apologies, restitution, reparations or other symbolic gestures that raise tensions, or lead to confrontational or antagonistic policy choices. Second, there are "cognitive" mechanisms. Pernicious myths foster ethnic and nationalist stereotypes and negative or false images about others, or create false assumptions and beliefs about the nature of international politics, the causes of war and peace, and one's own and other's national interests. These images and assumptions—reflected in distorted and pernicious views of history—can cause significant national misperceptions that lead to conflictual policies.

The study identifies popular views of history by systematically analyzing Soviet and all post-Soviet Russian history textbooks. It examines three cases of wars, conflicts and interventions that have been especially prone to Russian historical mythmaking: The Soviet-German War of 1939-45; Soviet western interventions in 1939-40; and the Russo-Turkish wars of the 19th century. Russia's portrayal of these wars and interventions is dominated by self-glorifying, self-exculpating, other-denigrating and
victimization myths. An examination of recent Russian foreign policy conflicts in two regions—the Baltic and the Balkans—illustrates how these historical ideas have shaped Russian images and assumptions, and fostered emotional antagonisms and misperceptions that have precipitated or exacerbated conflict in those regions.

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PREFACE

DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

This dissertation explores the relationship between pernicious historical ideas and international conflict. It is commonly assumed that historical ideas serve only as fodder for propaganda, or to help political elites justify decisions already made rationally, consistent with structural constraints or strategic interests. This study provides significant support for the countervailing view: Historical ideas and beliefs, in and of themselves, have very real impact on state behavior. Pernicious historical myths that are commonly held by publics and elites—and purveyed widely through mass public education—are an important and surprisingly understudied source of international conflict.

Historical myths—by which I mean largely fatuous interpretations of history, based on gross distortions and/or omissions—are often the hallmark of popular conceptions of history. Virtually all states appropriate historical myths that are patriotic; myths that, to a greater or lesser degree, illuminate a glorious and guilt-free past, or blame others for its ills. This is especially true of history disseminated through mass public education. Yet, the nature of those myths varies greatly, from the

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1 See, for example, Mary Fullbrook, "Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR," in Myths and Nationhood, pp. 72-87; Andrew Wilson, "Myths of National History in Belarus and Ukraine," in ibid., pp. 182-197; E. H. Dance, History the Betrayer: A Study in Bias (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975); Charles Jelavich, South Slav Nationalisms—Textbooks and Yugoslav Union Before 1914 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990); Klaus Schleicher, ed., Nationalism in
relatively benign myth that seeks to exemplify virtuous behavior to the more chauvinistic myth that unjustly glorifies the nation's past actions—particularly in past wars and military interventions—whitewashes events that reflect negatively on that nation, or denigrates others. The latter type of myth—the pernicious distortions, half-truths, and omissions—is the primary focus of this study.

The Argument

Given the emergence over the past decade of nationalist conflict and increased scholarly focus on the role of "ideas" in international relations, we still know little about the relationship between historical ideas and international conflict. The explicit focus on this task is the main contribution of this dissertation. Specifically, the study identifies two primary ways in which pernicious history precipitates or exacerbates conflict: First, there are emotional mechanisms, by which gross historical distortions and half-truths create real or perceived historical grievances that in turn spur conflict. Second, there are cognitive mechanisms, by which pernicious historical ideas contribute to a whole host of public and elite misperceptions that may led to conflict. Thus, while a nation is not led into battle by its history teachers, a particular view of history may lie at the heart of the justification for communal violence and war, may create the ideas used to generate popular support for such violence, or may foster certain beliefs and images that can produce conflict-promoting misperceptions.

The general aim of the dissertation, then, is to illuminate the little-studied and poorly-understood relationship between historical ideas and international conflict. Given the dearth of social science work on the topic, this study is intended as a "first-cut" examination of the consequences of pernicious historical mythmaking. Its immediate aim, therefore, while modest, is a critical first step in the development of more precise hypotheses—and ultimately a more general theory—on the relationship between historical ideas and interstate conflict. The substantive empirical case studies in Part II of the dissertation are in fact designed to serve as detailed illustrations—or as "plausibility probes"—of the general proposition that pernicious historical ideas are conflict-promoting. In addition, they are designed to better specify the mechanisms involved, to identify enabling conditions, to generate hypotheses for further testing in other cases, and to lay the groundwork for subsequent theory-development.

The study asks the following set of questions: Are pernicious historical beliefs particularly dangerous? Can they cause or exacerbate conflict, and if so, how? Is there any way to prevent such ideas from emerging, or to ameliorate the more pernicious effects of these beliefs? To answer these questions, and to better understand the causes and consequences of pernicious historical ideas, the dissertation examines the experience of historical revision in post-Soviet Russia. Given its tumultuous past filled with civil strife, political oppression, economic hardship, revolution and war, Russia's history is primed for chauvinist mythmaking. This is especially the case in the recent post-Soviet period, which has witnessed the loss of national territory and population, a demoralized
and destitute military, the ravages of failed economic development, and a corresponding loss of global prestige and power. At issue today is whether Russia’s past is being re-written and taught in a way that is dampening nationalist extremism by promoting democratic and civic values, or is instead sowing the seeds of extreme nationalism and violent conflict.

As argued here, Russian history textbooks have continued to purvey pernicious ideas and distorted images not unlike the ones found in Soviet history texts. Despite the massive purge of Marxist-Leninist language, analytical approach and Soviet-era cadres of textbook authors and educators—and despite widely held beliefs to the contrary in both Russia and the West—many of the general themes and particular interpretations found in Soviet history textbooks continue to persist. This is particularly true in the portrayal of Russia’s foreign relations, international conflicts and wars.

Specifically, post-Soviet-Russian textbooks, though "de-Sovietized" and even anti-Soviet in places, continue to advance views on war, politics, and ethnic/religious relations that have not fundamentally changed since the Soviet period. While they are less dogmatic, less doctrinaire and more nuanced, they continue to stress themes of victimization and heroic self-sacrifice. Textbook interpretations of wars and military interventions are largely unbalanced, filled with self-glorifying, self-exculpating and other-denigrating myths. They criticize the behavior of others without explaining the reasons behind that behavior, while at the same time justifying Russia's own past misdeeds. Negative aspects of wars are associated with non-Russians, while positive
aspects are credited solely to Russia. Not unlike the old "drum and trumpet" history of late 19th and early 20th century European textbooks, Russia's post-Soviet history textbooks glorify and romanticize Russia's past foreign policy and involvement in past wars.

These views contribute greatly to a Russian self-image that is highly inward-looking, narcissistic, insecure and suspicious of others. A strong focus on the exceptionalism of Russia's role in its past wars—the incomparability of its suffering and valor—is especially disconcerting. It reflects a Russian self-image of total uniqueness in which others are seen as incapable of recognizing Russia's "enormous achievements" and "tremendous sacrifices" on behalf of the world, and thus fundamentally incapable of understanding and appreciating the Russian national character and Russia itself.

These ideas and images, in turn, have had real consequences for Russia, its neighbors and the West. Pernicious historical ideas have been a serious source of instability in Russia's relations with the Baltic states, and have precipitated or greatly exacerbated conflicts between Russia and the West in the Balkans—the two cases examined in detail in this study. In addition, its lack of self-aware and self-critical views on history, particularly in a society that has had such a traumatic history as Russia, has likely created a significant barrier to the development of democratic values, beliefs and practices. Indeed, what history textbooks reveal about Russia's views on war, politics, and ethnic/religious relations should give pause to those who think Russian domestic and foreign policies are clearly on a path toward western-style liberalism and democracy.
**Methods of Case Selection**

Some may take issue with the method of case selection adopted here, both in the selection of cases in Part II of the dissertation, as well as that of Russia itself. Let me address each of these briefly. First, Russia itself was selected not only for the inherent importance of the case, but because it offers a striking example of pernicious mythmaking in education. To the extent that this study seeks to identify sources of pernicious mythmaking I "look under the light" at a such a case.

Second, the two cases selected in Part II are all cases of potentially-violent conflict. The Baltic case is one of foreign conflict with a state that used to be part of the Soviet Union, and the Balkan case is one of foreign conflict with a traditional, long-standing adversary (the US and the West in general). These cases are designed primarily as "plausibility probes" of the larger hypothesis that pernicious ideas are an important cause of conflict, and as a way to develop and specify the specific mechanisms by which historical ideas promote or exacerbate conflict. They are designed to generate additional hypotheses and to identify enabling conditions that explain why conflict should result from widely-held pernicious historical beliefs. Thus, while I do in fact select on the dependent variable (conflict), I do so with the intention primarily of hypothesis- and theory-building.²

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Outline of the Dissertation

In the dissertation I carry out two main tasks: First, I examine the content of Russian history textbooks, identify the dominant ideas, images and beliefs found in the new Russian history, and assess their degree of perniciousness. Second, I assess the current and potential dangers of some of those ideas by examining recent conflicts in Russian foreign policy, and specify how those ideas precipitated or exacerbated those conflicts. Specifically, the dissertation is divided into three parts and eight chapters. Part I, "The International Effects of Pernicious Historical Mythmaking," (which consists of chapters one and two) provides a general overview of the study. Chapter one begins with a general statement of the problem of pernicious historical ideas. It examines the current state of knowledge on the problem and presents several hypotheses that seek to explain that relationship. It discusses the significance of studying the content and manufacture of history textbooks in general, and in post-Soviet Russia in particular.

Chapter two turns to fundamental definitional and methodological questions. In addition to explaining why certain historical cases were selected for analysis and discussing the logic of data selection—i.e., which textbooks were selected for analysis and why—chapter two articulates a general framework for understanding, identifying and measuring pernicious historical beliefs. It elaborates on what I consider to be

pernicious, false or distorted ideas, how I identify such ideas in history textbooks, and how I measure their intensity and hence their propensity for danger.

Part II, "Pernicious Historical Mythmaking in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia," (which consists of chapters three through five) examines in depth Soviet and Russian treatment of some of Russia's most important wars and military interventions. It identifies the primary themes and interpretations offered in the Russian history textbooks, identifies dominant images of both Russia and others, and the ideas, beliefs and assumptions that follow from them, and assesses the degree of perniciousness of those ideas.

The case studies in Part II focus on Russian textbook interpretations of wars and conflicts in Soviet and Russian history—events that are the most prone to nationalist mythmaking, that are especially revealing of images of others, and that often have particular cultural and emotional salience in society and politics. Chapter three focuses on one of those salient events—the Russo-German War of 1939-45. Chapter four turns to the treatment of particularly aggressive moments in Soviet foreign policy—a number of military interventions carried out between 1939 and 1940. These include the Russo-Finnish Winter War, and the occupation and annexation of the Eastern Poland and the Baltic States. Chapter five turns to the portrayal of Imperial Russia's interventions and wars in the Balkans. Cases include the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1806-12 and 1877-78, and the origins of World War I.
Part III, "The Consequences of Pernicious Historical Mythmaking," (which includes chapters six through eight) examines the impact of such pernicious ideas on recent cases of Russian diplomatic and military conflict. In order to illustrate the real and potential dangers that follow from pernicious historical mythmaking, it examines two cases—Russia's conflict with the Baltic states, and with the West in the Balkans. In each of these case studies I specify the various ways in which historical ideas and images, and the misperceptions they foster, helped precipitate or exacerbate those conflicts. Doing so helps illuminate our understanding of the relationship between violent conflict and pernicious historical ideas, and the way in which pernicious history can lead to serious conflict-causing misperceptions.

Chapter eight concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the theoretical implications and policy prescriptions that follow from the study. By providing a compelling case for taking historical ideas seriously as a source of violent and potentially violent conflict, the study presents a challenge to traditional structural realist approaches to international conflict, as well as to constructivist theories of international relations. Second, it challenges traditional approaches to the study of the sources national misperceptions. Finally, it has important implications for our understanding of current and future Russian political development and Western foreign policy responses.

Indeed, while the focus of the dissertation is primarily on the pernicious effects of historical ideas internationally, there are significant domestic consequences as well. First, Russian historical mythmaking in education speaks directly to the threat of
extreme nationalism in Russia by focusing on ideas that nationalists commonly appeal to
and exploit. This study finds that certain pernicious views of history are widely held,
both by those that consider themselves nationalists and those who do not, and thus cut
across ideological and sociological lines in Russia.

Second, it speaks directly to the current extent of, and future prospects for,
democratic consolidation in Russia by focusing on ideas that are closely associated with
democratic and civic values and beliefs. Obviously, increased confrontational and
conflictual diplomacy and domestic military conflicts that may follow from historical
mythmaking have been, and will continue to be, a drag on Russian democratic
development. Yet, drawing on the "transitional justice" and civics education literature, I
argue that the persistence of self-glorifying and self-exculpating myths in Russian
history has helped impede the consolidation of democratic values and beliefs. This, of
course, bodes ill for democratic development in Russia, assuming Western policymakers
continue to ignore the importance of promoting a more self-critical accounting of
history, especially in education. This conclusion has wider implications for our
understanding of democratization—both of the factors that impede it and promote
it—in states undergoing post-authoritarian transitions.

**Assumptions About History**

Finally, a brief word about the evaluation of historical ideas and beliefs.³ This
study makes explicit value judgments about historical ideas. It operates on the

³ More detailed discussion of definitions are presented in chapter two.
assumption that there are good, bad and innocuous historical beliefs. That is, some beliefs are more likely to promote conflict (or conciliation), both domestic and international, than others. This dissertation offers considerable evidence that historical beliefs can have very real, dangerous consequences. Thus, assessing the degree of danger of historical ideas is both valid and necessary.

Yet, some clearly may take issue with such normative claims about historical ideas and discussions of historical veracity. This study, however, does recognize that historical interpretations are subjective, and that the historical "truth" is highly elusive. While perhaps impossible to agree upon an objective, clearly defined historical "truth," or a single universal interpretation of historical events, there is, however, clearly a range of interpretations that professional historians consider plausible and appropriate (or inappropriate) given the existing historical record. Some explanations of past events, therefore, are in fact more valid than others: better explanations are more consistent with the existing historical record and the general consensus of professional historical scholarship. Historical views are considered false or distorted when they clearly fall outside that range of acceptable interpretations. It is the most egregious, most obviously distorted versions of events that are often the most pernicious. It is these egregious and obvious distortions that are the focus of this study.

Just as this study does not assume that there is a single valid interpretation of an historical event, or that all views that deviate from it are "false," it also does not consider all "myths" or "false" history to be axiomatically pernicious. That is determined by
several other factors: Historical beliefs become exceptionally dangerous when historical
distortion, omission, or fabrication takes place around issues of particular social or
emotional salience; when it promotes values or ideas that are particularly noxious and
offensive; and when it serves narcissistic, self-glorifying, self-exculpating or other-
denigrating uses. Such ideas are the subject of this thesis.
PART I

UNDERSTANDING THE INTERNATIONAL EFFECTS
OF PERNICIOUS HISTORICAL IDEAS
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHY HISTORY MATTERS

There is probably no better place than a schoolroom to judge the character of a people, or to find an explanation of their national peculiarities.

— Francis J. Grund, 1837

We should give our young people absolutely correct and objective information about our past.


You probably know the famous expression: "The German teacher won the Franco-Prussian War." We should do everything that is in our power so that our descendants will say: "The Russian teacher won the historic battle for a new great, prosperous and free Russia."

— Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 1996

Do a society's views and interpretations of history influence a state's international behavior, and if so, how? Can particularly pernicious views about history precipitate or exacerbate conflict among states, and if so, how? Through a study of


mass public history education and textbooks in post-Soviet Russia this dissertation seeks to answer these questions. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present the general framework and key assumptions of the dissertation. In doing so it addresses the relevance of the study to existing theoretical questions and debates in international relations (sources of nationalist conflict and violence; constructivist approaches to international relations theory; sources of national misperceptions), and post-Soviet Russian politics (the future direction of Russian political development; the nature and scope of virulent Russian nationalism; and the strength of Russian democratic values and beliefs).

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section one assesses the existing state of knowledge on the relationship between historical ideas and international conflict. Section two discusses the relevance of history education and textbook in assessing popular historical ideas and the international effects of those ideas. Section three presents several hypotheses drawn from general empirical and deductive observations, as well as existing theoretical literatures, that posit the mechanisms by which historical ideas lead to conflict. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relevance and importance of the post-Soviet Russian case.

I. Historical Ideas and International Conflict: Assessing the Existing State of Knowledge

The question of how societies—particularly those that are divided or have suffered some form of great national trauma—interpret and teach the past, has long been
a concern of publics, professional historians, and political elites. Many believe that
societies should portray history fairly, honestly and in a way that militates against
narrow ethnic nationalism. While rarely articulated, it is widely assumed that pernicious
history is dangerous—that it fosters xenophobic, chauvinist and racist ideas that can
precipitate or exacerbate conflicts, both within and between states.

Pernicious history is considered dangerous, therefore, because it is closely linked
to extreme nationalism, which itself has been associated with the most destructive wars
of the twentieth century. It is seen as an important cause of reckless foreign policies that
lead to war, and as a cause of modern wars’ fierce intensity and destructiveness. Indeed,
to the casual observer there is also a strong correlation between the dissemination of
virulent historical myths, usually through mass public education, and aggressive and
violent foreign and domestic policies. Some of the most violent regimes of the twentieth
century, for example, have also been some of the worst abusers of history. They
disseminated through the educational systems some of the worst examples of malevolent
self-glorifying myths. Studies of the educational systems and textbooks of Wilhelmine
and Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, apartheid South Africa, Communist China, post-
Communist Serbia and Croatia, as well as Soviet Russia, all offer strong testimony to
this fact.\footnote{See Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism and War," \textit{International Security} 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993), p. 80.}

\footnote{For example see E.H. Dance, "Bias in History Teaching and Textbooks," in \textit{History Teaching and History Textbook Revision}, ed. Otto Ernst Schüddekopf, et al.}
The danger of pemicious historical ideas was a central, though implicit, assumption of much of the early pioneering work on nationalism. In the 1920's and 30's the work of Hans Kohn, Carelton Hayes and Louis Snyder, for example, showed how perceptions of history were central to the formation of national consciousness. Their work routinely examined popular interpretations of history—particularly that found in


For more on Japanese textbooks see Ienaga, The Pacific War, pp. 19-32; idem., "The Glorification of War in Japanese Education," pp. 113-133. Ienaga in particular has viewed the content of Japanese education before World War II as a significant cause of Japanese imperialism and the Pacific War. As he has written, "I am not attributing the Pacific War (1931-1945) to the influence of textbooks alone. However, there is no doubt that the emphasis on militarism in the curriculum, combined with the media's glorification of war and the government's suppression of pacifist and liberal views, was a major factor in socializing the great majority of Japanese to support aggression enthusiastically." "The Glorification of War in Japanese education," 117.


schools—and showed how grossly distorted and chauvinist history often led to the development of extremely chauvinist forms of nationalism.\(^6\)

Indeed, historians were often the first to recognize the power of chauvinist history. Earlier in the century, on the eve of U.S. entry in World War I, the historian H. Morse Stephens declared: "Woe unto us! professional historians, professional students, professional teachers of history, if we cannot see written in blood, in the dying civilization of Europe, the dreadful result of exaggerated nationalism as set forth in the patriotic histories of some of the most eloquent historians of the nineteenth century."\(^7\)

Indeed, in the first few years after World War I, the belief that pernicious historical ideas were a significant source of international conflict led scholars and policymakers to


scrutinize the teaching of history. Many believed that grossly biased and distorted "drum and trumpet" history taught in European (and American) schools fostered national chauvinism that contributed to the onset and the intensity of the Great War.⁸ Such assumptions were explicit in works published at the time with titles such as, The Menace of Nationalism in Education, Lies and Hate in Education, Militarism in Education and The German School as a War Nursery.⁹ In fact, one of the first tasks of

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⁹ V. H. Friedel, The German School as a War Nursery (New York: MacMillan, 1918); John Langdon-Davies, Militarism in Education: A Contribution to Educational Reconstruction (London: Headley Bros., 1919); Jonathan French Scott, The Menace of Nationalism in Education (New York: Macmillan, 1926); Mark Starr, Lies and Hate in Education (London: Hogarth Press, 1929). As Scott, pp. 16-17, wrote, for example:

... [W]riters of textbooks and teachers of... history, geography and civics are training the world's children to nationalistic narrowness, to nationalistic prejudices. To their own country, teachers and texts give disproportionate attention, magnifying its achievements and those of its leaders, past and present, keeping silent in regard to its faults or "rationalizing" these into virtues. Other countries they tend to neglect, disparage or criticize severely. To the international idea some lip service is paid; but there is little real enthusiasm for it where it appears to conflict with some cherished national prejudice. Thus, what should be a training for world culture and an international point of view becomes education in compartments. And the prejudices thus inculcated in the impressionable years of childhood, remain throughout life, and form the basis of that miscalled patriotism to which an opportunist and chauvinistic press so easily appeals, and which in time of crisis it stirs to arms.
the newly-formed League of Nations was to commission a study of history education in Europe to determine its contribution to the cause of World War I.\textsuperscript{10}

Indeed, the belief in the danger of chauvinist history led to the emergence of an entire cottage industry after the First World War devoted to the assessment and revision of history textbooks. One scholar writing in the inter-war period noted that "much of the education of today... is a war-provoking force."\textsuperscript{11} The textbook revision movement gained considerable momentum after World War II, and served as a major influence on the allies' massive reeducation program in occupied Germany and Japan. As one observer noted, Western political leaders "felt that, once the Germans were defeated, the proper formula applied to their school system would eliminate the danger of their


starting future wars.”12 In the 1950’s UNESCO—whose Constitution asserts, “wars begin in the minds of men”—established a permanent European institute for international textbook research.13 Today, a perusal of newspapers, magazines, and bookstore and library shelves reveals a wide popular concern over historical memory, particularly traumatic or controversial episodes. Public debate, discussion and soul-searching


surrounding the past occur frequently in almost all societies, particularly those that have experienced some form of national tragedy. Thus, for example, Germany,\textsuperscript{14} Japan,\textsuperscript{15}


France,\textsuperscript{16} and the United States\textsuperscript{17} have all publicly wrestled with the interpretation and popular memory of their wartime pasts. Since the end of the Cold War, popular and

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scholarly attention to the issue of historiography and popular memory in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and the former-Soviet Union has been equally significant.\textsuperscript{18}

More recently, scholars and political elites have begun to focus on the importance of historical truth-telling—in the form of "truth commissions," amnesty and lustration laws and trials—in successfully managing transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes. This issue of "transitional justice" has played a central role most notably in the transitions in Chile, Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala and South Africa.\textsuperscript{19}

Yet, despite nearly a century of popular concern over the way societies interpret and teach the past, and despite the widespread belief that pernicious historical ideas are inherently dangerous, the relationship between pernicious history and international


conflict is poorly understood. In essence it remains an underspecified and untested assumption; a powerful "folk theory" that has rarely been examined with any rigor. The specific ways, if at all, that popular historical ideas that are purveyed through mass education contribute to international conflict is surprisingly understudied in the scholarly literature. Therefore, the main task of this dissertation is to provide a clearer understanding of how pernicious historical ideas found in mass public education can promote inter-state conflict.

Structural realists see ideas, particularly historical ideas, as justifications for policy decisions made rationally, consistent with the structure and distribution of power in the international system. However, the past several years has seen the emergence of work in international relations theory that takes ideas, including historical ideas, seriously as an independent source of international behavior. A number of works have focused on the role of ideas in shaping international institutions and regimes, which in turn structure the range of foreign policy options open to states.\(^20\) Other works have elaborated on the role of ideas, norms, values and beliefs in shaping national identity, which in turn determines interests and international policy preferences.\(^21\) However

\(^{20}\) For example, Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

neither the "ideas and foreign policy" literature nor the "constructivist" literature has examined "bad" ideas, or ideas as a source of conflictual relations among states. Both focus primarily on the positive effects of ideas: how they foster international economic cooperation, arms control, the transition from Apartheid in South Africa, and the collapse of communism, just to give a few examples. Further, that literature has said little about where these ideas might come from.

Works that have examined the relationship between nationalism, international conflict and war provide important exceptions. Stephen Van Evera, for example, has offered a persuasive deductive argument that chauvinist historical myths make states prone to aggressive international behavior. Namely, chauvinist mythmaking, and the teaching of such myths in schools, greatly increases a whole host of national misperceptions, exacerbating the security dilemma among states and contributing to the

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intensity of conflict spirals. Barry Posen has argued that nationalism—purveyed partly through mass education—led to the creation of mass armies, whose existence made offensive wars more likely and greatly increased the intensity of warfare. While he makes no explicit reference to pernicious historical ideas, their significance in inculcating nationalist ideas in society is implicit in his argument.24

However, there are no empirical or theoretical studies that focus exclusively on the relationship between malevolent historical beliefs and international conflict. The value of this study, therefore, is that it clarifies that relationship, specifying the mechanisms by which historical ideas lead to conflict, and tests those ideas empirically in the case of post-Soviet Russia. In addition, while this study accepts the central argument of constructivists about the political power of ideas, it moves beyond constructivist approaches by highlighting an important source of ideas that shape values and interests: namely popular history, particularly that purveyed through mass public education. Further, by examining case studies of international conflict this study makes constructivist arguments more relevant to the study of international security, which

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24 Posen, "Nationalism and War."
seeks to explain the causes and dynamics of conflict and war. It is precisely the potentially pernicious ideas, most closely associated with conflict and war, that should be one of our greatest concerns.

II. The Conflict Dynamics of Historical Mythmaking

Though there is no literature that exclusively focuses on historical ideas and international conflict many existing theoretical and empirical studies related to the causes of war, the sources and dynamics of national misperceptions, and the sources and dynamics of nationalism and ethnic and nationalist conflict all provide important insight into the relationship between history and conflict. Specifically, these diverse literatures suggest that historical ideas have precipitated or exacerbated conflict in two major ways—through emotional mechanisms and cognitive mechanisms.

A. Emotional Mechanisms

In many societies, especially divided or multiethnic ones, or those that have experienced great national trauma or warfare, historical distortions, omissions and whitewashing have often instilled resentment and animosity among some individuals or states, and manifested grievances over real or perceived injustices. These feelings have lead to violent retaliation, or to demands for apologies, reparations, or other symbolic gestures that inherently raise tensions, or that lead to confrontational or antagonistic policy choices. At best they reinforce existing animosities; at worst they precipitate
hostilities. In either case, they increase the likelihood of deadly or potentially deadly conflict.

Such dynamics appear to be present in several regional conflicts. Japan's East Asian neighbors have continually decried Japan's interpretation of its conduct in World War II and demanded formal apologies; demands that have strained relations and increased tensions with its neighbors, particularly China and Korea. Armenians have denounced Turkey's whitewashing of its past behavior; Palestinians have attacked the popular Jewish version of the founding of the Israeli State; and Serbs have denounced Croatia's whitewashing and glorification of its wartime behavior, among many others.


26 Turkey's refusal to admit that it carried out genocide against the Armenians in 1915 has served as a continual source of dispute among these two countries. See Richard G. Hovannisian, ed., Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, forthcoming); idem., The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Kamuran Guerue, "Turco-Armenian Relations," Eurasian Studies, 3 (Spring 1996), pp. 54-64; Roger W. Smith, "Genocide and Denial: The Armenian Case and Its Implications," Armenian Review, 42 (Spring 1989), pp. 1-38.

Often, states recognize the emotional power of certain historical myths and use them as propaganda to manipulate public opinion to tolerate or carry out violence. Regimes have purveyed historical myths—both via mass public education and mass media—to mobilize publics, either to make sacrifices in times of political or economic crisis, to rally to the country's (or ethnic group's) defense when under attack, or to wage war themselves. Pernicious historical myths are often the staple of hypernationalist propaganda that contributes to ethnic and nationalist violence, providing a basis upon which nationalist ideologues and political opportunists entice publics to violence.29


Examples of this phenomenon are numerous, from Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan to the former-Yugoslavia and Rwanda.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{B. Cognitive Mechanisms}

The second general way in which pernicious historical ideas precipitate or exacerbate conflict is through cognitive mechanisms. False and distorted historical beliefs or pernicious historical ideas—especially those purveyed widely through mass education or proffered by political entrepreneurs—foster ethnic or nationalist stereotypes and negative or false images, assumptions and beliefs about others. The images revealed through interpretations of history can have direct and indirect impact on political decision-making and international behavior through the shaping of interests and


perceptions. A great deal of work in international relations theory and foreign policy
decision-making, particularly work within political psychology, has pointed to images
and worldviews as important determinants of international behavior. Work by Nathan
Leites, Alexander George, Ole Holsti and others on "Operational Codes," have
demonstrated persuasively how core beliefs, values and principles can guide political
decision-making. We know from the literature on national misperceptions that such
images can cause significant misperceptions that lead to conflictual or confrontational
foreign policies.

Specifically, research in social psychology, which serves as the basis of much of
the national misperception literature, has shown how individuals have a set of core
beliefs about themselves, about others and the world—what Jervis calls the evoked set
of beliefs—that serves as a cognitive lens or filter through which information is

31 See, for example, Robert Jervis, The Logic of Images in International Relations
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); idem., Perception and Misperception in
International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Wolfram Hanreider,
Comparative Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays (New York: McKay, 1971); Frederick
C. Barghoorn, Soviet Russian Nationalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956),
chapter 8.

32 Nathan Leites, Kremlin Moods (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation,
1964); idem., A Study of Bolshevism (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1953); idem., The
Operational Code of the Politburo, First ed. (New York: MacGraw-Hill, 1951);
Alexander L. George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of
Political Leaders and Decision-Making," International Studies 13, no. 2 (June 1969),
reprinted in American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays, ed. G. John Ikenberry
(Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1989), pp. 483-506; Ole R. Holsti, "The 'Operational
Code' as an Approach to the Analysis of Belief Systems," Final Report to the National
Science Foundation, Grant No. Soc75-15368 (December 1967);
processed and decisions are made. The nature of the historical beliefs held by
individuals is especially important in this regard: social psychology shows us that
individuals are "cognitive miser$ who fit new evidence into their existing cognitive
frameworks instead of updating their general beliefs as new evidence arrives.
Therefore historical beliefs often act as lenses that shape views of current events. A
distorted "lens"—i.e., a false understanding of the past—has been known to frequently
distort one's understanding of the present. This is the general thrust of much of the
work on historical analogies in decision-making.

While the misperceptions literature acknowledges the power of history in
shaping perceptions, it tends to treat history as the past personal experiences of
decision-makers, rather than as general historical beliefs. However, the power of
historical beliefs as a cause of misperceptions makes sound deductive sense. Indeed,

33 Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics, esp. Part II,
"Processes of Perception," pp. 117-318. See also Hazel Markus and R. B. Zajonc, "The
Theory and Method, ed. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson (New York: Random
House, 1985).

34 Jervis, Perception and Misperception, pp. 117-318.

35 Yuen Foong Khong, Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the
May, "Lessons" of the Past: The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign
Policy (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973); Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May,
Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers (New York: Free Press,
1986). Also see Deborah Welch Larson, Origins of Containment: A Psychological
Explanation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), and Jervis, Perception and
Misperception, pp. 217-87.
much of the classics of the nationalism literature has documented the central role of
historical beliefs in shaping core beliefs about national identity. That is, historical ideas
are important determinants of images, values and beliefs in general. National histories,
for example, tell the story of who the people of the nation are, where they come from,
and how they got there. As much of the work on nationalism has argued, history is a
repository of beliefs about a shared past.36 Understanding, therefore, how a society
treats its past is critical to understanding how the nation sees itself. Through
descriptions and evaluations of past behavior, history answers directly or indirectly
fundamental questions about the nation's values, beliefs, and concerns. Answers to
central questions such as: "Why have we gone to war in the past, and who was to
blame?" "Why have we committed crimes against our own people and against others?"
"Why have other countries attacked us?" and "Why have we attacked other countries?"
define a nation's self-image, and its image of others. These are essentially simple, yet
fundamental questions that lie at the core of a nation's self-image.

C. The Mythmaking/Conflict Spiral

These are not competing or mutually-exclusive hypotheses but rather are
mechanisms that can coexist simultaneously, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. In addition,
these independent causal "paths" can operate either in the myth-purveying state, or in

36 On the relationship between national histories and nationalism see Boyd C.
Shafer, *Faces of Nationalism: New Realities and Old Myths* (New York: Harcourt,
the state that is the target of the myth, or in both. That is, historical myths can precipitate a sense of grievance or misperceptions on both sides. Thus, the distorted views that a state holds of its own past behavior vis-à-vis another state, fosters a set of images, assumptions and beliefs that directly influence the decisions it makes. Similarly, the group or state that is the object of the historical distortion may perceive hostile intentions on the part of the purveying state, whether or not those are its true intentions.

Figure 1.1
Pernicious Myths as a Cause of Interstate Conflict:
Two Causal Mechanisms
It follows, then, that the great danger of mythmaking is in the feedback that occurs between the myth-purveying state and the target state—feedback that can actually intensify these conflict-promoting mechanisms. This is illustrated in Figure 1.2 below. For simplicity’s sake, Figure 1.2 illustrates the independent causal "paths"—that is, the emotional and cognitive mechanisms from figure 1.1, with the shorthand "Paths A and/or B." As seen here, one reason why mythmaking is so dangerous is that this process is self-reinforcing. Once myths are purveyed by one state, the likelihood that these malevolent effects will occur on both sides greatly increases. In addition, as illustrated in Figure 1.2, mythmaking often begets mythmaking. Pernicious ideas purveyed in one state will make the target group or state
more likely to purvey their own pernicious historical ideas, or they may become less willing to confront their own past crimes, all of which causes backlash in the original myth-purveying state. So, as both states become myth purveyors and victims of mythmaking themselves, the result is a vicious circle of spiraling mythmaking and increased tensions.

III. History Textbooks and the Legitimation of Pernicious Historical Ideas.

As Figure 1.1 shows, the existence of pernicious ideas is necessary, but not sufficient, to exacerbate or precipitate conflict. The critical variable, or enabling condition, is some kind official or wide popular legitimation of those ideas. In other words, the ideas are not only publicly visible but also widely disseminated in ways that imply official and popular endorsement or tolerance of those views. There are a number of ways that the legitimation of ideas can occur: through the dissemination of state-sponsored propaganda; through mass public commemorations; the naming of official state holidays; the establishment of museums or memorials, and—the most common way—through the content of mass public education.

As a way of measuring legitimation, history textbooks are particularly useful for at least two reasons: They are clear, concise articulations of popular historical views. Second, they are intended for wide dissemination and have an explicit socializing and nationalizing function.
A. Textbooks and popular history.

First, in addition to being highly visible and widely disseminated, textbooks provide a direct, concise, written historical narrative, rather than an abstract representation. As a result they tend to provide a clearer signal to other states about the beliefs, values and images that society and elites implicitly or explicitly endorse. In addition, history textbooks almost always reflect popular views of history. A clear measure of how a society and the state interpret its history is how it writes about and teaches that history through the educational system. The content of popular history and historical memory is found in a number of sources—popular entertainment, such as films and popular literature, the mass media, opinion polls, and scholarly historical writing, as well as memorials, museums and public commemorations. Yet, none of these reveal as vividly and substantively the popular view of history as does the core of mass public education—the history textbook. Thus, as E. H. Dance argued more than 30 years ago,

> It is not the cranks with whom we are concerned, but the mass of normal . . . opinion about history. The best place to find that is not in philosophical or even academic writings, however brilliant or foolish, but in the school textbooks. It is the business of a textbook to be commonplace: the school history books of any country contain the commonplaces of its historical thinking.37

Similarly, historian Henry Steele Commager has written that "What children have learned in school is not to be taken too seriously as an index to their character, but it is

37 Dance, History the Betrayer, p. 54.
an almost infallible guide to the moral system that adults approve."\(^{38}\) It is therefore primarily from an analysis of Soviet and Russian history textbooks that this study derives its assessment of the popular Russian view of its history.\(^{39}\)

Specifically, history textbooks are revealing of popular views of history for at least two reasons. First, they embody "lowest common denominator" history—a distilled version of popular history and historical memory that appeals to the widest possible audience. Given the nature of textbooks and their target audience, they are simple, parsimonious, and accessible. Further, only what is widely considered the most important material makes its way into a textbook. For this reason, textbook histories offer especially clear insight into the nature of a state's self-image. Just as history textbooks offer a distilled view of a state's view of history, so too do they offer a penetrating window onto a state's perception of itself and its image of others.

Second, in many societies, especially those with highly decentralized educational systems subject to local input and oversight, the content of mass public history education is one of the best windows onto popular views. Most modern societies are clearly marked by a diversity of beliefs and opinions. Nonetheless, most societies

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\(^{39}\) The following chapter discusses in detail the textbooks used in this study and the rationale for their selection.
exhibit strong tendencies toward certain beliefs and opinions over others—particularly about history. Given the nature of textbooks, and the need to reconcile often diverse social interests, they often reflect these dominant tendencies.

**B. Textbooks and political socialization.**

Second, unlike other means of popular legitimation, history education and textbooks are intended for mass consumption and have explicit socializing and nationalizing functions. Unlike other popular expressions of historical views—films, novels, memorials and public commemorations—history textbooks not only reflect popular views of the nation and its role in history, but are explicitly designed to inculcate them into future generations. While there are a vast array of socializing influences, few deny the importance of history education in socializing beliefs about the nation into future generations. In his pioneering work on civic values, for example, Charles Merriam noted, there are "many other types of education than those received through the formal educational system, but this is the most systematic and most highly organized, most consciously contrived for the purpose of influencing directly the next generation."\(^40\) This observation tends to be confirmed by the educational literature. At least in the United States, researchers have found a strong correlation between the content of textbooks and the historical knowledge of students. Such evidence is further bolstered by studies that show that in most countries textbooks are the primary source

of history instruction. Hence history textbooks and history education are not only especially illuminating as proxies for popular views on history but also are inherently important to examine in their own right.

Indeed, it is because of these self-conscious socializing and nationalizing functions that history education and textbooks are frequently a focal point for political conflict. Thus whether or not history education exerts a powerful influence on a society's youth is perhaps less important than the fact that societies widely believe they do. Publics and elites see the history textbook as an important repository of the nation's core values and beliefs, and, given the nature of mass public education, as a central transmission belt of those core ideas to younger generations. It is precisely because of this belief, that textbooks themselves often become objects of heated public debate and controversy. Witness, for example, the great battles in the U.S. over textbook content and the recent controversy over national history standards.

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Such popular concern is even more significant in divided societies, states that have undergone profound political and ideological change, or have suffered great tragedy and violence. Witness the celebrated battle over censorship and the treatment of World War II in Japanese textbooks, the teaching of the Nazi period in Germany (and the former-East Germany), and growing public concern over history teaching in post-

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colonial Hong Kong, post-apartheid South Africa, Israel, Northern Ireland, and


On Northern Ireland see Margaret Eastman Smith, "Historical, Ethnonationalism, and Peacebuilding in a Divided Society: The Teaching of History and Group Identity in Northern Ireland" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 1999); Alexander MacLeod, "One History, Different Versions," Christian Science Monitor," 18 June 1998, p. 1; John McManus,
the former-Yugoslavia,\textsuperscript{50} to name just a few. Even in the US, disputes over the nature of the ideas in textbooks can turn violent, such as the notorious case of violent conflict over history textbooks in Kanawha County, West Virginia schools in 1974.\textsuperscript{51}

Indeed, the widespread belief in the power of history education as a nationalizing tool has led many political elites to blatantly manipulate the content of school histories for purposes of political mobilization and control.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, in inter-war Germany, political elites grossly manipulated and controlled the writing and teaching of the history

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\textsuperscript{51} James Moffett, \textit{Storm in the Mountains: A Case Study of Censorship, Conflict and Consciousness} (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988); Franklin Parker, \textit{The Battle of the Books: Kanawha County} (Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1975);

of World War I, particularly the question of Germany's responsibility for the war.\footnote{Holger H. Herwig, "Clio Deceived: Patriotic Self-Censorship in Germany After the Great War," \textit{International Security} 12, no. 2 (Fall 1987), pp. 5-44.}

Similarly, in Soviet Russia the party elite considered history education a central propaganda tool that had to be tightly controlled by the state.\footnote{As Khrushchev once said, "Historians are dangerous people, capable of turning everything topsy-turvy. They have to be watched." Quoted in Harvey J. Kaye, "Why Do Ruling Classes Fear History?" And Other Questions (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), p. 15.} More recently, a similar phenomenon of the control of history is underway in Belarus.\footnote{See Rainer Lindner, "Besieged Past: National and Court Historians in Lukashenka's Belarus," \textit{Nationalities Papers} 27, no. 4 (1999), pp. 631-647. In 1995 President Lukashenka ordered the withdrawal of Belarusian history textbooks from schools and had them replaced with old Soviet-era versions.}

In addition, textbook content has frequently been a serious point of international dispute as well. Ideas found in textbooks can often spark international controversy and conflict whether they are seen to reflect elite views—since textbooks are often either explicitly or tacitly endorsed by states—or those of society in general. The most vivid example remains Southeast Asia, where Japan's neighbors have continually decried Japan's textbook treatment of the war years, and vice-versa (such as Japan's common criticism of Chinese and Korean textbooks' "exaggeration" of Japanese wartime atrocities).
IV. The Importance of Post-Soviet Russia

A. Conflict and Russian Historical Ideas

To assess the relationship between pernicious historical ideas and international conflict, this study examines in depth the nature of popular historical beliefs in post-Soviet Russia. The first half of the dissertation audits the content of Russia's new, post-Soviet history—in particular those ideas that are associated with its past wars, military interventions and diplomatic conflicts—as found in its history textbooks. It determines the nature of the ideas purveyed, measures their perniciousness, and assesses their potential for danger. The second half examines cases of Russian foreign policy conflict and explains how pernicious historical ideas have precipitated or exacerbated those conflicts. Indeed, popular interest in how Russia is confronting its past is more than just idle curiosity. As mentioned above, there is wide popular belief that historical ideas matter; that the way a society writes its history, or the historical beliefs that the state sanctions or condones, tells us much about that society. In addition, societies believe, and experience seems to confirm, that these ideas are important because they are closely associated with violent and potentially violent domestic and interstate conflict.

In fact, Russia has a heavily-contested and bloody past filled with events of great tragedy and violence that make it highly prone to conflict. Today the meaning and significance of past historical events is challenged by Russia's neighbors, ethnic and religious minorities inside Russia, and among Russians themselves. Numerous conflicts have already arisen between Russia and its neighbors over questions of historical
interpretation (with Ukraine, for example, over the status of Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet, or with the Baltic states over the demarcation of borders) and historical responsibility for past behavior (most recently with Estonia over the nature of the Russian annexation of that country in 1940, and with Poland over responsibility for wartime atrocities committed in 1920-21 and 1939-41). That the past is so volatile an issue, makes it likely that it will continue to be a source of dispute.

Further, in recent years, the content of Russian history textbooks has been openly challenged: textbook authors and education officials have been subject to vociferous attacks by nationalist politicians and public intellectuals who see some books

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as "anti-Russian," "unpatriotic," and the result of foreign influence and manipulation.  

Indeed, some regional legislatures have even voted to recommend that such textbooks be banned from local schools. Thus, while no longer an overt political tool, Russian history education is still considered by Russians to be no less significant. Thus, some Russian political elites have not only attacked the content of Russian textbooks, but many have expressed concern over the education of ethnic Russians in the former-Soviet


republics; political elites have called for the maintenance of Russian schools outside Russia—schools that teach Russian language, literature and history—and have even provided Russian textbooks to those schools. The fact that the interpretation of, and responsibility for, history in Russia has in recent years led to conflict both at home and abroad, should be justification enough for this study.

In addition, how the Russians are rewriting their past—particularly the Soviet period, which witnessed an enormous amount of human suffering—is critical since how Russia views these past events reveals much about its self-image, its image of others and important popular beliefs and assumptions about the world that affect its domestic and foreign policy behavior. The value-added of this study is that, like the work of Nathan Leites, Allen Lynch and others, it seeks to understand the underlying bases of Russian policy behavior—particularly violent and conflictual behavior—by discerning dominant images, beliefs and assumptions. In addition, it builds on that larger "images" literature: In contrast to existing studies, my source of data—historical ideas in general, and those in history textbooks in particular—is clearly unique.

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60 Thus, since this study examines the content of history education, it differs significantly from those of Leites and Lynch. Nonetheless it is in the same spirit as their works. Leites attempted to understand Soviet decision-making and foreign policy behavior by examining elite rhetoric, from which he distilled his famous "Operational Code"—core beliefs, values and principles that guided political behavior. Leites,
Auditing post-Soviet Russian history, identifying pernicious ideas, and measuring their intensity, are especially important precisely because our existing knowledge of the perniciousness of the content of Russian historical ideas and history education is quite poor. Descriptive studies have neither sought to examine chauvinist content and nationalist myths, nor to determine how dangerous or innocuous they are. Even in the popular press, which has been most interested in this question since 1992, the focus on the malevolent content of history education has been minimal. This is both puzzling and disconcerting. Clearly it is such ideas that should be of greatest interest to Russia scholars, western decision-makers and concerned publics today.  

In addition to the insight it provides into the relationship between historical ideas and conflict, post-Soviet Russia offers an especially attractive and compelling case


Similarly, Lynch examined the writing of Russian international relations scholars in order to distill core beliefs and views that influenced Soviet international political behavior. Allen Lynch, The Soviet Study of International Relations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Despite the plethora of scholarly studies in the last thirty years that have analyzed the content of history textbooks in a variety of countries, surprisingly few have actually focused explicitly on the nature of their malevolent content. This failure to explicitly evaluate history textbooks for their general degree of perniciousness (and, indirectly, for their historical accuracy) may be due in part to the increasingly popular post-modern idea that history is socially constructed, that historical "truth" is ephemeral, and there is no "right" or "wrong" historical interpretation. Therefore, history texts are incapable of being judged, or evaluated for their veracity. This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.
study in its own right. First, given the Soviet regime's manipulation and distortion of history, and its rigid control of history education, there is great popular interest in how Russia has revised its history, and how it is currently teaching it. Second, Russia's legacy of chauvinist mythmaking in education makes it an especially useful case for examining the mythmaking—and myth-inhibiting—process. Thus, it can help us determine where such ideas come from and how to ameliorate them. Finally, the examination of historical ideas in post-Soviet Russia offers insight into the nature of Russian democracy and nationalism, and the future of Russian political development. The study, therefore, also seeks answers to several questions. First, What is the nature of post-Soviet Russian historical ideas? What is the nature of Russia's self-image and its image of others? How much have those ideas changed since the Soviet period, and in what ways? Which factors have inhibited chauvinist mythmaking in post-Soviet Russia, and which have exacerbated it? How dangerous or innocuous are these ideas? These three tasks are elaborated below.

**B. Popular Interest in Russian History Revision**

For nearly 80 years, Russian and Soviet history was subject to blatant political manipulation, conscious falsification, and gross distortion. In many ways, the legitimacy of the Soviet regime and the Communist Party's hold on power required strict ideological control over the written past. Orwell's now-famous dictum, "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past," has come to be the associated with all totalitarian and communist regimes, the Soviet Union in
particular. Thus, to many the first real signs of change in the mid-1980's were the public examination of official national history. Indeed, it was demands for historical truth from various groups within the Soviet Union—for example, by Memorial, which demanded an honest historical accounting of Stalinist repressions, and by Sajudis in Lithuania, which demanded that the Soviet government acknowledge the existence of the secret protocols to the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939—that helped undermine Soviet rule.

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63 Anatol Lieven has written: "In the Baltic the revelation of the full extent of the deportations and the executions of the 1940s played a part in undermining Soviet rule, but the key factor was of course the publication of the truth about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the way the Balts came to be annexed in 1940." Anatol Lieven, The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 222. See also Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, New Nations Rising: The Fall of the Soviets and the Challenge of Independence (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1993), Chapter 4: "The Baltic States: Vanguard of Independence," esp. pp. 113-115; Gail W. Lapidus, "From Democratization to Disintegration: The Impact of Perestroika on the National
Orwell's dictum recognizes that the absence of censorship, not only in the press but also in scholarship and education, is crucial to the free flow of ideas, the development of an open society and a democratic state. Thus, it is considered highly significant that today the Russian State has abandoned its ideological control over the writing of history.

But the simple removal of direct governmental control does not automatically make for better history. Thus, there has been wide interest in understanding the content of Russia's new history, how it differs from the Soviet version, and, in particular, how it treats previously taboo subjects and "blank spots." This interest is particularly strong among Russians themselves. Indeed for many years there has emerged a virtual cottage industry in the writing of tell-all memoirs by famous (and not-so famous) Russians, and those who knew them. These, and the more serious works of historical revision, fill a popular need of a society that was so long denied the opportunity to openly and honestly reflect on its past. Even in the West there is wide popular interest in how Russians are confronting the past and particularly what new history is being taught in Russia's schools. For these reasons it warrants close attention.

However, our existing knowledge both in English and Russian of the content of post-Soviet Russian education remains quite poor. At a minimum, describing that content fills an important gap in public knowledge. Despite general interest, the nature

On Memorial see Smith, Remembering Stalin's Victims.
of the changes carried out in Russian history education has received only superficial scrutiny over the past ten years. The several interesting studies of popular memory in Russia have paid only scant attention to history education,\textsuperscript{64} while the few studies that have explored it directly, both in English and Russian, have tended to offer much misinformation, conjecture, and confusion about its actual content, scope and significance.\textsuperscript{65}

These attempts to simply describe the new history have proven inadequate for two main reasons. First, neither existing western or Russian scholarly analyses, nor popular press reports, have examined comprehensively—as this study does—all federally-approved textbooks, as well as a representative sample of non-approved texts,

\textsuperscript{64} Interestingly, the most recent work on Russia comparable to Buruma's \textit{Wages of Guilt}—Nina Tumarkin's \textit{The Living and the Dead}—says nothing about history education or textbooks. Similarly a recent work on the memory of Stalin in Russia since 1991 also says almost nothing about education. Adam Hochschild devotes only a few pages to discussion with a historian who was writing a new textbook, and most of the discussion was about pedagogical approach, rather than actual content. See his \textit{The Unquiet Ghost}, pp. 131-137.

currently used in Russia's schools. Instead they have examined only a limited number of texts, usually just one or two. In some cases they have reviewed textbooks that are not officially endorsed, and hence are not widely used. In either case, they have tended to generalize from a small, unrepresentative selection of textbooks published since the early 1990's, and hence reach conclusions that are at best incomplete and at worst misleading. Western press reports, for example, have frequently made enthusiastic proclamations to the effect that "[t]he new textbooks depict Soviet-era history realistically," and that "[c]ountless other examples show the Education Ministry's commitment to teaching history accurately, sometimes brutally so. . . . Now that the Education Ministry finally has resolved the nation's textbook problem, it can turn its attention to raising teacher's pay." The grossly optimistic statement that Russia has now "resolved its textbook problem" is highly misleading, and indicative of the overly optimistic characterizations found especially in the popular press.

66 The following chapter provides a more in-depth discussion of the selection of texts used in this study.


68 The conclusions these studies reach are often biased by the tendency to focus on educational developments in the Russian capitals—Moscow and St. Petersburg—which are home to a plethora of experimental schools and history curricula.
Second, these studies often fail to evaluate thoroughly and meaningfully the ideas presented in the textbooks. Too often they focus on superficial changes in the content, without evaluating the new content on its own terms. Like the example, studies of the new twentieth century Russian history textbooks often praise new interpretations of the old Soviet-era orthodoxy, or the inclusion of previously taboo materials without evaluating the particular interpretation that is now offered. These studies axiomatically assume that since the textbooks rebuff the old orthodoxy, include previously taboo subjects, or the author is identified as a "liberal" or anti-Communist, then they no longer purvey pernicious or objectionable ideas about Russia's past behavior. 69

Thus, while many assume—rightly so—that previously taboo subjects are now openly discussed in the Russian educational system, the analysis has usually ended there. How those previously taboo events are being interpreted in the new history textbooks remains a complete mystery to many, both inside and outside Russia. This

An innovative approach to history education adopted by an experimental school in Moscow, for example, tells us little about how the mass of Russia's schools are teaching history. In the aggregate, as this study finds, such studies provide a falsely optimistic picture of the true nature of Russian history education as a whole. This is especially true of western press reports, but is not limited to them. While Valkenier, for example, reaches a more pessimistic conclusion about the nature of history education than many Western journalists, she nonetheless draws conclusions from a brief visit to Moscow. Thus, her conclusion that Russian schools widely use Tsarist-era textbooks is inaccurate. See Valkenier, "Teaching History in Post-Communist Russia."

failure to carry out a rigorous analysis of the emerging ideas in history textbooks is perhaps understandable, especially on the part of Russian scholars and educators who have been preoccupied with the financial turmoil and massive structural changes in the educational system. It is also perhaps understandable given the time frame: new textbooks began appearing only in the last five years. Yet, it is precisely because of these distractions that a study of this kind is necessary. The vacuum left by the lack of serious analyses of the historical ideas disseminated in the new textbooks has been filled by nationalist ideologues, who often grossly distort the nature of that content for political purposes. This is clearly the case with recent nationalist attacks on certain history textbooks.70

Now is certainly the time to take stock of current efforts at rewriting Russia's history. More than a decade has passed since the reforms of the Gorbachev period commenced, and at least five years have passed since the emergence of the first real post-Soviet Russian history textbooks. The transitional period in textbook development is slowly coming to a close and the new Russian history is now being solidified in the new generation of schoolbooks. Chapters 3-5 of this dissertation

70 The irony here is that these textbooks already embody a relatively high degree of chauvinist and nationalist views. One consequence of these public attacks has been to force authors to make already objectionable textbook material increasingly more nationalistic. Indeed, this is further proof that the critics are motivated more by political, rather than intellectual concerns. It was clear in the course of interviews with some of the leaders of these attacks, including Communist Party Duma deputy Tamara Pletneva and literary critic Irina Strelkova, that they had not read the textbooks very closely. T. V. Pletneva, Personal interview, Russian State Duma, Moscow, 17 July 1996; I. Strelkova, Personal interview, Dom Literaterov, Moscow, 17 June 1996.
address the existing gap in public knowledge by examining the treatment of key events in
Russian history textbooks, particularly events that have previously been subject, or are
especially prone, to chauvinistic interpretation, gross distortion, or omission.71 It
performs an audit of the new (and often old) ideas presented in the texts, and evaluates
them on their own terms.

71 The official Soviet version of history has been well documented in the
western scholarly literature. Studies that have examined the content of official history
during the Soviet period, and Soviet historiography in general, include: Cyril Black,
Rewriting Russian History: Soviet Interpretations of Russia's Past, 2d ed., rev. (New
York: Vintage Books, 1962); John Keep and Liliana Brisby, eds., Contemporary
History in the Soviet Mirror (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961); Anatole G.
Mazour, The Writing of History in the Soviet Union (Stanford: Hoover Institution
Press, 1971); Lowell Tillett, The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-

However, perhaps because the official CPSU view of history was uniform across
society—in the mass media, in professional scholarship, as well in the educational
system—studies devoted to the content of history schoolbooks and, more importantly,
to the process by which they were created, were quite few. To the degree that this
study discusses the legacy of the Soviet period, it is the first to address the Soviet, as
well as post-Soviet, process of history textbook creation and content. Most studies
have focused on the treatment of particular issues within Soviet secondary history
education. See, for example: Jilleen V. Apatore, "The Military-Patriotic Theme in
Soviet Textbooks and Children's Literature" (Ph.D. dissertation., Georgetown
University, 1986); William Korey, Jews as Non-Persons: A Study of Soviet History
Textbooks in Elementary and Secondary Schools (Washington, DC: B'nai B'rith
International Council, 1970); Graham Lyons, ed., The Russian Version of the Second
World War: The History of the War as Taught to Soviet Schoolchildren (Harden, CT:
Archon Books, 1976). One exception is the short essay by William B. Husband,
"History Education and Historiography in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia," in Education
and Society in the New Russia, ed. Anthony Jones (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994),
pp. 119-140.
C. The sources of pernicious historical ideas

In addition to the overt political manipulation and control, there exists a dangerous legacy of chauvinist, self-glorifying mythmaking in Russian history and history education. This legacy demands close scrutiny and evaluation of Russian historical ideas. It is critically important to understand how much this old chauvinist content has been mitigated or changed in the post-Soviet period, and in what ways. Thus, this study not only identifies and measures the perniciousness of the content of post-Soviet Russian history textbooks, but also seeks to illuminate the sources of, and influences on, that content. Specifically, the study explains in part the process by which history education in post-Soviet Russia has been revised since 1992. It sheds light on how and why were particular historical myths were selected, developed, and disseminated in school textbooks and curricula; why certain Soviet-era nationalist myths continue to persist in mass public education, despite years of explicit democratic reforms; and which factors have promoted more chauvinistic mythmaking, and which have inhibited its development.

A study of the post-Soviet textbook revision provides a case study of "mythmaking in action." As noted above, myths in history, particularly more chauvinistic ones, can be especially dangerous. Yet, the process by which these toxic ideas make their way into mass public education is poorly understood. General studies that have explicitly examined more pernicious ideas in textbooks have tended to be
purely descriptive. Very few have explained the mythmaking process, the origins of
those ideas and beliefs, and how they make their way into textbooks, or the factors that
inhibit such ideas from being adopted. Even the exceptional study that has sought to
address the sources of mythmaking has not done so systematically. While not the
main focus of this study, it nonetheless sheds important light on the subject.

In addition, explaining the textbook revision process allows us to assess the
major efforts at educational reform carried out in post-Soviet Russia. While this study

72 Notable works that address various forms of nationalist and ethnic bias in
textbooks in individual countries include: Blackburn, Education in the Third Reich;
Dean, et al., History in Black and White; Ethan Lewis Ellis, 40 Million Schoolbooks
Can't Be Wrong: Myths in American History (New York: Macmillan, 1975); Frances
FitzGerald, America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century (Boston:
Little, Brown, 1979); Korey, Jews as Non-Persons: Langsam, "Nationalism and History
in the Prussian Elementary Schools"; Ruth V. Miller, Nationalism in Elementary
Schoolbooks in the United States from 1776 to 1865 (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia
University, 1973); Olson, "Nationalistic Values in Prussian Schoolbooks."

73 For example, Saburo Ienaga, The Pacific War, pp. 19-32; idem., "The
Glorification of War in Japanese Education," pp. 113-133; Charles Jelavich, South Slav
Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union Before 1914 (Columbus: Ohio State Univ.
Press, 1990). While these works are exceptional in their attempt to understand the
sources of the myths, that process was not the focus of these studies. The one
exception is Herwig, "Clio Deceived."

74 The recent time-frame of the study—an approximately six-year period from
1992 through 1998—allowed for direct communication with many of the key actors
involved in the textbook-revision enterprise. Over the course of 1996 and the summer
of 1997 I interviewed many of these key actors, including many authors of new
textbooks, their editors and publishers, education ministry officials responsible for
history curriculum, state Duma deputies responsible for education policy, Russian
education researchers and historians, representatives of non-governmental and
international aid organizations, among many others. This provided a unique
opportunity to examine the mythmaking process in progress, something that no
previous study has done.
looks only at one part of the educational system (secondary education), and then only at one aspect of that (history education), explaining the textbook revision process requires a much broader understanding of the entire educational system and the changes that have taken place since 1992. Thus, the textbook revision process has been affected by changes in the higher-education institute system, from which many textbook authors and textbook evaluators are drawn; by changes in the educational publishing system, which evolved from a state monopoly to an open market system; and by broad structural and institutional changes in the educational system as a whole, which, like the publishing system, became highly decentralized and much more open.

That openness includes the direct participation in the educational reform process of an entirely new actor: international and national NGOs and aid organizations. Their activities are critical to understanding the textbook revision process. While not the main focus of this study, it nonetheless offers unique insight into an aspect of the mythmaking process that is highly unusual, unprecedented and understudied: The direct involvement of foreign organizations and individuals in the voluntary revision and rewriting of a states' history textbooks. Education—particularly history education—is generally considered the exclusive domain of nation-states, not open to direct foreign participation. In fact, the role of George Soros's Open Society Institute in Russia is central to understanding the nature of current Russian history education, and thus warrants close scrutiny and evaluation.
D. Democracy and Nationalism in post-Soviet Russia

The nature of Russian historical ideas and the content of its history education can help assess the danger and popular appeal of Russian nationalism and the commitment to, and strength of, democratic and civic values in Russia. Therefore, the examination of Russian historical ideas, and hence the identification of Russian self-image through the content of its history education, speaks directly to a broad public and scholarly debate about the current and future direction of Russian politics, and proper Western responses to it.

That debate can be characterized crudely as one between Pessimists and Optimists. Pessimists see rising chauvinistic nationalism, increased ethnic conflict and international confrontation, a general failure of democratic development and consolidation, and increased social, economic and political anarchy. Optimists see increasing consolidation of democratic and market-oriented institutions and practices, both domestically and internationally, and hence see current troubles as merely bumps along the road to a democratic and prosperous future. Pessimists see Western aid to Russia as largely ineffective, while Optimists see it as vital both to preserve gains that have been made and to help bring about further positive change. Pessimists see a great deal of continuity from the Soviet period, while the Optimists see a great deal of change.

At the heart of this debate are assumptions, often implicit, about Russia's national self-image and its image of others—i.e., core Russian beliefs, values and ideas about such fundamental issues as the causes and prevention of war, the use of force at
home and abroad, the nature of state-society relations, and the role of religious and ethnic minorities inside Russia. The content of national histories, the development of Russian textbooks, and the process of educational reform in general, can help identify such beliefs, and thus provide an insightful data point with which to better evaluate the claims of both Pessimists and Optimists. If, for example, extreme nationalism were on the rise, or had a wide base of support in Russia, as the Pessimists would predict, one should also see the emergence of pernicious history education. Similarly, if civic values and democratic practices were emerging in Russia, as the Optimists would predict, we should expect to find school histories that are self-critical, that stress historical accountability, and lack self-glorifying, self-exculpating and other-denigrating myths.

**Russian historical ideas and Russian democracy.** Whether Russia confronts its past honestly and self-critically, or whitewashes or omits more troubling and painful experiences speaks directly to Russia’s commitment to democratic development and the prospect for democracy’s longevity in Russia. By auditing the content of the new Russian history, by measuring its degree of perniciousness and comparing it to historical ideas that were pervasive in Soviet education, we can better assess how self-critically and honestly Russia is dealing with its most difficult and traumatic past experiences. This can help us better understand how deeply-ingrained democratic and civic values have become and the Russian elite commitment to democratic ideas and practices. In addition, by determining the degree to which either pernicious or more self-critical historical ideas are being actively disseminated through history education, we can begin
to assess the prospects for long-term democratic stability and consolidation in Russia.\footnote{It should be noted, however, that this study does not assess or evaluate explicitly the effectiveness of history textbooks as a means of socialization. Since this study focuses on textbook content primarily as an expression of values, rather than as a propaganda tool, it is not necessary to demonstrate the textbook's socializing "relevance." Nonetheless, the question of the impact of these ideas on beliefs and attitudes of Russian children is extremely important and remains grossly understudied. The closest scholars have come to addressing the socializing significance of history education in post-Soviet Russia has been the large, cross-national European study "Youth and History," carried out in 1994 and 1995. The Youth and History project surveyed 32,000 teenagers in 27 countries in Europe, including Russia. While providing some interesting food for thought, the Russian survey results are problematic for two reasons: First, the survey did not focus specifically on the impact of textbook history. Second, at the time of the survey the first new Russian history textbooks, which are discussed at length in this study, had only just begun to be published. See Victor Nemchinov and Irina Tsenina, "Youth and History: Testing Russian Teenagers in the Time of Transition," in Youth and History: A Comparative European Survey on Historical Consciousness and Political Attitudes Among Adolescents, Volume A, eds. Magne Angvik and Bodo von Borries (Hamburg: Körber-Stiftung, 1997), pp. A270-A274 (Volume B contains the actual survey data).}

Thus, to the degree that we are concerned about the strength and longevity of Russian democracy, understanding how Russians deal with the past is extremely important.

\textit{Historical ideas and Russian nationalism.} Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been great popular and scholarly concern over the rise of virulent

\footnote{Other important work that focuses on Russia has been carried out by James V. Wertsch, who has looked tentatively at the question of national-identity formation though secondary education in Russia. See his "Memory, History and Identity in the Former Soviet Union," Final Report to the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, Contract No. 811-07 (July 1997).}

\footnote{Finally, some political scientists and sociologists have conducted surveys of Russian youths within the past year, however they focus only on broad values and beliefs, rather than at sources of those beliefs. See Jerry Hough, "Yeltsin, Regions," Johnson's Russia List, no. 2122, 27 March 1998.}
nationalism in Russia. Throughout the 1990's, many have seen a large looming threat of Great Russian nationalism and neo-Soviet authoritarianism. It has not been uncommon, particularly in the popular press, to see repeated references to "Weimar Russia." After the election of Russian President Vladimir Putin press reports frequently mentioned the Russian desire for a "strong hand" and authoritarian leader. These concerns warrant much greater attention to the nature of the ideas in Russian mass public education and to understand their degree of perniciousness.

While predicting the likely emergence of a hypernationalist regime in Russia is beyond the scope of this study, identifying and measuring the pernicious content helps answer the following questions: First, what historical ideas, beliefs and values might appeal to broad segments of Russian society? (In other words, what kinds of ideas are ripe for exploitation and manipulation by a potential nationalist leader?) Second, if a

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78 Most recent studies of post-Soviet Russian nationalism tend to ignore the uses of history, generally, and in education particularly. Exceptions to the former include Gerard Holden, Russia After the Cold War: History and the Nation in Post-Soviet Security Politics, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).
nationalist regime emerges in Russia, how dangerous is it likely to be?\textsuperscript{79} Russian textbooks provide an excellent source of data for answering these questions. Since nationalists often appropriate such myths in appeals to the public (indeed, they often provide a foundation upon which nationalist rhetoric builds) examining the content of mass public history education, and measuring its degree of perniciousness, can offer an additional data point in assessing broader sympathies that political extremists might appeal to and exploit.

Further, it is very likely that the type of nationalism and degree of danger it presents are conditioned in part by the nature of the ideas purveyed in mass public education.\textsuperscript{80} Thus, how dangerous or innocuous the common myths in Russian history education are, is extremely valuable for assessing how dangerous and violent a potential nationalist regime might be. Studies have found that nationalist myths that lack personal resonance among the public often fail.\textsuperscript{81} Thus, in the absence of chauvinistic and bellicose myths purveyed widely through mass public education, extreme nationalist calls for violence, recrimination, and revenge against foreign countries and/or domestic groups, would likely have little resonance.

\textsuperscript{79} While some may question the value of investigating such speculative questions, it is precisely during periods of relative political moderation, such as today, that such ideas should be explored, if we are to determine the viability of a future nationalist regime in Russia.

\textsuperscript{80} Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," pp. 15-33, esp. pp. 26-30

\textsuperscript{81} See, for example, Mary Fullbrook, "Myth-Making and National Identity: The Case of the GDR," in \textit{Myths and Nationhood}, pp. 72-87.
CHAPTER 2
DEFINING, IDENTIFYING AND MEASURING PERNICIOUS HISTORY

[Historical myths] are often more powerful than the objective truth—for the truth can be painful.

—Norman Davies

Much of the previous work on nationalism in education and school textbooks has lacked a satisfactory method of defining, identifying and measuring chauvinism, pernicious nationalism and other bellicose and malevolent ideas in textbooks. They have tended to be either purely descriptive studies written primarily by historians, or polemical tracts designed to deride a particular country's textbook content and educational system. In many ways this lack of rigor is defensible, since it is extremely difficult to assess in any precise way—particularly quantitatively—a highly subjective phenomenon: the presence and degree of perniciousness in textbooks. After all,


2 After World War I western critics frequently attacked the content of German textbooks. See, for example, V. H. Friedel, The German School as a War Nursery (New York: MacMillan, 1918); Mark Starr, Lies and Hate in Education (London: Hogarth Press, 1929). Chinese attacks on Japanese textbooks and Japanese attacks on Chinese textbooks in the 1930's were also popular: Jih-Pen Yen Chiu Hui, Anti-Chinese and Anti-Foreign Teachings in New Textbooks and Publications in Japan (Nanking: Association for the Study of Japanese Affairs, 1932); Herald of Asia, Anti-Foreign Education in China (Tokyo: The Herald Press, 1931); Anti-foreign teachings in new text-books of China (Tokyo: Sokokusha, 1930). A more recent example of this type of approach, looking at textbooks in Pakistan, is K. K. Aziz, The Murder of History in Pakistan (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 1993). In addition there have been numerous studies that have analyzed the problem from a largely pedagogical perspective.
nationalism as a concept has been debated for many years by highly-gifted scholars, who have still not settled on a standard definition. We are talking here about matters of historical interpretation, omission, or factual distortion, as well as themes and subtle patterns of emphasis; while individual words or phrases may seem relatively innocuous, the sum total may provide a very different picture.

Nonetheless, we can only begin to answer questions regarding the sources of the content of history education, the nature of a nation's core values and beliefs, the degree of danger they pose, and the effect they have on international behavior if we at least make an attempt at systematic definition and measurement, and come up with a sensible—if perhaps imperfect—method of understanding the degree of pernicious bias present in mass public history education. The aim of this chapter is to provide definitions and discuss the methodology used to assess the nature and degree of perniciousness of the textbooks examined in Part two of the dissertation.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section I addresses definitional questions: What constitutes a "pernicious," false or distorted idea or historical myth? Can value judgments be made about historical ideas? The second section explains what issues, or cases, are examined in the textbooks (and presented in Part II of the dissertation) and the rationale for that case selection. The span of Russian history

covered in school textbooks is vast and it was necessary to examine certain historical events in more detail than others.

Section three then explains the various indicators of pernicious history that were used in the examination of the textbooks. These include issues related to war, politics, and ethnic/religious relations. This section also highlights several important questions that will be addressed in the dissertation about the nature of post-Soviet Russian nationalism.

The fourth section proposes a method for measuring the intensity of pernicious views found in textbooks. Such views range from the generally benign to the extremely threatening, thus a more systematic method is offered that allows us to characterize the views expressed, and to compare them with other texts.

The final section answers questions of data selection and reliability: Why and how were certain textbooks selected? How generally representative are they of all textbooks currently available in Russia? How generally representative are they of broadly-held Russian popular and elite views about history (i.e., is it valid to use history textbooks as proxies for popular views of history)?

I. Definitions: What is a Pernicious Historical Myth?

While the literature on nationalism has embraced the concept of "myths," and has examined them for insight into a nation's identity, it generally doesn't use the concept in the same way I do here. Myths are defined here as fatuous historical beliefs
that are, by definition, largely (though not exclusively) pernicious. I use the adjective "pernicious" only to emphasize the distinction between my view and the traditional, more innocuous, usage. In that usage, myths are viewed as value neutral, and are rarely judged for the danger that they might pose. While historical myths may be fabricated "stories" that "stretch the truth," they are all seen as rather innocuous, neither "good" nor "bad."

Yet, this study makes explicit value judgments about interpretations of history. It operates on the assumption that there are good, bad and innocuous historical beliefs. That is, some beliefs are more likely to promote conflict (or conciliation), both domestic and international, than others. Yet, how do we reach a particular judgment about a historical interpretation? How do we determine that a particular view of history is potentially dangerous or pernicious, especially given the subjective nature of

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4 My definition comes closest to Boyd Shafer's, who has defined "myth" as "an ill-founded belief held uncritically by a people (or an individual) to explain what otherwise is or seems to be inexplicable or unclear." Boyd C. Shafer, Faces of Nationalism: New Realities and Old Myths (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972), p. 313.

5 Thus, historian Norman Davies has defined myths as "sets of simplified beliefs, which may or may not approximate to reality, but which give us a sense of our origins, our identity, and our purposes." In this definition, one that is commonly used, myths are entirely innocuous. Norman Davies, "Polish National Mythologies," in Myths and Nationhood, eds. Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 141.

One important exception is George Schöpflin, who has noted that certain myths may lead to present day conspiracy theories, scapegoating or xenophobia. See "The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths", in Myths and Nationhood, p. 25.
interpretation and existing limits to historical knowledge? I argue that three factors largely determine the perniciousness of historical views: the veracity of the particular historical view, the salience of that view, and the role it performs within a particular context. Each is addressed in detail below.

A. Veracity

The first determinant of perniciousness is whether an historical view falls outside the range of acceptable historical interpretations. This can be done in a variety of ways: through omission, distorted emphasis either nuanced or gross, and outright fabrication. It may also be done intentionally, such as through obvious political or ideological manipulation, or unintentionally, perhaps as the result of deeply-ingrained, subconscious biases. Historical views that fall outside this range and are grossly distorted or patently false are largely pernicious, and more likely to have malevolent effects than those that fall within the range of acceptable interpretations.

An important clarification on this point is necessary: This study recognizes that the historical truth is often elusive and subjective, and that historical interpretation is often highly politicized. To paraphrase historian William McNeill, one person's historical truth is another person's myth. However, while perhaps impossible to agree upon an objective, clearly defined historical "truth," or a single universal interpretation of historical events, there is clearly a range of interpretations that professional historians

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consider plausible or appropriate (or inappropriate) given the existing historical record. Therefore, some explanations of past events are in fact more valid than others: better explanations are more consistent with the existing historical record and the general consensus of professional historical scholarship.

Professional historians, therefore, may disagree over the interpretation of a particular version of events, yet at the same time agree that certain interpretations are clearly false—that is, they fall outside the acceptable range of given interpretations that are consistent with the available historical record. It is the most egregious, most obviously distorted versions of events that, I argue, are most pernicious. Put another way, the main determinant of perniciousness is not historical "truth," per se, but gross falsity. My concern here is the degree to which popular portrayals of history in education deviate from this range of acceptable interpretations. In this study I draw on the existing secondary historical literature, as well as personal communication with professional historians, to determine the general historical consensus—that is, the range of acceptable interpretations—on Russian historical events under evaluation in Part II of the dissertation. I compare the Soviet and Russian textbook treatment of those events to that baseline, consensus view.

An example that will be discussed in detail in chapters 4 and 6 serves to illustrate. Historians may debate a whole range of issues associated with the occupations and annexations of the Baltic states in 1939-40: the precise numbers that were killed or deported; the degree to which deaths were spontaneous or ordered from
above; the nature of the conditions within the occupied states; the extent and nature of Baltic "collaboration" with Soviet authorities, etc. However, no respectable historian argues that there were no such deportations and killings, or that the Soviet Union never occupied and annexed the Baltic states, or, to take the opposite extreme, that Soviet actions amounted to a systematic "genocide" of the Baltic peoples. These views clearly fall outside the range of acceptable historical interpretations and therefore, I argue, carry with them certain inherent dangers.

In addition an historical view is likely to be pernicious when, in the event that the historical record is sufficiently contested by professional historians, only a single interpretation (however valid) is offered, to the exclusion of other plausible explanations. Again, this may be done either intentionally or unintentionally. The result, however, remains the same.

**B. Salience**

However, historical lies, distortions and omissions in and of themselves, are not axiomatically pernicious. Whether an historical interpretation falls outside the acceptable range of interpretations, or in the case of textbook histories, alternative explanations are excluded, the event being interpreted must have particular cultural or emotional salience to be particularly pernicious. That is, it must deal with an event of historical significance, or express a number of offensive or dangerous principles, values, or beliefs. Hence, Holocaust denial is particularly pernicious not simply because it falls well beyond the range of accepted historical views and contradicts the overwhelming
historical evidence, but because it does so about an historical event of great cultural and emotional significance to Jews and others. To use the case the Baltic example above, denying that the Soviet Union occupied and annexed the Baltic states (as current Russian history textbooks and popular and elite opinion do) is a pernicious notion because of the centrality of that experience in Baltic popular consciousness.

C. Role

False or distorted interpretations can serve different functions and take different forms, each varying in degree of perniciousness. As noted above, the particular event that is the subject of mythmaking is especially important in determining the negative or benign character of that myth. Similarly, determining the nature of a particular historical interpretation requires an understanding of the role that interpretation performs. When history is distorted or fabricated in order to instill a positive moral lesson, it can be relatively benign or even beneficial. Take, for example, the American myth of George Washington and the cherry tree, which serves as a lesson of the virtues of honesty and filial piety. Yet, when history, particularly of salient events, is distorted, and there are obvious self-serving reasons for doing so (such as concealing ones actual culpability, for example), then it becomes especially pernicious.7 Historical myths are particularly

dangerous when they perform one of the following roles: when they are explicitly self-glorifying; when they excessively emphasize the state or society's role as victims or martyrs; when they are self-exculpating or rationalize past misdeeds; and, finally, when they implicitly or explicitly denigrate others. Figure 2.1 shows these various myths and their degree of perniciousness.

**Figure 2.1 Types of Myths**

Further, historical lies, distortions and half-truths are particularly worrisome if they reflect a larger principle, belief, or value that is offensive or dangerous. Thus, using the example mentioned earlier, Holocaust denial is dangerous because it reflects a significant degree of racism and anti-Semitism, while potentially inflaming ethnic hatred. There are, in fact, a number of such "indicators" of pernicious history in addition to racism and anti-Semitism. These include xenophobia, militarism, insecurity,

imperialism, authoritarianism, and the deification of national leaders. Each of these are discussed in more detail below.

II. Indicators of Pernicious History

Writing in the mid-1950s about chauvinistic and messianic attitudes in Soviet ideology Frederick Barghoorn observed that "Individuals, and the groups of individuals who make policy in some states and nations, compensate for feelings of inferiority, individual insecurity, and real or fancied threats or insults by creating self-images which magnify their virtues, but depreciate and vilify enemies and outsiders."\(^8\) Whether or not the causal mechanism is accurate, the general description of the behavior—expressions of insecurity, inferiority, fear, self-glorification, vilification of others—sums up rather well the concept of perniciousness advanced in this study. Specifically, pernicious views in mass public history education comprise a variety of distinct chauvinist and bellicose self-glorifying and other-denigrating views. I have identified at least eight of the most common features, or indicators, of perniciousness in history education, grouped into three main categories—views on war/foreign relations, views on politics/state-society relations, and views on ethnic/religious relations.\(^9\) Each of these views, summarized in Table 2.2, is examined in detail below.


\(^9\) All except for one (anti-Semitism) are views consistent with chauvinism in general. Anti-Semitism is a sub-category of racism that has been seen as indicative of Russian chauvinism in particular.
Table 2.2. Indicators of Pernicious History

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<th>Views on War/Foreign Relations</th>
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<td>Xenophobia</td>
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<th>Views On Ethnic/Religious Relations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
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<td>Anti-Semitism</td>
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A. Views on War/Foreign Relations

The treatment of issues surrounding war in post-Soviet Russian texts is still very much like Soviet-era texts in significant ways. Most importantly, both Russian textbook views of war are strikingly similar to the "Drum and Trumpet" histories of the past—the hypernationalist, chauvinist myth-laden views, which were phased out of European textbooks after the end of World War II. These European history texts of the late 19th and early 20th century expressed highly romanticized views of war. They glorified imperialism and militarism, and were highly xenophobic in their interpretations.

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of the causes and conduct of wars. The most extremely nationalistic of the lot also stressed the perennial threats to the nation's security from neighbors both near and far.

All of these characteristics of the drum and trumpet school of history—xenophobia, militarism, insecurity, and imperialism—are not only central features of hypernationalist mythmaking (and thus their presence, or absence, from educational materials are of wide concern to publics and policymakers) but have also been seen as central features of Russian nationalism and foreign policy behavior, both past and present. Thus looking at these four characteristics in the Russian history texts allows us not only to characterize the texts' views on war, measure the perniciousness of those views, and compare them with Soviet-era texts, but also to test some broad popular beliefs about the nature of Russian nationalism, national self-image and the sources of Russian foreign policy behavior, both past and present. Given that school texts infuse important national values and attitudes—such as those toward war—through the telling of stories about the nation's past, if any of these four characteristics were indeed central elements of Russian self-image and, subsequently, important sources of its foreign policy behavior, then they should be revealed in textbook interpretations of Russia's history. While many of these more noxious views are associated with extremist groups on the right and left, examining textbooks allows us to determine the extent to which such ideas are present in the mainstream of post-Soviet Russian society.

Some brief definitions of these four characteristics, and explanations of the
assertions about them, are provided below.

1. Xenophobia

Xenophobia is a central feature of pernicious history closely associated with war and foreign relations. Further, xenophobia, particularly anti-Western sentiment, has been seen as a major feature of Russian nationalist thought and motivation for its foreign policy behavior. During the Soviet period, of course, mistrust, suspicion and belittling of the West were well documented. In the post-Soviet period many believe that, with the exception of extreme nationalists, Russians have embraced the West, western values and ideas. Yet, how much has the inherent mistrust of foreigners, and especially westerners, that many see as a fundamental element of Russian nationalism, really changed since the Soviet period? If the Russian self-image is fundamentally xenophobic and anti-western, one should see this reflected in the textbook discussions of wars. Specifically, one should find foreigners, in general, and westerners, in particular frequently compared unfavorable to Russia, Russians and Russian diplomatic and military behavior. One should find generally negative characterizations of foreigners, and should see stereotyped portrayals of foreigners, who are characterized as less gifted than Russians, amoral, hostile, aggressive, arrogant, and anti-Russian.

In the textbook discussions of past wars, how, for example, are adversaries and other actors in the international system treated? Does the text describe others in an overly-negative, disparaging, belittling way? Does it view neighbors and others as hostile, aggressive, and anti-Russian? Does it compare Russia to other countries, and if
so does it do so negatively or positively? Does it emphasize, implicitly or explicitly, Russia's uniqueness and exceptionalism vis-a-vis other countries?

2. Militarism

Closely related to xenophobia is the concept of militarism, by which is meant not simply the glorification of war and of the military as an institution, but a lack of critical evaluation of one's own military and political decisions to use armed force. Like xenophobia, many observers have seen militarism as an important feature not only of Russian and Soviet foreign policy, but Russian and Soviet economy and society. Many have pointed to Russia's huge armies and the Soviet defense-industrial complex, which resulted in a militarization of society.¹¹ Most importantly, though, many have seen Russian and Soviet foreign (and domestic) policy as highly aggressive, willing to use force easily and with little discretion. One could point to the recent Chechen war as a case in point. The glorification of military values and the military as an institution are also popularly believed to be a central element of Russian nationalism. It is popularly believed that the danger of nationalist resurgence in Russia lies not only in the humiliation associated with the loss of Russia's empire, but also of the power and prestige—both internationally and domestically—of the Russian military following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

If the Russian self-image is fundamentally militaristic, one would expect to find such expressions in textbook interpretations of Russia's past wars. Texts should present a wholly uncritical presentation of the military and of military figures, and of their past conduct. One should also expect texts to avoid discussions of the decisions to use force, or, to the degree such decisions are discussed, one would expect them to be generally unbalanced, with a propensity toward padding texts with rationalizations or justifications for that decision.

Thus, the texts have been examined for their tendency to glorify and romanticize the military by heroizing military figures, uncritically presenting the military's conduct in past wars, as well as military and political decisions to use force. For example, does the text heroize or glorify Russian military figures? Is it ever critical of military actions or decisions? Is it ever critical of political decisions to use force? Does it frankly discuss the human aspect of warfare, and the horror of war, or is it romanticized? Finally, what are the reasons offered for the use of force?

3. Insecurity

Perniciousness is often manifest by expressions of national and personal insecurity. Not surprisingly, many have argued that Russia's self-image has been strongly shaped by its own territorial insecurity, having an enormous contiguous land border that is difficult to defend, and its history of foreign invasion. This general insecurity has been seen as a central feature of the Russian national self-image. Most recently Russian nationalists have seen the collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent
loss of territory as greatly increasing Russian insecurity. They suggest that the large
ethnic Russian diaspora in the former Soviet republics faces grave danger.\textsuperscript{12}

In general it is this geo-strategic reality, it is argued, that has necessitated its large
land army and many of its imperial adventures, driving Russia's original grab for empire
in the early 18th century on through the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe after
World War II. It has been seen by some as the ultimate source of Russian foreign policy
behavior, contributing to consistent actions, despite ideology, over the past several
centuries. Some would argue, however, that today, in the nuclear age, these traditional
geopolitical concerns are much less important, and hence should dampen excessive
concern for foreign invasion and increase a state's security.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, understanding how
much a sense of insecurity is still part of the Russian self-image is especially important.
As Jervis, Waltz, Van Evera and other international relations theorists have argued, a
heightened sense of insecurity, whether real or imagined, is highly destabilizing. When

\textsuperscript{12} On the Russian diaspora see Aadne Aasland, "Russians Outside Russia: The
Kasier, Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet
Successor States (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996); Paul Kostoe, Russians in the Former
Soviet Republics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Igor Zelev, "Russia
and the Russian Diasporas," Post-Soviet Affairs 12, no. 3 (July 1996).

\textsuperscript{13} John Lewis Gaddis, "The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar
eds. Sean Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 1-
44; Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," in ibid, pp.
198-200. Also see Kenneth N. Waltz, "More May Be Better," in Scott D. Sagan and
Kenneth N. Waltz, The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate (New York: W. W.
states see themselves as insecure they are especially prone to misperceptions, which, among other things, exacerbate the security dilemma, serve as an excuse for imperial expansion, and heighten international crises leading to wars. Indeed, one sees this quite clearly in the foreign-policy thinking and public discourse of Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and others. These views were widely held by publics, and reflected in mass education. Thus, if insecurity were an important part of the Russian national self-image it should be evident in the textbook interpretations of Russia's wars.

Of course, territorial insecurity as an excuse for war in the pre-nuclear age may be a legitimate interpretation. The key is to see if there are generalizations made or direct inferences drawn about Russian security, in general, from discussions of the past wars. Of course, one could argue that historians who write the texts simply don't understand the nature of the nuclear revolution, and thus it is not surprising if such views are absent. But that is especially dangerous. If historians, who are highly educated students of history, don't understand that Russia's security situation has changed over the past 50 years, then why should we assume that others, especially political and military decision makers, are any more knowledgeable about this? Indeed, many of these same texts are used to teach young military cadets in Russia's prestigious

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military academies.  

Thus, in their presentations of past wars, the texts were examined for their tendency to stress the threats posed by other states, claims that wars were caused primarily by others' threats, and self-exculpatory rationalizations of Russia's own war-causing behavior or military interventions on the grounds of largely imagined threats to security.

4. Imperialism

Finally, imperialist views are also highly pernicious. The work of Jack Snyder, Charles Kupchan and others has shown how false and distorted beliefs about the benefit of empire are often used to justify imperial wars and expansion.  

Thus, not only is imperial expansion itself dangerous and destabilizing, but the mythologizing about empire is also highly pernicious.

The value of empire has also been seen as a central element of Russian nationalism, and imperialism as a central feature of Russian foreign policy. A prominent view, most closely associated with historian Richard Pipes, is that Russians define their

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15 S. V. Apraksin, E. V. Iudina, L. N. Samoilova, S. A. Sliusareva, members of the history faculty, St. Petersburg Suvorov Military Academy, St. Petersburg, Russia. Personal communication with author, 25 June 1996.

nation in terms of empire. In other words, "Russia" is inherently an imperial nation, whose territory "naturally" encompasses the area of the former-Soviet Union, and at a minimum, the three Slavic states. In addition, observers of Russian history and Russian foreign policy have pointed to its tradition of imperial ambition and imperial expansion as a central feature of its history and foreign policy. Some have argued that this remains a constant feature of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy as well, as illustrated by Russian policy in the "near abroad" and the Caucasus. Further, it is popularly believed that the danger of nationalist resurgence in Russia lies in the general angst over the loss of Russia's empire. The collapse of the Soviet Union, and subsequently the dwindling of Russian "superpower status" and its corresponding diplomatic prestige, it is argued, serve as a point of great anxiety among Russians. Russian nationalists, in turn, it is argued, play on this fear to mobilize political support.

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17 Richard Pipes, "Russia's Past, Russia's Future," Commentary 101, no. 6 (June 1996), p. 35.


19 Pipes, "Russia's Past, Russia's Future," p. 35.
If true that Russian national self-image is imperialistic and expansionistic, one should find in the textbooks a glorification of imperialism and past imperial behavior. Such a view would also be confirmed, although much less strongly, if the texts display a high degree of tolerance for imperialism, or whitewash some of the more unsavory elements of past imperial behavior, both conduct and consequences.

The history texts have been examined for their propensity to glorify empire or romanticize imperial conquest, either by inflating the value of empire in its descriptions of Russia's wars and imperial conquests, or by whitewashing the past record of Russian conduct or the consequences of their imperial conquests. For example, does the text inflate the value of empire in its descriptions of wars and imperial conquests? Is the gaining of an empire considered a legitimate war aim? Does it whitewash the imperial motivations of past wars, or the record of conduct in imperial wars, or the consequences of imperial conquest? Does it lament the collapse of empire, or loss of territory? Does it include issues of imperial conquest that were taboo during the Soviet period, and if so, how are they presented?

B. Views on Politics/State-Society Relations

Russian textbook interpretations of its past wars and military interventions are also revealing of views related to politics, such as the nature of the political system and state-society relations. Specifically, the classic chauvinist textbooks of the past tended to portray positively aspects of authoritarian rule and frequently glorified, if not deified, national leaders.
As with views on war, both of these characteristics of chauvinist history—authoritarianism and deification of national leaders—are not only central features of hypernationalist mythmaking but have also been seen as important features of Russian nationalism, both past and present. The examination of these two characteristics in Russian history texts, therefore, allows us to characterize the texts' views on politics, measure the perniciousness of those views, and compare them with Soviet era texts, as well as to test some broad popular beliefs about the nature of Russian nationalism and national self-image. Given that school texts are infused with important national values and attitudes—such as those toward the nature of politics and state-society relations—through the telling of stories about the nation's past, if any of these two features are indeed central elements of Russian self-image, then they should be seen in textbook interpretations of Russia's history. As with views on war, many of these more extreme noxious views are associated with groups on the far right and left; thus examining textbooks allows us to determine the extent to which such ideas are present in the mainstream of post-Soviet Russian society.

Below are some brief definitions of these two characteristics.

1. **Authoritarianism and anti-democratic sentiment**

It is almost a cliché of Russian nationalism that Russians favor "strong" authoritarian leaders, the stern "Tsar-father," and that Russian nationalism as an ideology condones authoritarian forms of rule and is quite hostile to democratic institutions and practices. Yet, some scholars have argued that Russia actually has
nascent democratic traditions and that the Russian predilection for authoritarian over
democratic institutions is largely a myth.20 One way of tackling this debate is to
determine the types of political values Russia purveys through the educational system,
in particular through history education. Clearly if the Russian proclivity to
authoritarian and anti-democratic practices and values were more than a cliché, then
glorification of non-democratic political and military leaders and praise for authoritarian
forms of rule should be found in history textbooks.

Soviet-era history was marked not only by its various "cults of
personality"—first Stalin, then Brezhnev, and of course the perennial object of
deification, Lenin—but it also glorified the Communist Party itself. While not explicitly
praising authoritarian forms of government, through its praise of the party it indirectly
supported non-democratic, single-party rule. While the new generation of texts are no
longer organs of party propaganda, this generally uncritical view of authoritarian
national leaders persists in the new generation of post-Soviet textbooks.

In identifying the nature of textbook views on these central political issues, we
ask, for example, how are military and political leaders treated? Does the textbook ever
criticize the behavior, personality or policies of national leaders? Does it offer a
consistently flattering portrayal of these individuals? How genuine are criticisms of

20 S. Frederick Starr, "Prospects for Stable Democracy in Russia," Mershon
Occasional Paper, Mershon Center of The Ohio State University, November 1992;
idem, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society." Foreign Policy 70 (Spring 1988); Nicolai N.
Petro, The Rebirth of Russian Democracy: An Interpretation of Political Culture
personalities or policies? Does it offer rationalizations or justifications for their more unsavory behavior or policies? How does it treat notions of democracy, democratic institutions, practices and democratic decision-making? One question that studies of wars can especially illuminate is, How sensitive is the textbook to the vagaries of foreign policymaking in democratic societies?21

2. Deification of national leaders

Glorification and heroization of authoritarian civilian and military figures is also a common feature of pernicious history. For many decades in Europe and the United States national history was essentially the history of wars and great leaders. This approach changed considerably after World War II, not only for pedagogical reasons. As textbook revisionists pointed out, this approach is open to considerable abuse, often leading to the deification of some very nefarious personalities. The most explicit effect of blind nationalism is that it inhibits critical evaluation of past national leaders.

Thus in seeking to understand the degree of perniciousness of Russian history textbooks, we want to identify not only how much a text glorifies past political and military leaders, but also which particular leaders it glorifies. Are all leaders indiscriminately praised or criticized? Clearly a critical view of the nation's past leaders,

21 In the case of World War II, for example, we ask how Russian textbooks explain the United States' "slow decision-making" on the opening of the second front, which helps to tell us about how sensitive Russian texts are to the nature of policymaking in democratic states.
their policies, and the consequences of those policies is central to genuine critical self-examination—a hallmark of democratic practice.

C. Views on Ethnic/Religious Relations

The third feature of chauvinist and nationalist-biased textbooks is a high degree of intolerance for other ethnic and religious groups. The drum and trumpet history of old was marked by high degrees of ethno-centrism and often veiled and explicit racism. In the case of Russia, many have seen ethnic Russian self-glorification, in general, and anti-Semitism in particular as a central feature of the Russian national self-image. In recent years, observers have pointed to increased attacks—direct and indirect—on Jews and peoples of the Caucasus.22 The irony is that Russia proclaims itself a multi-ethnic society. Many Russians indeed reject the notion that Russian nationalism—in the sense of ethnic Russian self-glorification—even exists, precisely because of Russia's multi-ethnic composition. Thus, identifying and measuring the degree of ethnic and religious intolerance in Russian history textbooks is an important indicator not only of the general perniciousness of views expressed, but also a means of testing the claim that racism and anti-Semitism are key features of Russian national self-image. This is an especially

important issue given the multi-ethnic character of the Russian federation today and of
the importance of civil rights to democratic development. Such views come to the fore
in textbook interpretations of past wars and military interventions.

The most common expression of such views is simply the omission of
contributions made by other groups in the conduct of past wars, or the consequences of
the war, and/or the state's policies vis-a-vis minority groups. In times of war especially,
there is a tendency to look for scapegoats: non-dominant groups are often blamed for
starting the war, shirking, treason, etc. Thus, does the textbook discuss the roles and
contributions of minority groups, and if so in what way? How, for example, are
minority groups treated? Does the text describe minority ethnic or religious groups in
an overly-negative, disparaging, or belittling, negative way? Does it compare ethnic
Russians—or Orthodox believers—to other peoples, and if so does it do so negatively
or positively? Does it emphasize, implicitly or explicitly, Russia's uniqueness and
exceptionalism vis-a-vis other groups? Does the text discuss negative consequences of
state policies, or of warfare, on minority groups? Does it include issues of persecution
of minority ethnic and religious groups that were taboo during the Soviet period, and if
so, how are they presented?

In sum, Table 2.3 below shows the eight indicators of pernicious history, under
three broad categories, which I identify and measure in the chapters three through five. I
have focused on these "negative" indicators because my concern here is with the relative
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>GENERAL PREDICTIONS</th>
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</table>
| Xenophobia | 1. negatively characterizes foreigners.  
2. describes foreigners as aggressive and anti-Russian.  
3. emphasizes, explicitly or implicitly, Russia's uniqueness and exceptionalism.  
4. expresses self-glorying views by portraying Russia as exceptional/unique and more honorable than others. |
| Militarism | 5. glorifies warfare and Russia's conduct in past wars.  
6. uncritically portrays military figures.  
7. emphasizes Russian military victories, downplay Russian military defeats.  
8. attributes military victories to the uniqueness and exceptionalism of Russia, Russia's soldiers, and officers; attributes defeats to the adversary's duplicity or failures.  
9. military victories are achieved "against all odds" and at great Russian sacrifice.  
10. military or political decisions to use force are not evaluated.  
11. justifies Russian military action against others, while describes aggression against Russia as always unprovoked, without justification, or motivated purely by anti-Russian sentiment.  
12. whitewashes, downplays or ignores consequences of Russian military action, while describing the consequences of foreign military action against Russia as incomparably brutal, cruel and unrestrained. |
| Insecurity | 13. emphasizes constant foreign threats to Russia.  
14. attributes the causes of wars to others' threatening intentions or behavior.  
15. rationalizes Russia's own war-causing actions or military interventions based on threats to security (i.e., Russian invasions attributed to other's threatening or menacing behavior, or provocation.) |
| Imperialism | 16. inflates the value of empire and expansion.  
17. rationalizes or justify expansionism, or whitewashes the negative aspects of past imperial behavior, both conduct and consequences.  
18. negatively characterizes loss of empire.  
19. omits discussion of imperial expansion and the conduct and consequences of that expansion. |
| Politics/State-Society Relations | 20. behavior, personality or policies of authoritarian national leaders is not critically evaluated.  
21. whitewashes, downplays or ignores consequences of authoritarian/anti-democratic policies or behavior, and rationalizes or justifies such actions.  
22. negatively portrays, directly or indirectly, notions of democracy, democratic institutions, and practices. |
| Authoritarianism | 23. portrays in glowing, uncritical terms Russian national leaders.  
24. uncritically praises national leaders' policies and contributions.  
25. inflates national leaders' contributions to national and world history. |
| Deification | 26. omits discussion of or diminishes contributions by other non-dominant ethnic groups.  
27. omits discussion of or diminishes past negative treatment of non-dominant ethnic groups.  
28. negatively portrays, or advances stereotypes, of non-dominant ethnic groups.  
29. praises ethnic Russians, "Russian" national qualities, traits, characteristics, behavior and values.  
30. attribute causes and consequences of war to non-Russians. |
32. negatively portrays, or advances stereotypes, of Jews. |
danger posed by ideas in the new generation of Russian history texts. Each of these eight indicators, in its own way, is uniquely destructive and dangerous. Further, each indicator provides a "critical test" of the presence of pernicious ideas in the history texts: The presence of one of these indicators to a significant degree should be cause for concern (though it would be extremely unusual—and worthy of explanation in its own right—to see the presence of only one, without others). I argue that the Russian national self-image—the core values on issues of war, politics and inter-ethnic relations—is revealed in the content of mass public education. Thus I have derived predictions about the nature of history texts, based on eight indicators of pernicious history, that should be found in the texts if such values were indeed present in post-Soviet Russia. The general questions outlined in the above discussion will be posed for each of the three case studies in the following chapters; predictions will be tailored for each individual case. Table 2.3 lists the general predictions that are made, alongside its corresponding indicator.

III. Measuring Intensity of Pernicious Content

Having outlined an approach for identifying pernicious views in the texts, our next task is to develop a method of measuring the intensity of such views. To categorize and measure the degree of perniciousness of the content of Russian history textbooks, this study looks at the treatment of several key events in Russian history and assesses their veracity, salience and role. With regard to the latter, they will be closely examined for the presence of indicators of pernicious role discussed above: views on war
that promote militarism, xenophobia, imperialism, and insecurity; views on politics that are sympathetic to authoritarianism and anti-democratic and deify national leaders; and views on ethnic and religious relations that express racism and anti-Semitism. Only a close reading of the texts can allow us to determine the presence and intensity of such views. There are indeed varying degrees of perniciousness in history texts, and any scheme for categorizing their content must take that into account. Indeed, my aim is to measure, in general terms, the degree of perniciousness of that content: is it extremely virulent, only mildly noxious and offensive, or generally benign? The problem is how best to capture that distinction so that I can then compare these texts with their Soviet predecessors, and eventually with those of other countries.

As noted above, in each of the case studies examined in chapters 3-5 I have determined perniciousness by looking for evidence that conforms to the 32 predictions listed in Table 2.3. In order to determine the degree of perniciousness I simply assess, after the close reading of the texts, the number of "tests" that the textbooks "pass"—i.e., the higher the number of predictions confirmed, the higher the degree of perniciousness. As the basis of measurement I have summed the number of confirmed predictions and then calculated their percentage of the total number of predictions. That percentage then

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23 The method of classification used here recognizes that few textbooks are either completely noxious or completely objective in their interpretations. Much as with the diagnosis of mental disorders, the categorization of personality types, or the classification of offenses under criminal law, there are varying gradations of pernicious content in textbooks. I have benefited greatly from several discussions on this topic with P.R. Goldstone.
corresponds to the following scale: "absent" (0 confirmed predictions), "benign" (1%-25% of predictions confirmed); "generally benign to moderately threatening" (26%-50% of predictions confirmed); "threatening" (51%-75% of predictions confirmed); and "extremely threatening" (76%-100% of predictions confirmed). This method has the benefit of telling us how extremely pernicious each individual indicator is, as well as overall perniciousness. It also allows for easy comparison across cases and with Soviet and other textbooks.

This, of course, is not a strict quantitative measure, but rather a numerical representation of a qualitative measure. The type of analysis required to assess accurately the nature of the chauvinist content of history textbooks defies precise quantification. Indeed, my purpose here is not large-n statistical analysis and comparison, but rather to get a flavor of the content of post-Soviet Russian history education, and, with some degree of accuracy, to characterize that content objectively and compare it with its Soviet predecessors and, eventually, with that of other countries. However, traditional content analysis techniques, which have often been used to measure specific forms of bias in textbooks, miss much of the subtlety and nuance that colors particular historical interpretations.24 What is instead required is a close,

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Examples of studies that use content analysis to measure discrete types of bias include Ray Allen Billington, The Historian’s Contribution to Anglo-American Misunderstanding: (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966); Allen Francis Ketcham,
rigorous, contextual reading of texts and the making of an informed judgment, based on that reading, of the general intensity of the perniciousness of the views presented.

Of course making judgments about the relative perniciousness of content cannot occur in a vacuum. Thankfully there is rich source of material on international textbook revision and studies of history education and textbooks in other countries, that I can draw upon to come up with the parameters of what constitutes "good" and "bad" content. Scholars generally agree that the Wilhelmine German educational system, for example, was infused with a high degree of nationalism and chauvinism. Textbooks were rife with xenophobia and militarism and other issues associated with pernicious history. For our purposes, the type of content found in Wilhelmine German texts is considered the most extreme form of chauvinist bias.

"World War II Events as Represented in Secondary School Textbooks of Former Allied and Axis Nations" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1982); Elena B. Lisovskaya, "Change in Ideology, Change in Dogmatism? Comparative Content Analytical Study of Soviet and Russian Textbooks" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1995); Ivor Wayne, "Can History Textbooks be Analysed Systematically?: A Methodological Inquiry" (Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1971). An excellent example of the type of analytical approach adopted here, without the numerical component, is Charles Jelavich, South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union Before 1914 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990).

Similarly, scholars generally agree that the history education that has evolved in the Scandinavian countries since the end of World War II—driven in large part by a perennial forum for textbook exchanges among those countries—is the opposite in every respect of the Imperial German case: Contemporary Scandinavian history textbooks are virtually absent any expressions of militarism, xenophobia, glorification of authoritarian values, racism, etc. that are the main features of pernicious history. These, then, are our reference points, the parameters of the system by which the content of Russian history textbooks have been classified in this study. Figure 2.4 below demonstrates both the notion of gradation in intensity of offensiveness and where the main reference points are located on the scale.

1922), pp. 207-210; Scott, The Menace of Nationalism in Education; Louis L. Snyder, Roots of German Nationalism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); Starr, Lies and Hate in Education; Arthur Walworth, School Histories at War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938).

**Figure 2.4. Measurement of Intensity of Pernicious Content**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absent</th>
<th>Benign</th>
<th>Generally benign</th>
<th>Moderately threatening</th>
<th>Threatening</th>
<th>Extremely threatening</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
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<td>Wilhelmine</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td></td>
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<td>textbooks</td>
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<td>textbooks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**IV. Case-Selection**

The case studies in Part two of the dissertation focus on the Russian textbook treatment of wars and conflicts in Soviet and Russian history. Wars, military interventions and diplomatic conflicts are especially illuminating for at least four general reasons. First, given the enormous pain, hardship and bloodshed associated with wars, and given that they inherently raise questions of culpability, they tend to be the most prone to historical abuse and nationalist mythmaking. Second, because telling the story of past wars, both its causes and conduct, requires descriptions of the "enemy," as well as questions of culpability, they are especially revealing of self-images and images of others. Third, given the great emotionally-charged often tragic nature of these events, they have particular lasting cultural and emotional salience in society and politics.

Fourth, and most importantly, wars and conflict are the most telling indicator of the extent of pernicious views found in textbooks. Specifically, they allow us to better determine Russia's views not only on war, but also on the nature of politics, and
ethnic/religious relations that separate chauvinist and bellicose history from non-chauvinist history. This is true for two reasons. First, wars and military adventures constitute the bulk of the content of most Russian history textbooks, despite additions in recent years of more cultural and social history. How those events in Russia's past are treated is especially important. Second, these are the critical litmus test cases: if the texts are not pernicious in treatment of wars—which are the most susceptible to chauvinist mythmaking—then they will not be chauvinistic in general. Certainly, focusing on the treatment of Russia's wars leaves things out. Yet, understanding how pernicious the views expressed in these texts are is our purpose here. Whether or not they include discussions of architecture, literature or everyday life matters little; what is most critical is how they treat the most objectionable events in the nation's past, and those events whose interpretation is open to the greatest abuse. These are most often found in a nation's treatment of its past wars and military adventures. Looking at these events specifically is sufficient to gauge the nature and degree of perniciousness of the Russian historical views.

The cases chosen for examination have been selected on the following three criteria. First, they are drawn from the modern period, i.e., from the founding of the Russian empire in the early 18th century through the end of the Soviet period. While the pre-Modern period has served as an important source of cultural myths and symbols in Russian society, the experiences of the modern period, I argue, offer a much more direct source from which to plumb the nature of Russian modern values, beliefs
and ideas. This period is seen by textbook authors and teachers as much more relevant to contemporary life, and thus lessons and comparisons—however legitimate—are drawn more freely from this period. Further, events of more recent memory are often the source of the most frequent and intense controversy and conflict.

Second, the cases reflect wars or military conflicts that historians and publics themselves consider especially important, and/or to which the largest number of textbook pages have been devoted. This is especially important for drawing conclusions about contemporary Russian beliefs and ideas from these cases. When textbook authors draw lessons or make observations about World War II, for example, it has much more relevance than observations about the Russian role in, for example, the Seven Years War.

Third, cases have been selected to include four characteristics (Table 2.5 below): cases in which Imperial and Soviet Russia were invaded (World War I; the Soviet-German War of 1941-45), and cases in which Imperial and Soviet Russia intervened against other countries (the Russo-Turkish Wars of the 19th century; the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-40, the annexations of the western territories in 1939-40). Selecting the most relevant cases in which Russia was invaded, and in which Russia did the invading, respectively, allows us to address a central counter-argument: since a country would naturally be proud of defending itself against foreign attack, some degree of chauvinistic mythmaking in those cases would not be unusual, nor especially indicative of an embracing of larger chauvinistic values. However, the critical test to determine if Russian views of war are generally pernicious is to see if such hypernationalist rhetoric
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument(s) Raised</th>
<th>Questions Answered</th>
<th>Case Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The high Soviet period.</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Soviet period than the Imperial period?</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russians are disillusioned with the failed capitalism.</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbols, ideas, values, etc.</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against others.</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others invaded/aggressed Russia.</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
<td>Is there more, less equal sympathy for the Imperial period?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5: Purposes of Case Selection and Source Selection
is present in discussions of those cases where Russia has attacked others.

Selecting cases from both the Imperial and the Soviet periods allows us to test two popular arguments not only about whether the Russians are looking back romantically to the past, but to which period, if any, they are romanticizing. One popular argument is that Russia has rejected its Soviet past and has instead embraced the Tsarist period. Many argue that Russia's current search for a new national identity and "national idea,"27 can be found by looking to the pre-Soviet period. Indeed, this is a popular notion in the nationalism literature as well, which finds that nations that have rejected one regime, will look back to previous regimes for national symbols and values.


Alternatively, a second, competing argument found often in the scholarly and popular press is that given the economic turmoil, and the souring of the capitalist experiment in Russia, Russians are now looking back fondly and romantically to the "High Soviet period," i.e., the late-Stalin through Brezhnev era. Which, if any, is it? Since mass public history education is often a window onto society's consensus beliefs about the past, examining how textbooks treat both the Imperial and the Soviet periods allows us popular argument is that Russia has rejected its Soviet past and has instead embraced the Tsarist period. Many argue that Russia's current search for a new national identity to test the proposition that there is indeed greater sympathy for one, neither, or both of the by-gone eras.

V. Sources and Textbook Selection

I have drawn these cases not only from the new batch of post-Soviet history texts, which is my main concern, but from Soviet-era texts as well. Many of the features of hypernationalist interpretations of history are seen to be past or present features of Russian nationalism, Russian national self-image, and Russian foreign policy behavior. Thus it is necessary not only to see if these views are present in the current batch of Russian history texts, but also to assess the degree of continuity or change of these views from the Soviet period. Therefore, in each of the historical cases examined, I will continually make reference to the "base-line" views presented in the equivalent Soviet texts. This is especially important for assessing the degree to which efforts at
revising history textbooks have failed to meet contemporary West European standards, and to begin to understand why this is the case.

Specifically, this study examines in detail at least twenty-two current Russian and World History textbooks, generalizing from them to create a composite textbook interpretation of Russian views on war, politics and ethnic/religious relations, and compares those views to those found in Soviet history textbooks. These new Russian textbooks are neither identical in scope nor emphasis. Yet, on key historical events the overall interpretations and the essential themes they choose to emphasize are similar enough to speak of a single textbook view. There are, of course, always exceptions, and when significant, those exceptions will be noted. Yet, given the current environment in Russia of competitive textbook publishing, and a decentralized and "democratized" educational system characterized by freedom of choice for teachers, schools and local education officials in the selection of materials, why have I selected these particular titles over others? How generally representative are these texts of all textbooks currently available in Russia? How diverse are the views presented in these textbooks? How generally representative are they of broadly-held Russian popular and elite views about history (i.e., is it valid to use history textbooks as proxies for popular views of history)? This section addresses these questions.

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*28 For a complete list of titles, see Table 2.8 in Appendix.*
A. Selecting the Most Widely-Used Textbooks

In this study I have selected the most widely-used Soviet and Russian history textbooks titles for analysis. However, the method for determining which texts are the most widely-used differs between the Soviet and post-Soviet texts. The method of determining the most popular Soviet textbooks is straight-forward and rather unproblematic: if a textbook was published during the Soviet period, it was de facto widely used. All texts were published by the monopoly, state-owned textbook publishing house, and only those texts were used in schools. Content was uniform and closely monitored and controlled by the Communist Party in Moscow. Further, between 1970 and 1990 little significant variation existed among different editions of texts. In this study I use a representative sample of these texts, generally those that span the 1970's and 1980's.²⁹

Determining the most widely used post-Soviet textbooks is somewhat more problematic and requires a more detailed discussion. Over the past few years there has been a virtual explosion of materials for teaching history in secondary schools, not only textbooks, but workbooks, sourcebooks, chronologies, atlases, and study-aids for teachers and students. The state no longer plays the major coordinating role in terms of selection and distribution of textbooks, and the former state textbook publishing house, Prosveshchenie, has lost its monopoly status as numerous textbook publishers have

²⁹ See Table 2.9 in Appendix.
emerged on the scene.\textsuperscript{30} How then do we select those textbooks that are the most widely used in Russia's schools?

While there are indeed a plethora of new history textbooks currently available in Russia, there are only a handful that are widely used. This handful of titles consists of those that have gone through a process of federal expert review and recommendation, and have been included on the select "Federal Set" of textbooks. The Federal Set, in essence, largely determines which textbooks dominate the market.\textsuperscript{31} As any textbook publisher in Russia today will admit, inclusion on the Federal Set is the ultimate goal, since it virtually guarantees large numbers of textbook orders.\textsuperscript{32} Textbooks on the Federal Set are printed in the hundreds of thousands, compared to a few thousand or less for non-included textbooks.

Despite decentralization of the educational system, textbook ordering is still largely centralized. Regional administrations order textbooks directly through the Ministry of Education, which places orders with publishers. Granted, individual


\textsuperscript{32} This was conveyed to me in the course of interviews throughout 1996 and summer 1997 with textbook publishers, authors, and officials responsible for federal textbook assessment and approval. See list of interviews in Bibliography.
schools and local and regional governments are not required to order books through the Ministry, nor are they required to use only federally-recommended textbooks. However, these textbooks still dominate the market. In fact, as the Federal government slashes its funding for textbooks, shifting the burden to regional governments, local administrations, and parents, there has been movement away from this centralized processing; schools and regional governments simply order textbooks directly from publishers. Yet, the Ministry still compiles an approved list, still centrally processes textbook orders it receives, and regional administrations continue to order those textbooks that are on the Federal Set. The history textbooks chosen for review here are all those included on the Federal Set through the 1997/98 school year. (This set includes all textbooks approved for inclusion on the Set since 1992.)

There are three main reasons why textbooks on the Federal Set dominate the market and are widely used in schools. First, among teachers and school administrators there is still great reliance on the center for administrative and curricular guidance. In a state with a long tradition of Federally-sponsored and controlled education, teachers and administrators still take their cues from the Ministry of Education in Moscow. Thus,

33 While there are no official statistics on textbook usage in Russia, the conclusion that Federal Set textbooks are the most widely-used has been deduced from the market share of those publishers with books on the Federal Set. I have relied particularly on survey data on textbook usage collected and compiled by Dr. Mark Agronovitch of the World Bank in Moscow, who graciously made the data available to me. The data in part served as the basis for the Bank-funded Education Innovation Project. See The World Bank, Human Resources Division, Country Department III, Europe and Central Asia Region, "Staff Appraisal Report, Russian Federation, Education Innovation Project," Report No. 16267-RU, 6 May 1997.
when it comes time to order books, they choose those that have been Federally
"approved." This is often very common outside of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other
large cities, where more than 70 per cent of Russia's schools are located.34 Indeed, there
are real qualitative differences between urban and rural schools. On average teachers in
Moscow and St. Petersburg are better trained and educated.35 Not only can those
teachers find and purchase interesting alternative materials to share with their classes,
but they are probably more likely to do so than their rural counterparts. There is also a
lot less innovation in rural schools. Witness the demands by teachers—particularly
those outside Moscow and St. Petersburg—for the development of National educational
standards.36 Teachers continue to look to the center (that is, the Russian Ministry of
Education) for guidance, and to rely on materials that have received the imprimatur of
the state.37

34 Aleksandr Sudakov, "Baba-Iaga protiv!," Moskovskii komsomolets, 16
January 1996, 7. Sudakov was the director of the former State publishing house
Prosveshchenie.

35 In 1996, for example, former-Minister of General and Professional Education
Kinelev announced that during the upcoming school year 75 per cent of high school
teachers had post-secondary pedagogical education. That left 25 per cent without it,
most of those in rural areas. Andrei Nikolaev and Marina Kosmina, "Vladimir Kinelev:
Pedagogi u nas prevoskhodnye, vot tol'ko deneg ne khvataet," Pervoe sentiabria, 5
September 1996, 1.

36 Russian sociological research has shown that teachers consider the lack of
standards to be one of their most serious problems. Aleksandr Adamskii, "Nadezhda na
chinovnika," Pervoe sentiabria, 26 October, 1993, 2.
Second, there are often serious deficits both of actual alternative textbook titles and information about them, particularly outside of Moscow. Teachers or parents in Moscow can make a trip to one of the larger bookstores and find a good (though hardly comprehensive) selection, but this option is simply not available to most of Russia's schoolteachers or parents. Thus, when it comes time to order textbooks, teachers and administrators play it safe and choose those that have gone through federal evaluation. Teachers and administrators often complain that there are so many textbooks to chose from that the easiest decision is simply to select those that have been recommended for use by the Ministry of Education.

Third, it is much easier for school administrators and local and regional government bureaucrats to order books directly from the Ministry rather than submitting numerous orders to individual publishers. This decision is further aided by the fact that the Ministry of Education still sends out to all regions order forms that

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37 See comments by former-director of the Drofa publishing house Iu. V. Deikalo, in "Krizis uchebnogo knigoizdaniia: est’ li vykhod iz tupika?" Knizhnoe obozrenie, no. 2, 10 January 1995, 12.

38 Many materials are available for mail order, but there are several problems with this process. You must (1) have the money to purchase them; (2) know what titles are available; (3) know how to (and be able to) send for these materials; and finally (4) be assured that you know the quality of what you’re getting. Very few people with limited income are going to pay a relatively significant amount of money to get a textbook or teaching aid that they haven't had a chance to look at first. Publishers have no tradition of sending out sample copies, while school and local libraries have no funds to buy them. Further, many have complained that mail-order is slow and unreliable. N. Persidskaia, "Uchebnye knigi," Pervoe sentiabria, 6 April 1996, 1; Ekaterina Korovkina, "Kak dostavit' uchebnik na krai sveta," Uchitel'skaiia gazeta 8, 4 March 1997, 11.

include only textbooks on the Federal Set. Regions may also order textbooks from a
catalog of Federal Set books that is published by the Ministry.40 Thus, while schools
and local governments have the freedom to chose their own textbooks, they often limit
their choice to books on the Federal Set.

B. Generalizing About Post-Soviet Russian History Textbooks

Some may argue that the plethora of new history textbooks currently available,
including translations of western texts, and the current decentralization and
"democratization" of the educational system, makes any meaningful generalization about
the current generation of textbooks both impossible and irrelevant: Impossible because
there are simply too many books from which schools can choose, irrelevant because
these textbooks represent a great diversity of opinions and interpretations.

This argument greatly overstates the real impact of educational
"democratization," decentralization, and de-monopolization of the textbook market in
Russia today. Both the number of new textbooks and the freedom to choose among
them are, in practice, quite limited. As noted above, textbooks on the Federal Set in fact
dominate the textbook market, and thus are the most widely used in Russia's schools.
When one considers the variety of textbooks that make up the Federal Set the concept
of choice is much more of an illusion. Real choice means two or more titles per subject,

---

per grade level. This is not the case with the current Federal Set. For example, the choice is especially paltry for both ninth grade twentieth century Russian and world history, where there is only one book per subject on the Federal Set. Further, there is a tendency for the same authors or collaborative author groups (kolektivy) to have several different textbooks for different grade levels, on the Federal Set. For Russian history textbooks, for example, of 15 titles on the Federal Set for 1997/98 there are only 11 different authors or kolektivy. (See Tables 2.6 and 2.7 in Appendix).

More importantly, though, as is argued here, the differences in content among even the federally-approved textbooks on the Federal Set are quite negligible. Among those books that are widely used, there is remarkable convergence of views despite claims by education reformers that Russian history education has fundamentally changed since the Soviet period. Decentralization and de-monopolization of educational publishing, they argue, has resulted in a plethora of new, innovative history textbooks that present widely diverse views. This view is much exaggerated: the points of convergence are much greater than the points of difference.42

41 The Federal Set for the 1997/98 school year included not only textbooks that are planned for publication by the beginning of the following school year, but also include some titles that have been published since approximately 1992. "Perechen' uchebnikov i uchebnykh posobii Federal'nogo komplekta na 1997-1998 uchebnyi god," Iz pervyh ruk 1, 1997, in Uchitel'skaia gazeta 2, 21 January 1997, 11-14.

42 Indeed, at first glance it is especially puzzling, as advocates of the free market will tell us, that despite a burgeoning academic publishing market in Russia there is remarkably little substantive diversity.
C. Textbooks as Proxies for Popular Views

This study also views textbooks as important proxies for popular and elite views of history. While doing so may not be legitimate in all countries, it is legitimate in the Russian case. Given the nature of the Russian educational system today the content of history textbooks indeed reflects much more than the particular views of their authors. In the Russian case, the content of public history education is particularly revealing of popular historical consciousness for at least two reasons. First, as noted above, one finds fairly consistent interpretations across an array of textbook titles. Particularly in decentralized systems such as Russia's, textbook content may vary considerably across regions. Thus, generally consistent interpretations across textbook titles constitute strong evidence of common core beliefs.

Further, there is considerable consistency of views not only across the approved textbook titles, but also among approved and non-approved titles, official texts, and popular expressions of history. In this study I have made several "cross-checks": First, I examined a representative sample of non-approved texts to note any discrepancies between the approved and non-approved versions. What is generally found is that, on average, those non-approved texts do not differ greatly from the approved versions. Second, I examined non-textbook "official" histories, most-notably the recently published History of Russia (9th-20th Centuries): Official Publication of the
Government of the Russian Federation. Again, one finds little difference between the views expressed in Russia's sanctioned history texts, and those that are advanced by "official" political elite sources. Finally, Part three examines public conflicts and diplomatic disputes that focus on historical interpretation or responsibility. These chapters clearly demonstrate that many of the same views expressed in Russia's history texts are in fact commonly expressed by Russian elites and the public at large.

The second reason why Russian history textbooks make good proxies for popular and elite views of history is found in the significant institutional and intellectual reform of Russia's educational system over the past eight years. The content of history has been radically revised since the Soviet Communist Party began discussing "historical blank spots" in the late 1980's. However, despite the massive purge of Marxist-Leninist language, analytical approach and Soviet-era cadres of textbook authors, many of the general themes and particular interpretations found in the Soviet texts continue to persist. This is particularly true with reference to Russia's foreign relations, wars and international conflicts. The persistence of these particular views today, in the era of de-politicized and decentralized education, is a powerful indication that they are in fact deeply embedded and widely-held.

It should be stressed, however, that I am not making an argument here about an immutable "national character" that is somehow characteristic of all Russians. Nor am I arguing that all professional Russian historians of the period proffer the same

43 Istoriia Rossii (IX-XX vv). Ofitsial'noe izdanie pravitel'stvia Rossiiskoi Federatsii (Moscow: Knizhnyi soiuz, 1997).
interpretations. As in many other societies, particularly multi-ethnic ones such as Russia, opinions and beliefs are diverse. I am only arguing that there are strong tendencies toward particular views of history, and that these views are commonly found in history textbooks. There are always exceptions.
### APPENDIX

#### Table 2.6. Diversity of Russian History Textbooks on the 1997/98 Federal Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Text (by author/kolektiv)</th>
<th>Period Covered</th>
<th>Number of titles by same author/kolektiv</th>
<th>Number of titles for this period and grade level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vorozheikina</td>
<td>through 20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Chernikova</td>
<td>through 17th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preobrazhenskii</td>
<td>through 18th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chernikova b</td>
<td>through 17th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preobrazhenskii b</td>
<td>through 18th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Danilov/Kosulina</td>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katsva/Iurganov</td>
<td>16th-18th centuries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zyrjanov</td>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liashenko</td>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Zyrjanov b</td>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Danilov/Kosulina</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sakharov/Buganov</td>
<td>through 17th century</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bogdanov</td>
<td>through 17th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buganov/Zyrjanov</td>
<td>17th-19th centuries</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dolutskii</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dolutskii b</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levandovskii</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ostrovskii</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dmitrenko</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Russian history titles = 15**  **Total authors/kolektiv = 11**

#### Table 2.7. Diversity of World History Textbooks on the 1997/98 Federal Set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Text (by author/kolektiv)</th>
<th>Period Covered</th>
<th>Number of titles by same author/kolektiv</th>
<th>Number of titles for this period and grade level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vigansin</td>
<td>Ancient World</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agibalov</td>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ludovskaia</td>
<td>16th-18th centuries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zharova/Mishina</td>
<td>16th-18th centuries</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kredor</td>
<td>19th-20th centuries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Punski/Ludovskaia</td>
<td>1680-1870</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kredor</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gurevitch</td>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Gurevitch b</td>
<td>Middle Ages</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soroko-Tsiupa</td>
<td>20th century</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total world history titles = 9**  **Total authors/kolektiv = 7**

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*a* includes all textbooks approved for inclusion on the Federal Set since 1992. When there is more than one edition, only the most recent is counted.

*b* Title is recommended for use in more than one grade level and is therefore listed more than once.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Ed./Pub.</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Years Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Fatherland History: 20th Century/ Dolushkii</td>
<td>1st/1994</td>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>1900-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contemporary History: 20th Century/ Kreder</td>
<td>3rd/1997</td>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>1900-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Stories of Our Native Land/ Vorozheikina, et al.</td>
<td>2nd/1996</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10th-20th centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. History of Russia: Late-17th-19th Century/ Buganov &amp; Zryanov</td>
<td>1st/1995</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1689-1897</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Full publication information available in the bibliography.
### Table 2.9
Soviet-Era Russian and World History Textbooks Examined *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Ed./Pub.</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Years Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. History of the USSR/ Berkhin &amp; Fedosov</td>
<td>7th/ 1982</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1900-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. History of the USSR/ Fedosov</td>
<td>10th/ 1975</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1801-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. History of the USSR/ Fedosov</td>
<td>5th/ 1990</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1801-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stories of the History of the USSR/ Golubeva &amp; Gellershtein</td>
<td>16th/ 1990</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10th-20th centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. History of the USSR/ Potemkin et al.</td>
<td>12th/ 1983</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1938-81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Contemporary History/ Furaev et al.</td>
<td>6th/ 1975</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1939-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Contemporary History/ Furaev et al.</td>
<td>17th/ 1987</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1939-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Contemporary History/ Furaev et al.</td>
<td>1st/ 1989</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1939-88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Full publication information available in the bibliography.
PART II

PERNICIOUS HISTORICAL MYTHMAKING IN
SOVIET AND RUSSIAN HISTORY EDUCATION
CHAPTER 3

THE MYTH OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR:
THE SOVIET-GERMAN WAR, 1939-1945

The historical service of the Soviet people and its armed forces is that by defeating the fascist horde they destroyed the danger of the spreading of aggression to other countries and continents. The Soviet Union became the main force that obstructed German fascism's path to world domination. The peoples of the Soviet Union carried on their shoulders the central burden of war and played the decisive role in the crushing defeat of Hitlerite Germany.

— Russian history textbook, 1998

In this war our nation had as its aim the defence of honour, freedom and the independence of our Socialist Fatherland, the destruction of the Fascist invaders, and the provision of help to the nations of Europe so that they might free themselves from the bloody Fascist yoke. The high and noble aims of the Patriotic War inspired the Soviet people to boundless exploits, and gave birth to the mass heroism of the whole nation such as never before seen in history.

— Soviet history textbook, 1976

This chapter analyzes the treatment of Russia's experiences during the period of the Second World War, from 1939 to 1945, in the new generation of post-Soviet Russian and world history textbooks. It finds that, despite contrary historical facts and

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interpretations, and despite its de-Sovietized content, the new Russian textbooks continue to advance interpretations of the war that have not fundamentally changed since the Soviet period. It shows how Russian texts continue to purvey the "Myth of the Great Patriotic War"—a largely romantic, sanitized, and self-glorified view of events. In short, two main features characterize the myth: Russian victimization and Russian self-glorification/heroization. That is, through gross distortions of the historical record, as well as omissions of critical facts and interpretations, the Russian view of the war emphasizes Russia's role as a victim and the uniqueness of its suffering in the war, and stresses Russia's heroic military deeds and the uniqueness of its accomplishments. There is little dispute that Russians suffered terribly in the war and fought bravely and exceptionally well, considering the circumstances. Clearly, the Russians have much to be proud of and can take much credit for their victory over Nazi Germany. Yet, Russian victimization and heroism is hardly the full story of the war. The problem with the Russian Myth of the Great Patriotic War is that it is marked by a stunning lack of candor, self-reflection and critical assessment. Soviet contributions to the onset of the war, and of the more shameful aspects of its wartime conduct—conduct that most historians agree contributed greatly to the suffering and death of millions of Soviet citizens—are markedly absent. It is a view that is characterized by self-glorifying, self-exculpating, and other-denigrating views, particularly about the West. It is grossly unbalanced, criticizing the behavior of others without explaining the reasons behind that behavior, while at the same time rationalizing Russia's own misdeeds during this period.
Negative aspects of the war, both causes and conduct, are instead associated solely with others, while positive aspects are credited solely to Russia. There is no effort to discuss objectively the contributions of others to the Russian war effort.

This chapter is organized into five sections. Sections one through three each address a different feature of pernicious history: Views on war, which include interpretations expressing xenophobia, insecurity, and militarism; views on politics, which include interpretations expressing authoritarianism and deification of national and military leaders; and finally, views on ethnic/religious relations, which includes interpretations expressing anti-Semitism. These sections examine events related to the war's causes, conduct, and end, covering events between roughly 1939 and 1945. It is organized more or less thematically, rather than strictly chronologically. Section four measures the intensity of the pernicious content. Finally, the chapter concludes by summarizing some of the key ideas, assumptions, and images that emerge from the Russian view of war and assesses the overall perniciousness of these ideas.

I. Views on War: Expressions of Xenophobia, Militarism and Insecurity

A. Insecurity and Xenophobia: Explaining Events on the Eve of the War

Both the Russian and Soviet versions of the Soviet-German War's origins are strikingly similar. In particular, the two main features of the Myth of the Great Patriotic War—the Soviet Union and the Russian people as unwitting and innocent victims, and Russian self-glorification—colors the entire interpretation of events on the eve of the
war. This strong sense of victimization—of being the object of deceit and treachery, almost exclusively by the West—vividly conveys the sense of deep insecurity that is a central feature of pernicious history. Similarly, the strong sense of the righteousness of Soviet actions—moral and material superiority over others, particularly the West—is tinged with a great deal of xenophobia and express deep Russian insecurity. The West in particular is the object of great derision, while Russia, and the Russians, are seen virtually without fault. These expressions of deep Russian insecurity and xenophobia are vividly revealed in the textbook interpretations of three specific issues. First is the role of the Western powers on the eve of the war. Second is the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact of 1939. And third is the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941.

1. *Victimization and Western Duplicity on the Eve of the War*

In Soviet textbooks, the war is generally blamed on western imperialism, but more specifically on the duplicity and anti-Soviet hostility of the western powers.3 The Russians are portrayed as victims of Western mistrust and intransigence in the face of

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sincere efforts by the Soviet Union to stop German aggression and preserve peace in Europe. This sense of Russian grievance over the fact that their efforts at trying to create peace were rebuffed, is strongly tinged not only with anti-Western rhetoric but also with Russian self-righteousness: Had the West only cooperated with the Soviet Union, war could have been avoided. While the western powers pursued a cowardly policy of appeasement, only the Soviet Union took a hard-line against German aggression.

One would expect the new generation of history textbooks to take a much less anti-Western view and a more self-critical and balanced approach toward the causes of the war. But the Russian texts continue to stress Russia's role as victim. Where we might expect critical self-examination of the Soviet Union's role in the outbreak of the war, we find careful rationalizations and justifications for Russian and general scapegoating of the West. The new generation of post-Soviet textbooks, while absent Marxist-Leninist class language and any reference to imperialism as a cause of the war, still adhere to the view that the West—almost exclusively—bears responsibility for its outbreak, while the Soviet government pursued a sincere peace-promoting policy of collective security against Nazi aggression.

Specifically, the Soviet texts argue that the real goal behind appeasing Germany in the late 1930's was to isolate the Soviet Union and draw her into war with Germany, a plan hatched by anti-Soviet forces in the West. "The Munich Agreement," states a Soviet textbook, "marked the high point of the Western Powers' policy of encouraging
Fascist aggression in the hope of turning it against the Soviet Union."\(^4\) The new Russian texts continue this theme. For example, Dmitrenko's History of the Fatherland, an eleventh grade Russian history textbook, states:

The policies of this aggressive bloc [the Anti-Comintern Pact] created danger not only for the Soviet Union, but threatened the interests of other countries as well. Despite that, ruling circles in Great Britain, France and the USA attempted to use Germany and Japan in a struggle against the Soviet Union. The policy of "appeasing" fascist aggression, carried out by the governments of Great Britain and France with the support of the United States of America, pursued namely this end. Using this tolerance, Germany and Italy acted all the more impudently.\(^5\)

As in Soviet textbooks, the West is excoriated for its morally bankrupt policy of appeasement, while the Soviet Union is praised for its fight for a morally-just policy of collective security against Nazi aggression. According to Soviet texts, "The only state to make an energetic effort to restrain the Fascist aggressors, to block the path to war and to uphold peace was the Soviet Union, which consistently maintained its anti-war policy."\(^6\) Despite the "complete connivance and complicity from the western powers,"

\(^4\) Lyons, p. 8.

the Soviet Union "did all that was necessary for the preservation of peace."  However, such policies were consistently rebuffed. 8 Similarly, Danilov's ninth grade textbook, History of Russia: The 20th Century, states, "The Soviet Union proposed that the League of Nations take collective measures to censure the [German] violation of its international obligations. But its voice was not heard." 9

As further demonstration of the righteousness of Soviet diplomacy, the post-Soviet textbooks stress that in the aftermath of Munich only the Soviets came to the aid of Czechoslovakia, but again their good-faith offers of military assistance were rebuffed by the West. The Soviet version states, "Despite the overwhelming feeling of the people, the bourgeois Government of Czechoslovakia would not accept help from the Soviet Union, even though the independence of the country was in peril." 10 Similarly, the new Russian textbooks state that "The USSR was the only state that refused to recognize the German seizure of Czechoslovakia." 11 As Danilov and Kosulina write

6 Lyons, p. 3.

7 Potemkin, p. 17. Also, pp. 13-15; Lyons, pp. 1-10; Golubeva, p. 191; Furaev (1989), pp. 6-8; Furaev (1975), pp. 5-7.

8 Potemkin, p. 13.

9 Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 190. See also O.S Soroko-Tsiupa, Mir v XX vek, uchebnoe posobie dlia 10-11 klassov obsheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii, first ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie) [hereafter, Soroko-Tsiupa], p. 159.

10 Lyons, pp. 6-7.

"The Soviet Union was prepared to aid Czechoslovakia, under the leadership of the charter of the League of Nations. For that it was necessary for Czechoslovakia to go to the League of Nations Council with a corresponding request. But ruling circles in Czechoslovakia did not do this."\textsuperscript{12}

In all of this, there is no discussion of reasons behind the West's rejection of Soviet offers, the basis for western mistrust of the Soviet Union, let alone of alternative interpretations of the motives behind Soviet "international goodwill."\textsuperscript{13} Instead the emphasis is placed on the Russian role as aggrieved victim whose lone "voice was not heard." The implication is that the Soviet Union vigorously sought to defend abstract international principles of non-intervention and territorial integrity. In reality, the

\textsuperscript{12} Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 192. The discussion of the German attack on Poland is quite similar. The west is condemned for not coming to Poland's aid after the German attack. As the Soviet version goes, "England and France betrayed Poland just as they had previously betrayed Czechoslovakia" (Lyons, p. 11). Similarly, Dmitrenko's eleventh grade textbook (1995) and (1998), p. 277, states: "Declaring war against Germany, England and France in fact did not carry out any military action against her, and practically did nothing to help Poland, whose people carried out a just struggle for their national existence." This is especially bizarre given the fact that the Soviets conspired with the Germans to divide up Poland.

\textsuperscript{13} Only Ostrovskii's History of Russia presents a reason (albeit quite brief) as to why the West turned down Soviet offers at a collective security agreement, noting that the British and French had little faith in the USSR's military potential and reliability as an ally given their internal policies, particularly the purges of the officer corps. V. P. Ostrovskii and A. I. Utkin, Istoriia Rossi, XX vek, 11 klass, uchebnik dlia obscheobrazovatel'nykh uchebnykh zavedenii, first ed. (Moscow: Drofa, 1995) [hereafter, Ostrovskii (1995)], p. 249. The same text appears in the subsequent edition as well. See idem, Istoriia Rossi, XX vek, 11 klass, uchebnik dlia obscheobrazovatel'nikh uchebnykh zavedenii, second ed. (Moscow: Drofa, 1997) [hereafter, Ostrovskii (1997)], p. 249.
Soviets entered into war against Germany when they themselves were attacked and the territorial integrity of the Soviet State violated, not before. Indeed, the Soviets signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler and agreed to divide up Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence—an act that was a gross violation of accepted norms of international behavior. Further, the Russian interpretation implies that the Soviet policy was good-intentioned, honest and forthright and that they were unjustly denied an opportunity to demonstrate their goodwill. Moreover, readers are left with the questionable impression that had the West only accepted these Soviet offers then war could have been averted.

2. The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact

One of the most serious consequences of the West's duplicitous behavior and hostility toward the Soviet Union on the eve of the war, according to both the Soviet and new Russian histories, is that it forced the Russians into the arms of the Germans. "The perfidious politics of the Western Powers," goes the Soviet version, "forced the Soviet Union to take this step." Indeed, during the Soviet period history textbooks went to great lengths to rationalize and justify the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact in 1939. The classic Soviet interpretation is that the western refusal to sign a collective security agreement with the Soviets against Hitler forced the Soviet

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14 The Nazi-Soviet Pact will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

15 Lyons, p. 10. Also Golubeva, p. 191.
Union to enter into the pact. Along with this general western intransigence, allied
duplicity—namely news that the British were secretly negotiating a new anti-Soviet
pact with Germany in the summer of 1939—also forced the Soviets into Germany's
arms. Given the general danger of having to fight a war both in the Far East against the
Japanese and in the west against the Germans while being internationally isolated, the
Soviets had no choice but to turn to its hated enemy:

The danger of being pulled into a war on two fronts—with fascist Germany in
the west and with militarist Japan in the east—while in a state of complete
international isolation, without allies, weighed heavily on the Soviet Union.
In this alarming time for the Soviet people . . . the English government
carried out secret negotiations with Germany behind the back of the Soviet
Union. In these talks, carried out in London, they talked about a new anti-Soviet
pact with Hitlerite Germany. Before our country stood the task of thwarting the
perfidious plans of the warmongers, of putting off an attack by the imperialists.
Convinced that England and France were refusing to sign an equally-just
tripartite agreement on mutual assistance and were seeking to use fascist
Germany against the USSR, the Soviet government decided to conclude a
nonaggression pact with Germany proposed by the German government.\textsuperscript{16}

Rather then viewing the old argument with skepticism and perhaps seeing it as a
convenient excuse that Stalin and Soviet historians used to justify Soviet behavior, the
old interpretations are accepted almost wholesale. The West's intransigence during the
tripartite negotiations pushed the Soviets into the German's arms. As Dmitrenko and his
colleagues write:

In the summer of 1939 the USSR proposed the conclusion of a military convention with England and France providing for common action of the armed forces of all three countries in the event of aggression. The ruling circles of England and France did not respond to the proposal. The USSR was faced with the threat of isolation.

In this environment, Stalin and Molotov made the decision to agree to a German proposal to conclude a pact of non-aggression.¹⁷

The new post-Soviet textbooks still whitewash the egregiousness of the pact by claiming it to be the equivalent of—or no worse than—the West's policy of appeasement. This is a dubious comparison, since British policy, however misguided, selfish and irresponsible, sought to avoid a major war in Europe. The Soviet Union on the other hand, as revealed through the Secret Protocols to the pact, sought primarily to achieve territorial expansion with minimal risk of war. Rather than addressing these differences, the Russian textbooks accept without question the contemporary Soviet diplomatic justifications for signing the pact. For example, the new textbooks continue to stress that the Soviet decision was motivated by the West's anti-Soviet behavior, such as the allegation that the British were engaged in secret negotiations with the Germans in the summer of 1939. "In June-August 1939 Anglo-German negotiations took place on a variety of economic and political questions, including the signing of a non-aggression pact between Great Britain and Germany. At the same time secret Soviet-

¹⁷Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 274. Also see Soroko-Tsiupa, pp. 158-160. According to Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 203, the talks with the allies "practically deadlocked" because "the western powers tried to thrust on the USSR one-sided military obligations."
German negotiations were activated."\textsuperscript{18} However, given existing knowledge of British diplomacy in the 1930's, the Russian view greatly overstates the significance of British diplomatic overtures to Germany in 1939. Specifically, the Russian view seems to reflect an image of British diplomacy and foreign-policy making on the eve of the war that is much more highly coordinated, rational and coherent than it actually was.\textsuperscript{19}

3. \textit{Betrayal: The German Attack of the Soviet Union}

One of the general impressions one is left with after reading about events surrounding the origins of the war is of a Soviet state that was profoundly misunderstood, unfairly mistrusted and poorly treated by the international community. To the degree that today's textbooks criticize Soviet behavior in the pre-war years, that criticism is always made much more palatable by either scapegoating the West, citing national security fears, or making claims to moral relativism: The Soviets sought peace for themselves, their neighbors, and all of the world, but were shunned; they sought to redress injustice committed against them and their people, but were scorned; they sought only to defend themselves against a hostile and mistrusting world, but were

\textsuperscript{18} Soroko-Tsiupa, pp. 158-160.

\textsuperscript{19} For a more accurate picture of British foreign policy, which was anything but a coordinated, coherent conspiracy to destroy the Soviet Union, see Donald Cameron Watt, \textit{How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939} (New York: Pantheon, 1989). Also see Gaines Post, Jr., \textit{Dilemmas of Appeasement: British Deterrence and Defense, 1934--1937} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
condemned as aggressors. None of this differs significantly from the interpretation in the Soviet-era textbooks.

This theme of victimization is especially vivid in the description of Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. While there is no discussion of how Soviet cooperation with Germany might have brought about the larger war, there is a great deal of discussion of the Soviet failure to anticipate and respond effectively to the German attack. In a rather bizarre interpretation, the Russians are viewed almost as innocent victims who honestly abided by their agreement with Hitler, while Hitler "treacherously" violated his word and attacked the Soviet Union. The fact that the non-aggression pact itself was morally and strategically suspect is never mentioned. The Soviet textbook view states: "Thus Fascist Germany, flagrantly violating the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, treacherously unleashed war against the USSR."\(^{20}\)

Similarly, the new Russian textbooks state: "On 22 June 1941 at sunrise, without a declaration of war, the German-Fascist forces, treacherously violating the non-aggression pact, invaded the Soviet land."\(^{21}\) Indeed, some Russian textbooks go quite far in stressing their unjust betrayal by the Germans while the Soviets to the very end honored the letter and spirit of their non-aggression and trade agreements:

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\(^{20}\) Lyons, p. 25.

Despite the fact that Germany sharply cut back on the fulfillment of its obligations to the USSR according to trade agreements, special trains and steamships with grain, steel, ore, including manganese (which Germany did not have but demanded for military needs) continued to flow to Germany from the USSR. Train cars with rubber, purchased by Germany from Indonesia, passed through Soviet territory without delay. At the same time any kind of anti-Nazi propaganda was banned.\textsuperscript{22}

But despite these betrayals and adversity, the Soviet Union and the Russian people always emerged victorious. Indeed, according to the new generation of Russian textbooks, the Russians were uniquely qualified to endure and overcome great hardships. As the ninth grade History of Russia argues,

During the war the ability of our people, worked out by a thousand years of Russian experience, to carry severe social burdens was sharply evident. The war once again demonstrated the surprising "talent" of the peoples of Russia (rossiiane): to expose all of their best qualities, abilities, and potential, particularly in extreme conditions.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{B. Militarism: Explaining the Conduct of the War}

Interpretations surrounding the conduct of the war are highly militaristic in the sense that they glorify Russia's military prowess, and fail to evaluate military blunders and defeats. Instead military disasters are rationalized away, or blamed on others. Again the notion of exceptionalism is stressed: The Soviet armed forces overcame enormous odds to emerge victorious. Victory was not solely a miracle but the result of

\textsuperscript{22} Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 256.

unique, innate Russian characteristics. Every page is filled with tales of heroic actions of Red Army officers and everyday citizens on and off the battlefield. The message conveyed is clear: Never before have a people been subjected to such difficult circumstances and overcome them so masterfully. Interpretations of three issues that reveal this high degree of militarism are discussed below. First is a general discussion of major battles of the war. Second is the specific question of the opening of the Second Front. And third is the Japanese surrender.

1. *Military Valor and Heroism at the Front*

The emphasis on Russian valor and heroism begins immediately with the first descriptions of the first battles of the war. Dmitrenko's eleventh grade textbook notes, "From the very first days of the war, the peoples of the RSFSR, as well as all the peoples of the country, defended their Motherland, its honor and independence. They carried out a just war, that predetermined the unity and cohesion of the army and the people, the enormous will to victory and mass heroism,"\(^{24}\) According to Ostrovskii and Utkin, "The first hours of the war demonstrated that people were prepared, not sparing life, to battle for the freedom of the Fatherland."\(^{25}\) Indeed, pupils are often asked to

\(^{24}\) Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 309. Earlier, he notes, "Despite the difficult conditions of the military action, the defenders of the Fatherland from the very first days of the war exhibited courage and heroism," p. 305.

"cite examples of courage and heroism of the Soviet people in the first months of the war."\textsuperscript{26}

The new generation of Russian history textbooks continues the tradition of detailed descriptions of all major battles of the war, focusing on acts of personal heroism and enumerating the lists of those awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Although the Red Army is portrayed as a victim of political repression and interference, this in no way diminished their innate skill and courageousness on the battlefield after the initial failures. Take for example, the defense of the Brest Fortress in the early days of the war. History of the Fatherland writes, "A vivid example of heroism was the defense of the Brest Fortress. Its garrison, led by Major P. M. Gavrilov, Captain I. N. Zubachev, and Regimental Commissar E. M. Fomin, courageously held out until the middle of July, pinning down significant enemy forces and inflicting tangible losses."\textsuperscript{27} The fifth grade Stories of Our Native History, which titles its chapter on the war, "The Holy War," ask readers, "Why did the Soviet forces so courageously defend themselves in the Brest Fortress? Wouldn't it have been better to immediately yield to the victors?"\textsuperscript{28}


\textsuperscript{27} Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 305.

On the battle of Moscow, one eleventh grade textbook writes:

The general leadership of the encircling forces was carried out by Lt.-Gen. M. F. Lukin, who proved an example of faultless completion of military duty, high command mastery, and faith in the Motherland and the people. Even severely wounded, having lost a leg, he fought to the end. Still unconscious he was not taken prisoner. Up to the very liberation in May 1945 he behaved courageously and with dignity.\textsuperscript{29}

"With the heroic efforts of the Soviet forces and the people's militia [irregulars],"

concludes History of the Fatherland, "the Fascist German army was stopped at the walls of the capital of Russia."\textsuperscript{30} But how is it that the Germans managed to get all the way to the walls of Moscow? The Russian view is in fact silent on the reasons for the disastrous Russian defeats in the first year of the war. They tend to favor romantic descriptions of military valor to evaluations of military command and political decision-making that led to the defeats.

In describing the Battle of Stalingrad, the eleventh grade History of the Fatherland focuses particular attention on the "legendary" activities of a group of

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\item[30] Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 319. Danilov and Kosulina's (1995) and (1996), p. 217, description of the Battle of Moscow focuses on the heroics of the 316th rifle division under the command of General I. V. Panfilov. "The actions of this division," write the authors, "which was led by the political officer V. G. Kliuchkov, became legendary . . . . The entire country spread the words of the V. G. Kliuchkov, which he told to his soldiers: 'Great Russia, there is nowhere to retreat to: Behind us is Moscow.'
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soldiers who defended a single building in the city: "Neither enemy artillery, nor
bombs, nor infantry or tank attacks could break the determination of the defenders. A
small group of Soviet servicemen, defending that building, destroyed as many Hitlerites
as had been lost in the taking of several large European cities."31 Ostrovskii and Utkin
write: "It's possible to talk about Hitler's miscalculations and fatal mistakes, to criticize
the actions of his generals, but it is impossible not to see that in the decisive moment
[Stalingrad] held out thanks to the will and self-sacrifice of the Soviet servicemen."32

The emphasis on the heroism of the Russian sacrifice at Stalingrad, much like
the descriptions of other major battles of the war, leaves little room for more objective
and critical descriptions of Soviet military failures and defeats. For example, Russian
textbooks make no mention of the disastrous Soviet offensives at Kharkov in May of
1942, in which the Germans captured the equivalent of three Soviet armies,33 and at
Rzhev in November 1942—the brainchild of General Zhukov—and one of the most
costly Soviet offensive failures during the war. An estimated 100,000 Soviets were
killed and another 235,000 wounded in less than a month.34


33 See David M. Glantz, Kharkov 1942: The Anatomy of a Military Disaster

34 Estimates in David M. Glantz, Zhukov's Greatest Defeat: The Red Army's
Epic Disaster in Operation Mars, 1942 (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1999), pp.
The absence of any discussion of this offensive is particularly noteworthy, as it is a major mark against one of the most revered heroes of the war, General Zhukov. Just as the Russian view of the war focuses on Russian military victories rather than defeats, it also uncritically praises its heroes, particularly Zhukov. Hence readers are introduced to the "brilliant military genius," the hero of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk, the liberator of Eastern Europe, and the victor of Berlin. Again, while there is much to praise in the deeds of General Zhukov, the texts virtually deify him. In fact, his victories on the battlefield—and his defeats—came at a great cost in human lives.\(^{35}\) Zhukov's famous march on Berlin—which, as many historians have noted, was more of a personal race against his rival General Konev—cost the lives of nearly 40,000 with 142,000 wounded.\(^{36}\)

Thus, throughout the numerous pages of descriptions of battlefield heroics, and its emphasis on military victories rather than defeats, there is little if any criticism—explicit or implicit—of the military and its leaders. Yet, in many ways the military command itself was guilty of negligence, at best, and incompetence, at worst. Instead, the blame is laid elsewhere: "For the first stupefying failures of the Red Army

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304-8. To give a sense of the significance of the losses—335,000—compared this to the losses at Stalingrad: 485,000 men in two and one half months.

35 On the Zhukov "myth" see A.N. Mertsalov, G. K. Zhukov: Novoe prochtenie ili staryi mir (Moscow: Prometei, 1994).

36 Figures cited in Glantz, Zhukov's Greatest Defeat, p. 308.
a significant portion of the fault lies with the political leadership of the country.\textsuperscript{37}

While some textbooks do criticize the military itself for its rigid offensive military strategy, which made it incapable of effectively going on the defensive once attacked, the blame for this is placed exclusively at the feet of political leaders:

Military doctrine, which was led by the Red Army command, was obviously offensive in character. Important was the slogan: "Crush the enemy with little blood on our territory." [However] any utterance about the possibility of an extended defensive action qualified as actions of "enemies of the people."\textsuperscript{38}

Indeed, these were common arguments offered by the military itself and its supporters once it became acceptable to criticize Stalin's excesses after Stalin's death. But the best historical scholarship on the Soviet military has dismissed many of these excuses for Russian military failures on the eve of the war, and has rightly put a significant amount of blame on the Soviet generals.\textsuperscript{39} While the purges of 1937-38 indeed blighted the officer corps, in fact they did not deprive the army of its very best leaders, nor did they cause a great shortage of officers.\textsuperscript{40} That Stalin forced an offensive strategy on the army is also historically unfounded, as it had dominated strategic thinking in the USSR


since the Civil War. Historian Roger Reese has argued convincingly that the German
attack in June 1941 was more of a tactical rather than a strategic surprise, and therefore
cannot be seen as the main reason for Soviet failures in the first months of the war.41
Indeed, there is abundant evidence that the Soviet received clear indications from Soviet
intelligence of German intentions.42 Finally, the claim that Stalin's interference in
battlefield operations resulted in the great encirclements in the first few months of the
war is also over-stated. Stalin surely deserves the blame for the disastrous defeat at
Kiev in 1941 when he refused to grant the generals' request to retreat. But the evidence
does not support the claim that other Soviet disasters were equally attributable to
Stalin.43 Instead there were a legion of problems for which the military only was
responsible—problems of weapons and equipment maintenance and supply, peacetime

41 As Reese writes, "The claim that Hitler achieved 'strategic surprise,' that is, a
degree of surprise that gave the Germans far-reaching and long-lasting advantages, was
made to cover up Red Army mistakes such as partial manning. The element of surprise
does help explain why units on the border initially suffered from confusion that put
them at a disadvantage. It in no way explains why corps and armies from the interior
that had weeks to prepare before their first engagements failed in battle." Stalin's
Reluctant Soldiers, p. 189.

42 See Glantz, Stumbling Colossus, pp. 233-257.

43 Placing the blame for the military's failure solely on Stalin was a basic feature
of the Soviet interpretation since the days of Khrushchev, a simplistic and not wholly
accurate interpretation that John Erickson challenged in his seminal work on the eastern
front, The Road to Stalingrad: Stalin's War with Germany, Volume I (New York:
Harper and Row, 1975). See also, Reese, Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers. On the disastrous
battle at Kiev, see Alexander Werth, Russia at War: 1941-45 (New York: Carrol &
Graff, 1964), pp. 202-12; Richard Overy, Russia's War: Blood Upon the Snow (New
training and wartime operations. In short, the regime deserves much blame, particularly for the brutality with which it treated its own soldiers, as will be discussed below. But the military too deserves some measure of criticism for the disasters of the first year of the war.

2. The Second Front and Allied Contributions to the War Effort

While many school histories glorify the achievements of their soldiers in war, the Russian texts stress the uniqueness and incomparability of the valor and heroism of the Red Army and their superiority vis-a-vis others. Hence, just as the theme of Russian victimization is closely tied to anti-westernism—the duplicity and hostility of the West—so too is the theme of Russian heroism. Thus, Russian achievements are extolled while those of others, particularly, the Soviet Union's allied partners, are belittled. The result is clear: Russia alone overcame unthinkable adversity to save itself and the world. According to the Soviet view, "it had become obvious that the Soviet Union was capable of defeating Hitler's Germany with her forces alone."44 Similarly, "The USA and England understood," write the authors of History of the Fatherland, "that the Red Army could on its own carry out the crushing defeat of the enemy and liberate the peoples of Europe from the Hitlerite occupiers."45 As Danilov and Kosulina write, "The victories achieved by the Red Army in 1943-1944 made realistic the

44 Lyons, p. 69. Emphasis added.

perspective of the crushing defeat of fascist Germany by the forces of the Soviet Union without help from the allies.\textsuperscript{46}

The diminishment of the allied role in the war effort and emphasis on Russian heroic sacrifice and skill is especially evident in discussions of the opening of the second front. Western political leaders are accused of delaying the opening of the second front unnecessarily, implying that such delays were maliciously motivated. As the Soviet view goes, "In spite of repeated assurances by the Allies, the Second Front was not in fact opened in 1943. The Governments of the United States and England were well aware of the needs of the Red army and of the tremendous losses sustained by the USSR in the war."\textsuperscript{47} Similarly, the new Russian textbooks advance the following argument:

However a second front (understood as an allied landing in France) was not opened. The governments of the USA and Great Britain explained this by citing inadequate means for carrying out an amphibious landing on the continent. The Soviet government expressed unconcealed dissatisfaction with the delay in the opening of the second front.\textsuperscript{48}

Indeed, both in the opening of the second front and the subsequent eastern advance, the textbooks downplay the significance—if not stress the irrelevance—of allied forces.


\textsuperscript{47} Lyons, p. 46.

According to the Soviet view:

The Anglo-American forces met with practically no opposition from the Hitlerites, and advanced into the heart of France . . . . For these operations the Germans had diverted only sixty divisions to the Western front, while the Hitler command maintained 259 divisions and brigades on the Soviet-German front. The Soviet-German front remained the most important front and the most decisive one in the Second World War.49

Similarly, the new Russian textbooks argue:

The second front was opened on 6 July 1944 with a landing of Anglo-American forces in the north of France. But after that the Soviet-German front remained the most important and definitive front of the Second World War. Two-thirds of the fascist forces were concentrated on that front.50

And not only do they downplay the achievement of the Normandy landing, but actually credit the Red Army for its success:

Fearing the efforts of the USSR and the spreading of its influence to the countries of Western Europe, ruling circles of the USA and England were unable to further put off the opening of a second front. On 6 June, making use of the weakening of the German forces . . . the allies landed in Normandy and began to move slowly into the heart of France.

By this time, the Soviet forces had carried out a number of blows against the adversary, so that the German command was not permitted to remove divisions to the west from the eastern front.51

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49 Lyons, pp. 69-70.


This constant diminishment of the allied efforts compared with the Russians continues throughout the descriptions of the latter stages of the war: "The opportunities for further movement of the allied forces differed significantly. This difference was that the Red Army was forced to overcome fierce opposition, but the Anglo-American forces faced only weak resistance." 52 Once again, the Soviets are credited with helping these forces rather than the other way around:

At the end of December 1944, the German forces had undertaken offensives in the Ardennes on the territory of Belgium and began to close in on the allied forces, which turned out to be in an extremely disadvantageous situation, practically without any way out. However, fulfilling the allied obligation and at the request of the leadership of the USA and Great Britain, the Soviet forces went on the offensive on 12 January, 8 days earlier than the designated period, drew off onto itself parts of divisions from the West and in so doing saved from destruction the Anglo-American units. It goes without saying that beginning the attack earlier than the planned time carried with it unnecessary losses for the attacking units of the Red Army. 53

The emphasis on Russian heroic self-sacrifice—in contrast to the West—and the tendency to downplay the significance of the allied contribution to the war effort, is also vividly revealed in discussions—or lack of discussions—of Lend-Lease. Soviet and


Russian textbooks gloss over or fail to make any assessment of the impact of Lend-Lease on the early Soviet war effort. Russian schoolchildren, like their Soviet-era counterparts, read very little about the massive British and American aid effort, both in terms of materiel and logistics.

The Soviet textbooks note rather innocuously that "the United States Government gave the Soviet Union one thousand million dollars and extended the Lend-Lease Act to include the Soviet Union."54 What this meant in practice is not said. Russian textbooks are only marginally more generous in their discussion of Lend-Lease and western assistance at the early stages of the war. Yet, to the degree that allied support and assistance is mentioned it is always qualified as marginal or merely supplemental to Russian efforts. Dmitrenko offers only a single sentence about Lend-Lease and its impact on the Russian war effort, acknowledging with great understatement that allied shipment of vehicles "allowed the Soviet army to be more mobile."55 In reality, Lend-Lease supplied the Soviet Union with over half a million vehicles, not to mention enormous amounts of industrial equipment that made Soviet rearmament possible, millions of miles of telephone wire and communications equipment, and massive food shipments.56 Without diminishing the exceptional bravery

54 Lyons, p. 30.


of the defenders of Stalingrad in 1943, Antony Beevor has noted that American trucks
and jeeps and food aid "made a huge, yet unacknowledged, difference to the Soviet
Union's ability to resist" the Germany siege of Stalingrad.\(^{57}\)

The Russian view of the war also omits discussion of the significance of
Western intelligence information to the Soviet war effort. This is especially striking in
descriptions of the Battle of Kursk. In fact, the British provided Soviet intelligence with
highly detailed information on the German plan of attack, which they had intercepted
from German Enigma communications. (Indeed, the British even provided the Soviets
with captured Enigma machines and instructions for their use.)\(^{58}\) Russian textbooks

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v gody vtoroi mirovoi voiny," Otechestvennaia istoriia 3 (1996), pp. 46-54. Writing in

"Just imagine", Nikita Khrushchev later remarked, "how we would have
advanced from Stalingrad to Berlin without [American transport]"; at the end of
the war, the Soviet forces held 665,000 motor vehicles, of which 427,000 were
Western, most of them American and a high proportion the magnificent 2 1/2-
ton Dodge trucks, which effectively carried everything the Red Army needed in
the field. American industry also supplied 13 million Soviet soldiers with their
winter boots, American agriculture 5 million tons of food, sufficient to provide
each Soviet soldier with half a pound of concentrated rations every day of the
war. The American railroad industry supplied 2000 locomotives, 11,000 freight
carriages and 540,000 tons of rails, with which the Russians laid a greater length
of line than they had built between 1928 and 1939. American supplies of high-
grade petroleum were essential to Russian production of aviation fuel, while
three-quarters of consumption of copper in 1941-4 came from American
sources.


\(^{58}\) On the role and impact of the British intelligence assistance to the Soviet
Union see Martin Gilbert, "Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union, 1939-1945," in
World War 2 and the Soviet People, eds. John Garrard and Carol Garrard (New York: St.
note that the Soviets knew of the coming attack, yet fail to mention the British source of that information. Instead, the Russians credit the exceptional skill and foresight of Marshal Zhukov for the intelligence coup. As one textbook notes:

Already in April 1943, Zhukov prepared a report on the possibility of enemy action. He not only was able to predict the central point of future attack of the Hitlerites, but to calculate the number of enemy forces. Most startling is that the plan for operation Citadel was signed by Hitler only a week after Zhukov's report. And thus, Hitler's plan was exposed.\(^{59}\)

Other textbooks are a bit more generous, but still disingenuous. Danilov and Kosulina's ninth grade textbook note that the Soviet command "received information about German preparations for attack in the Kursk region," but fail to cite the source of this information. They then go on to credit Soviet intelligence: "The German command placed particular hope in a surprise attack, but Soviet intelligence was sufficiently able to precisely establish the date of the beginning of the operation."\(^{60}\)

Also lacking in the Russian version of the war is any larger assessment of the contributions of allied military action to the Soviet war effort, such as the effects of allied strategic bombing. Richard Overy has convincingly argued that "The combined effects of direct destruction and the diversion of resources [from the bombing] denied


German forces approximately half their battle front weapons and equipment in 1944. It is difficult not to regard this margin as decisive."\textsuperscript{61} And while acknowledging that 80 per cent of battle casualties occurred on the eastern front, he nonetheless concludes, "the Soviet Union was not acting alone. Without the division of German energies prompted by the bombing campaign or the Mediterranean theater the outcome would have been much less certain, perhaps very different."\textsuperscript{62}

Generally, though, allied contributions, whether material aid, intelligence, or military forces, are dismissed as largely insignificant compared with the great human sacrifice of the Russian and Soviet people. In the Russian view, it was the Russian sacrifice alone that one the war. As Ostrovskii and Utkin's History of Russia states, the British and Americans shipped military equipment to the USSR since "in the conditions when the Red Army as a result of bloody battles and retreat lost equipment, arms, and food reserves, there was no possibility in a short period of time to make up this deficit."\textsuperscript{63} And, furthermore, as the authors remind us, "Soviet forces suffered 300,000 dead and wounded in the storming of the [German] capital—more than the USA for all the years of the war."\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{61} Overy, \textit{Why the Allies Won}, p. 131. See also pp. 101-33.

\textsuperscript{62} Overy, \textit{Russia's War}, pp. 388-389.


While it is true that the Soviets certainly bore the brunt of the war in Europe, the Russian textbooks essentially dismiss the second front and the British and American war effort as irrelevant. While scholars debate the significance of the Second Front, and Americans certainly put more weight on it than deserved, it was clearly not as insignificant—both in its impact on the war effort, and in terms of the lives lost—as Russian texts purport. What's missing here is balance, perspective and discussion of alternative, equally legitimate views. Further, the tone of this discussion is highly defensive, as if the writers are countering long-told lies about Russia. It is as if the texts are carrying on an internal dialogue with those—primarily in the West—who are hostile and overly critical of Russia, and must constantly remind us of the selfless sacrifice of the Soviet Union. The result is that texts reflect a high degree of insecurity. Instead of portraying events dispassionately and self-critically when necessary, they overly-stress Russia's role as promoter of peace and good will, its incomparable heroic acts, and its role as innocent victim of the ill will of others. Often they emphasize Russia's "honorable intentions" to the detriment of the truth. While Russian soldiers suffered greatly, as well as performed acts of great heroism and courage, they were not alone in doing so.

3. The Russians Defeat Japan

The final example of expressions of militarism through descriptions of Russian heroism is the Russian role in the Pacific war. Almost without exception the new
generation of textbooks, just like the old ones, emphasize the key Russian role in bringing about the Japanese surrender. This raises a serious problem of balance. While the textbooks go to great lengths to distinguish the Russian role on the Eastern front of the European theater—the only significant arena of the war—there is no effort to distinguish the American role in the Pacific. To the degree that American predominance in the Pacific is mentioned, it is significantly downplayed or treated quite critically. So, for example, the textbooks reject any connection between the atomic bombings of Japan and the Japanese surrender. According to the Soviet view,

The fate of the Japanese aggressors was not decided by explosions of atomic bombs, but by the actions of the Soviet Armed Forces, which crushed the most capable divisions of the fascist coalition in Europe and almost a million-man Kwangtung army, which predetermined the defeat of Japan.\textsuperscript{65}

To the degree they do mention the bombings, they almost universally condemn them as strategically unnecessary:

This was a barbaric example of the use of an atomic weapon, not provoked by military necessity. By dropping the bombs on the Japanese cities, the US imperialists were trying to frighten the whole world, especially the Soviet Union. It marked the beginning of the aggressive course steered by the USA towards the establishment of world domination.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{65} Potemkin, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{66} Lyons, p. 86.
Similarly, Ostrovskii and Utkin's History of Russia states, with outrage characteristically absent from any descriptions of Soviet behavior in Europe, that

Three days before the proposed entrance of the USSR in the war with Japan, on 6 August 1945, from a heavy bomber of the American Air Force an atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima. On 9 August this "experiment" was repeated on the city of Nagasaki. The overall number of deaths reached 200,000 people. War is always inhumane, but to excuse the use of an atomic bomb against unarmed peaceful citizens is impossible. These acts were dictated not by military, but by political necessity. They were carried out for a demonstration of the aspiration of the leadership of the USA to establish its hegemony in the post-war world.67

After describing at great length the buildup of Soviet forces in the Far East and a discussion of Soviet plans to attack the Japanese forces in Manchuria, the History of the Fatherland states,

On the eve of agreed upon period for the USSR to begin military action, the USA on 6 August 1945 dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, and on 9 August the city of Nagasaki was subjected to atomic bombing. There was not any military necessity for this, since Japan's fate was already decided beforehand.68

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67 Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 314. The only exception to this interpretation is Dolutskii's Fatherland History, which, while still being critical of the bombing, clearly gives it the appropriate significance vis-a-vis the Japanese surrender. I.I. Dolutskii, Otechestvennaia istoriia, XX vek, uchebnik dlia 10-11 klassov obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii, vol. II, first ed. (Moscow: Mnemozina, 1996) [hereafter, Dolutskii], pp. 159-160.

In general, Soviet participation in the war is treated as absolutely vital to the defeat of Japan. "Although the military-economic potential of Japan began to be exhausted," write Ostrovskii and Utkin, "it was still in a state to exert long-term, unyielding resistance. The entry into the war in the Far East of the Soviet Union was presented by the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition as obligatory."\(^{69}\) Further, textbooks directly link the Soviet advance in the Far East, described as treacherous and brutal, with the Japanese surrender. "By 14 August," states Dmitrenko's History of the Fatherland, "the Soviet forces had broken up the Kwantung army and threatened its complete encirclement. On the very same day the Japanese emperor announced Japan's unconditional surrender."\(^{70}\)

The issue of the necessity of the atomic bombings is a point of fierce debate among historians of the war.\(^{71}\) Yet, Russian pupils get no sense of this when they are


\(^{70}\) Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 370. Also Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 314; Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 248. Dolutskii's textbook stands out as the rare exception. While the other textbooks argue that the Soviet Union entered the war in the Pacific solely to fulfill its "allied obligation" agreed to at Yalta and Potsdam, Dolutskii argues that "Stalin very much needed that war [in the Pacific]. . . . Stalin hoped for a re-establishment of the Soviet Union's eastern borders, completely ignoring the allies' atomic bombing. It was necessary to hurry, otherwise the Japanese would capitulate to the USA." Dolutskii, vol. II, p. 160.

told definitively that the bombing was unnecessary. Instead, students should be told that the topic is highly contentious and both sides of the argument presented. Again there is no effort to explain or understand the American motivations for the bombing, or to give any credence to the view that the bombing prevented an amphibious landing that could have cost millions of lives. This is especially puzzling given that Russian textbooks emphasize the ferocity with which the Germans defended their homeland upon the Soviet advance and the "fanatical mood" and "unyielding resistance" of the Japanese forces in Manchuria.\(^\text{72}\) As it is now discussed, it only serves to criticize and diminish the contribution of the West, while inflating that of the Russians.

**II. Views on Politics/State-Society Relations**

**A. Authoritarianism: The Critique of Stalin**

Expressions of authoritarian views in the new Russian textbooks, like the other indicators of pernicious history discussed above, differ little from the Soviet period. Both texts treat the Stalinist legacy ambiguously, blaming him for his arrogance, cruelty and poor decisions, but crediting him with rallying the populace to defend the country. There is nothing particularly troubling about this interpretation. The critique of Stalin, and the negative characterization of some of his crimes, is a positive feature of the texts. Yet, as with other cases where Russia's behavior is especially worthy of criticism and serious examination, that criticism is often half-hearted and inadequate. It seems only a

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bare minimum of criticism of Stalin and his actions during this period are acceptable. Thus, the texts blame Stalin for being "duped" by Hitler, and thus causing the initial military defeats of the war, but, as noted above, fail to condemn him for contributing to the outbreak of the war, in general.

Specifically, there remain authoritarian tendencies within the textbooks that should be cause for concern. Stalin's strong leadership and even some arbitrary authoritarian actions rather than being scorned, are rationalized away, leaving one with the impression that it was some of his more authoritarian policies during the course of the war that contributed to victory. Thus, the texts do convey a moderately dangerous penchant for authoritarian leadership and decision-making, especially in times of crisis: There is a tendency to support extreme measures in times of extreme emergency, something that a leader like Stalin was exceptionally capable of doing.

Criticism of Stalin is also tempered by the penchant to glorify the military, military leaders, and military decision-making. As noted earlier, the new Russian history textbooks portray the Red Army as a victim of Stalin's paranoia, incompetence, and brutality. Thus, despite the early military failures, the army itself cannot be held responsible for its actions. "However, the vital weaknesses in the Red Army was the low professional preparation of the officer corps," a phenomenon explained by the "mass repression of the command staff" in 1937-39.73

Yet, more specifically, there is a tendency to rationalize some of Stalin's and the NKVD's more brutal actions. Even some of the most repressive measures adopted during the war, and discussed in the new textbooks, such as the severe punishment for "lack of labor discipline," and the use of Gulag prison labor, are barely criticized:

The country strained all its power. Nevertheless, in the rear regions a network of many camps of the GULAG was preserved. From the beginning of the war, GULAG industry took on a particular meaning: different types of minerals necessary for military production could only be obtained in the GULAG mines. The tragic existence of millions of people, the high death rates from exhaustion and hard labor, which the country so needed.\textsuperscript{74}

Another textbook proudly proclaims, "For three years of the war, Gulag enterprises produced more than 70 million pieces of ammunition, most importantly mines and grenades."\textsuperscript{75} While the texts also mention that many prisoners were released from the Gulag system and allowed to serve in the army, the capacity in which those prisoner brigades served is not mentioned. For the most part, prisoners released to penal battalions awaited a much worse fate than forced labor. They were used for the most dangerous missions, primarily as human minesweepers. Nearly half a million such soldiers were forced to serve in penal battalions and at least 158,000 were executed.\textsuperscript{76} It is extremely troubling, therefore, when the texts proclaim without any other comment:


\textsuperscript{75} Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), pp. 342-3.

\textsuperscript{76} Figure from E. Mawdsley in War in History 4 (1997), p. 123, cited in Overy, Russia's War, p. 200.
"In 1942 and 1943, 157,000 prisoners, released early and enlisted into the ranks of the Red Army, valiantly fought against the enemy. Having distinguished themselves on general grounds, they were awarded orders and medals, and five—among them the legendary A. Matrosov—were conferred the title of Hero of the Soviet Union."\(^{77}\) In fact, of the nearly one million civilian prisoners released from the Gulag to penal battalions, "promises of redemption through bravery usually proved to be false, mainly because of bureaucratic indifference. Men were left to die in their ranks."\(^{78}\)

The most vivid example of this whitewashing and justification in the Russian view of the war concerns the infamous order No. 227, which made any soldier who surrendered in battle "a traitor to the Motherland," and subject to summary execution. On the Western front, special officers manning tanks followed the first wave of an attack to open fire on soldiers who "lacked battle enthusiasm." As one textbook writes, Never in the history of the army or our state had we retreated so far into the depths of the country. In front of our soldiers stood the task at whatever cost to stop the aggressor. This was pronounced in an order of the Supreme Commander in Chief on 28 July 1942, known as Order No. 227: "Not a step back!" Evaluating the position as extremely difficult, the order introduced severe punishment for retreating without orders from above. Commanders and Commissars who permitted this were called traitors of the Motherland. Following the example of the German forces, deployed behind units which were considered unreliable were the so-called blocking units (zagraditel'nye otriady). However, despite the severe measures, the order carried assurance that neighboring units would not retreat."\(^{79}\)

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\(^{78}\) Beevor, Stalingrad, p. 85.

The goal of Order 227, write Danilov and Kosulina, was "to put an end to the manifestation of cowardice and desertion."\textsuperscript{80} Such implicit justifications of a clearly barbarous means of ensuring military discipline are striking. Indeed, this and similar orders not only called for punishing those who were taken prisoner by the enemy, but also subjected the wives of those officers to arrest. In practice, Order No. 227 resulted in the arrests and executions of hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers, some of whom may have legitimately been shirking, many of whom most likely were not. The problem was that it was an obviously blunt instrument of enforcement that left little room for assessing gradations of guilt and had little tolerance for errors and misjudgments. Empowered by Order No. 227, at least 13,500 Red Army soldiers were executed just during the battle of Stalingrad. According to Beevor, this was proof "that the regime was almost as unforgiving towards its own soldiers as towards the enemy . . . ."\textsuperscript{81}


\textsuperscript{81} Beevor, Stalingrad, p. 166.
III. Views on Ethnic/Religious Relations: Anti-Semitism and Racism

A. Anti-Semitism: The Omission of the Holocaust

Despite the numerous additions of previously taboo material in Russian textbooks, many of these revelations have been muted by obvious justifications that tend to diminish the culpability of Soviet conduct, or to diminish their importance altogether. In addition, there continue to be a surprising number of notable omissions from the new textbooks. The most obvious is the absence of almost any mention of the fate of Europe's Jews and the Holocaust. Soviet texts of course stress the brutality and barbarity of the Germans, particularly in their occupation of the western Soviet Union; they even mention "death camps" and "millions of victims" but fail to mention Jews specifically.

Moving west, the Soviet forces saw the traces of horrible crimes. In the region of the city of Lublin was located the Maidenek death camp. Here the Hitlerites killed and burned in crematorium ovens a million and half people, including old people, women, children, brought there from different countries of Europe. More than four million people were killed in the other death camp—Oswiecim [Auschwitz].

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82 The important issue during the war years of the deportations and massive transfers of "unreliable" Soviet populations, which reflect directly on the nature of racism in Russian texts, is treated in detail in chapter four.

The new Russian texts follow this example: "Preparing for so-called 'total war,'" write Danilov and Kosulina, "the Hitlerites worked out a plan of monstrous evil in the occupied territories. The general plan 'Ost' occupied a particular place, according to which 120-140 million Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Poles, and Lithuanians were subject to deportation and destruction."84 "On the seized territories," writes Ostrovskii and Utkin, "the fascists created death camps and concentration camps, thousands of prisons and ghettos. Brutal punishment was carried out against the local populations."85 Yet, the question remains, who were the victims?

In cases where Jews are mentioned, any sense that they were specifically targeted by Hitler, or suffered disproportionately, is completely absent. As one Soviet era textbook states: "A million and a half Russians, Poles, Czechs, Jews, Frenchmen and Dutchmen were killed at Maidanek by the Fascist butchers."86 As already noted, the Soviet-era textbooks, like the current generation, stress not just that the Russian and other Soviet peoples were ordinary victims, but that their suffering was exceptional and


85 Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 288. Dmitrenko makes no reference at all to death camps or concentration camps in the east, nor any reference to the persecution of the Jews. However, he does reprint in the "documents and materials" section at the end of his final chapter on the war an order of 2 August 1941 from the city of Vilnius outlining all the prohibitions against the city's Jews. However, this must strike a young reader as odd, since it does not refer to any previously discussed material, is completely out of context and without any commentary. Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 374.

86 Lyons, p. 71
incomparable. This theme of uniqueness of the Russian experience is especially evident in the treatment of German atrocities. Indeed, the Soviet texts often stress the comparatively greater suffering of Russians, as if to argue that others' suffering, particularly that of Jews, could not be as great or greater than that of the Russians. The texts often make the point that Germans were given specific orders to kill Russians.⁸⁷

Again, the new Russian textbooks follow this pattern exactly. Their descriptions of German atrocities convey very strongly the sense that the Russian and Slavic peoples alone were Hitler's target of destruction. As one eleventh grade textbook notes, "A danger of physical extermination hung over the Slavic and other peoples of the Soviet Union."⁸⁸ The destruction of the Jews, the Holocaust, or the distinctively anti-Semitic nature of the Nazi regime is never mentioned—even as one of several of Hitler's goals in the east. Indeed, the Soviet-era texts often make more references, albeit innocuously, to Jews and death camps, than the current texts.⁸⁹

When Jews are mentioned, as in Ostrovskii's History of Russia, the emphasis is put on the even greater threat to, and suffering of, the Russian people: "Before the

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⁸⁷ Potemkin, p. 32.


⁸⁹ The only exception is Soroko-Tsiupa's world history, p. 173, which states, "In Poland, the occupiers built special 'death camps' where 'undesirable' populations, primarily Jews and Slavs, should be destroyed. By the end of the war more than 11 million people were exterminated in these camps (Oswiecim, Majdanek, Treblinka and others)."
beginning of the evacuations in the occupied territories there was put the task of exterminating 30 million Russians, 5-6 million Jews."90 This sense of comparatively greater suffering borne by the Russians is especially clear in descriptions of Soviet POWs: "Soviet prisoners of war were methodically destroyed," writes one author. "3.9 million Soviet prisoners of war were destroyed just on the occupied territory of the USSR. On the territory of Poland 1.8 million of our prisoners of war died in camps. Not a few rotted in camps and as workers both in Germany and in its occupied lands."91 Yet the actual number of Soviet Jews killed is never mentioned. In reality, as a percentage of population, the carnage against the Soviet Jews was enormous: More than 1.25 million Jews were killed in Nazi-occupied Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia, or roughly 45 per cent of the total Jewish population (more than 60 per cent of the Jewish population of Ukraine and Belorussia). If one takes the Holocaust as a whole, roughly 70 per cent of Europe's Jews died at the hands of the Nazis.92 Certainly this fact

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91 Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 288. The textbooks also use casualty figures to rationalize the Soviet "liberation" of Eastern Europe in 1944-45, and subtly, even the occupation of Eastern Europe after the war: "In the course of liberating the people's of Europe from the Hitlerite occupation, more than a million Soviet soldiers and officers were killed. The absolute majority of them were the sons of Russia. Six hundred thousand Soviet servicemen lie in Polish soil, more than 140,000 in Hungary, as many in Czechoslovakia, 102,000 in Germany, 69,000 in Rumania, 26,000 are buried in Austria, 8,000 in Yugoslavia" (Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), pp. 363-4).

deserves no less prominence than Russian deaths. Indeed, it is especially puzzling that an explicit mention of the Holocaust is not made in the current textbooks, considering the frequent discussions in the Russian press of the fear of rising anti-Semitism in post-Soviet Russia.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

The interpretation of the Soviet-German War in the latest generation of history textbooks stands out for its striking similarity to the official Soviet version of events. Despite increased access to previously-closed archives and to Western historical research, despite the absence of state-censorship, and despite the acknowledgement of many previously taboo subjects, the Russian popular version of the war remains virtually unchanged. Indeed, it is almost as if the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of the Soviet texts have simply been stripped away to leave the core of the Myth of the Great Patriotic War. The popular interpretation of Russia's war experiences and conduct continues to glorify Russia's achievements and conduct, and to rationalize or justify its failures, by extolling its role as a champion of international law and justice, a victim of international misunderstanding and mistrust and of Western disdain and duplicity. It is a view of the war as an unambiguous Russian (Soviet) victory, achieved alone, against all odds. Because of their unparalleled bravery and valor, and despite incomparable adversity, the people of Russia prevailed and saved the world from destruction. A
Russian pupil reading almost any Russian history textbook today is left with the impression that the Soviet-German War was the Second World War—that Russians were its sole victims and heroes.

There is a powerful implication in this view, and of the central focus on the exceptionalism and uniqueness of Russia's role in the war—its incomparable suffering and self-sacrificing valor, that non-Russians—particularly those in the West—are fundamentally ungrateful and unappreciative of Russian sacrifices in the war. It reflects a Russian self-image of exclusivity in which others, failing to recognize Russia's enormous achievements and tremendous sacrifices on behalf of the world, are fundamentally incapable of understanding and appreciating the Russian national character and Russia itself.

**B. Generalization and Variation Among Textbooks**

How representative, then, are these views of Russian textbooks as a whole? This chapter has obviously generalized from the entire library of post-Soviet Russian history textbooks. It has by necessity offered only selective illustrations. Clearly there exists some variation of views found in the texts. However, of the most widely-available texts, and those that have been federally-approved for use in schools, the number, on average, that significantly diverge from the classic Soviet/Russian view, are very few. Table 3.1 summarizes the extent of variation among the range of available, federally-approved, textbooks.
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Table 3.1 reveals quite clearly the consistency of views across the range of federally-approved textbook titles on twentieth century Russian and world history. In fact of all the relevant texts, all but two offer views, on average, consistent with the Myth of the Great Patriotic War. The two significant exceptions—the work of Zharova and Mishina, and the two-volume text by Dolutskii—are in fact two of the least widely-used texts. The former is no longer in print, and the latter is a fairly unconventional text, which has received much less distribution than its two main competitors, Ostrovskii and Utkin's History of Russia and Dmitrenko's Fatherland History.93

C. Perniciousness and Significance of the Myth of 1939-40

How pernicious, then, is the Russian popular textbook view of the war? What are the implications of the Myth of the Great Patriotic War for our understanding of Russian views on war, and the Russian self-image, more generally?

Tests of Perniciousness. The Russian Myth of the Great Patriotic War passes all three "tests" of perniciousness, outlined in chapter one. First, with regard to veracity, while the Russian view of the war is most guilty in terms of distorted emphasis.

93 In interviews, some history teachers in Moscow and St. Petersburg said that they use Dolutskii's textbook only as a reference book for their own classroom preparation, and consider it inappropriate for student use. This point was also noted by education specialists, specifically, Elena Rosanova, Director of Secondary Schools, Open Society Institute, Moscow, 5 September 1996; Anna Muraveva, Deputy Director of Secondary Schools, Open Society Institute, Moscow, 26 April 1996; Evgenii Evgen'evich Viazemskii, Head of the Laboratory of History Education, Institute of General Education, Ministry of Education, Moscow, 21 May 1996.
and lack of balance, it nonetheless rests on significant factual omissions as well as factual distortions.

Second, it clearly passes the "salience" test. There is little question the war is an event of exceptional importance to Russians, as well as most of the states of the former Soviet Union. It was, of course, a horrifically tragic event that touched the lives of almost every Soviet citizen. A recent poll that asked Moscow residents about family members who fought in the war reveals the degree to which the war continues to touch the entire nation. More than one in three had a brother or sister, a father or mother, a grandfather or grandmother who fought in the war. It is notable that of all the state holidays and official commemorations during the Soviet period that disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet State, the one marking the Soviet victory remains stronger than ever. Indeed, many have observed that Victory Day, celebrated on May 9, is "the most truly meaningful of Russia's many official holidays," and "the only holiday about which there is no argument." 

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95 VTsION, 12-14 June 1999, of 1,120 Moscow residents over age 16. Respondents were asked, "Were any members of your family at the front during the Great Patriotic War?" [http://ns.wciom.ru/EDITION/BLIZ99-4.htm].

96 See Kathleen Smith, "New Holidays Out of Old: Recasting the Red Calendar in Russia" (unpublished ms, 1999). For views on the war of younger generations, see Velikaiia Otechestvennaia Voina v otsenke molodykh: sbornik statei studentov, aspirantov, molodykh uchenykh, ed. N.A. Kirsanov (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet, 1997).
Finally, it overwhelmingly passes the "role" test—that is, the myth embodies and reflects Russian images of itself and others that are quite pernicious. As Table 3.2 illustrates, the vast majority (22 of 32, or nearly 69 per cent) of predictions of pernicious role are confirmed in the textbook treatment of the Myth of the Great Patriotic War. Like Soviet texts, the Myth of the Great Patriotic War is marked by a relatively high degree of xenophobia, insecurity and militarism. These views are vividly expressed by the texts' emphasis on Russians as the sole victims of the war, and through the use of self-glorifying, self-exculpating, and other-denigrating myths, particularly about the West. Russia's view of the war embodies a narcissistic, self-righteous worldview and Russian self-image. In general, interpretations are often grossly unbalanced, criticizing the behavior of others without explaining the reasons behind that behavior, while at the same time rationalizing Russia's own dubious actions during this period. Negative aspects of the war, both causes and conduct, are associated with others, while positive aspects are credited solely to Russia. There is no effort to discuss objectively the contributions of others.

97 Valeria Korchagina, "V-Day Sacred to Few Who Remember," Moscow Times, 8 May 1999.

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<td>1815</td>
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<td>Pre-revolutionary Role</td>
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**Table 3.2: The Myth of the Great Patriotic War in Post-Soviet Russian History Textbooks**
In addition, while explicit praise of Stalin and his authoritarian leadership are virtually absent, just as in Soviet texts, the Myth of the Great Patriotic War tends to rationalize and justify much of his objectionable behavior associated with the war effort. At the same time it continues to glorify the leadership of such wartime leaders as General Zhukov, whose own missteps and blunders are ignored. Finally, the texts continue to express a significant degree of implicit anti-Semitism, through the omission of discussions of the Holocaust, including the genocide of Jews within the Soviet Union.
CHAPTER 4

THE MYTH OF 1939-40: SOVIET INTERVENTIONS ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II

Russia's textbook treatment of World War II, as Chapter 3 demonstrated, is rife with pernicious beliefs, ideas, assumptions and images. Yet, how pervasive are these ideas? Do they extend beyond the case of World War II to other historical events, particularly ones in which Russia was less clearly a victim? World War II, after all, was a highly traumatic event in which Russia was invaded. Millions of Russians were killed and most suffered terribly. It is also true that the Russians fought bravely and heroically during the war. Therefore, a degree of Russian self-glorification in the portrayal of the war may be unsurprising and, some may argue, even justified. Further, given the uniqueness of the war in Russian history, in terms of its massive devastation, pernicious ideas expressed in the treatment of that war may simply be anomalous, and hardly representative of Russia's interpretation of other wars and conflicts. As a result, it may be inappropriate to generalize about broader Russian ideas and values based on the historical interpretations of that event.

Such conclusions, however, are mistaken for at least three reasons. First, while some may see the self-glorifying portrayal of these events as unsurprising, to many casual observers of Russian politics and society, it is puzzling precisely because Russian history has undergone such profound institutional and ideological change over the past decade. It is widely assumed in the West that such "drum and trumpet"
historical interpretations are a relic of the past. While there is some degree of self-glorification in most countries' portrayals of epic conflicts, such as World War II, the extent to which negative images are found in the Russian portrayal of the war is striking, especially considering the many years of historical revisionism in Russia.

Second, even if the interpretation of other wars and conflicts revealed less pernicious ideas, the fact that World War II itself received such treatment remains important. It is especially critical how World War II is popularly portrayed precisely because that war is so significant in Russian history (and the history of many other nations, especially in Europe) and continues to have profound meaning for the Russian public and elites.¹ Indeed, the "Great Patriotic War" remains a hallowed event in Russia, widely memorialized and commemorated. As far as formal education is concerned, the history of the period constitutes a significant portion of lesson plan hours and textbook pages.²

Nonetheless, it is problematic to generalize from a single case, however significant it may be, about broader ideas related to Russian self-image and worldview. An essential test of the pervasiveness of these ideas, images, and beliefs lies in the portrayal of events in which Russia was not the victim, but the "victimizer"—that is,


² See Table 3.1 in the previous chapter.
cases in which Russia waged war against others or intervened beyond its borders. In fact, the portrayal of one's own history of "aggression" is equally, if not more important, as the portrayal of one's own experience as a victim of occupation or oppression (though, as argued in the last chapter, there is a unique danger associated with "victimization" history). How a state interprets such events, in particular how it characterizes its own past behavior, how it assesses culpability, and how it expresses contrition (if at all), can reveal deeper popular beliefs about the causes of war, about the legitimate use of force, and views towards other nations and peoples. In addition, whitewashing or glossing-over past acts of military aggression can, for the victims of that aggression, remain a significant festering wound that adversely affects contemporary relations with those peoples or states.3

This chapter, therefore, broadens the scope of analysis to include the portrayal of Russia's military interventions between 1939-40. It stresses this period for three reasons. First, it constitutes a period of concentrated and intense interventionism on the part of the Soviet Union.4 Second, the events of this period were long-denied and

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3 Many East Asian states' condemnation of Japan's treatment of its wartime behavior is the most prominent case in point. This has also been the case in Russia's relations with the Baltic states, as will be discussed in detail in chapter six.

4 While Soviet interventions—both direct and indirect, through the use of proxies—occurred throughout the Soviet period (Hungary, 1956, Czechoslovakia, 1968, and Afghanistan, 1979 just to name a few of the prominent cases), the events of 1939-40—a relatively short period of time—resulted in enormous human and material destruction. While the level of destruction that occurred during the Afghan war was also high, that war lasted more than a decade.
distorted by Soviet authorities and Soviet historiography. As a result, examination of these events offers important evidence of the extent to which notable historical myths have persisted or evolved since 1991. Finally, these events, precisely because of the level of destruction they caused and the decades of Soviet denial, have had lasting influence in the target countries, as will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

These cases demonstrate that in the treatment of military interventions and the use of force beyond Russian/Soviet borders, Russian history education is equally as pernicious as the treatment of the Soviet-German War. Despite the revisions of the past decade and the inclusion of previously taboo material—and despite popular beliefs and claims to the contrary—the chauvinism that permeates the treatment of World War II is not an anomaly, but a common feature of Russia's popular portrayal of wars, interventions, and foreign policy conflicts generally.

Specifically, the chapter shows how Russian history texts continue to purvey the "Myth of 1939-40"—a set of highly pernicious views about Soviet military interventions in Poland, the Baltic States and Finland. In short, the myth emphasizes the legality and righteousness of Soviet action; the wide popular support of people in those regions for Soviet rule; and the general peacefulness of the Soviet interventions. This interpretation of events, which has changed little from the Soviet period, reflects a significant degree of imperialism (the glorification or whitewashing of military interventions) and insecurity (the emphasis on Russian victimization and on "threats" from others). It is characterized by significant omission, whitewashing, and self-
exculpating rationalizations: The interventions are cast either as heroic and noble struggles for the "liberation" of those countries from fascist oppression, as unavoidable and unintended actions thrust upon an innocent and well-intentioned Soviet Union, or as a necessary preventive action against an impending threat.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section one provides an overview of the Russian textbook interpretation of the secret protocols to the Nazi-Soviet pact of August 1939—the central event in understanding the interventions of the period. Sections two through four then examine the textbook treatment of three of the major interventions of this period—Poland, the Baltic States and Finland, respectively. Each section begins with the historical background and an assessment of the current historical consensus, and then presents the Russian view as found in both Soviet and post-Soviet history texts. The final section summarizes some of the key ideas, assumptions, and images that emerge from the Russian view of these events and assesses the overall perniciousness of these ideas.

I. The Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Secret Protocols and the "Myth of 1939-40"

A. The Historical Consensus

The story of the Soviet Union's Western interventions in 1939-40 begins with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939. The "unholy alliance" as it has been called,⁵ which shocked the West and many in the Soviet Union

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and Germany as well, was a formal treaty of rapprochement and cooperation between two bitter ideological foes. Each pledged non-aggression and neutrality in the other's regional armed conflicts. On its surface, and as Soviet propaganda and historiography emphasized, the agreement served the cause of peace: both sides pledged not to go to war against the other. Yet, the Pact included a supplementary secret protocol—its existence long denied by the Soviet Union—which revealed both German and Soviet desires for imperial expansion at the expense of their East European neighbors. While the actual Soviet motivation for signing the Non-Aggression Pact and its significance in bringing about the Second World War are still debated by scholars, there is little disagreement over the content of the secret protocols and their role in facilitating the Soviet interventions of the late 1930's. The protocols established "spheres of influence" between Germany and Russia: "In the event of territorial and political rearrangement," Finland, Estonia, Latvia, eastern Poland and Bessarabia were to be part of the Soviet sphere.6

Following the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, and the Soviet invasion from the east 16 days later, Molotov and Ribbentrop again came together, this time to sign the Soviet-German Border and Friendship Treaty. In order to "establish peace and order" on Polish territory and to "promote the peaceful existence of

residents," both sides delimited their new border, which now ran through Poland. In addition, both sides signed two supplementary secret protocols to the new treaty: The first amended the secret protocol of 23 August, adding Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence and paving the way for its occupation and annexation the following year. In the second protocol, both sides pledged to "suppress" all "Polish agitation" in their respective territories that was directed against the other side. The Soviets fulfilled their end of the agreement with gusto, interpreting "Polish agitation" against the Nazis very broadly, even turning over to the Germans self-exiled German-Jewish communists who had come to the USSR in the 1930's.

Historians continue to debate the nature of Soviet-German relations on the eve of the war, and the origins and meaning of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Some argue that the Soviets had a plan for western expansion, driven primarily by ideology. According to this school, the Soviet Union sought to foment conflict between Germany and the West, to revive the Rapallo-policy of Soviet-German rapprochement, and thereby open the

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8 Gross, Revolution from Abroad, p. 13. In the words of historian Michael Carley, "At the end of September, Ribbentrop went again to Moscow to sign further agreements with Molotov, coldly renegotiating their respective spheres of interest in Poland and the Baltic and developing trade relations. Molotov swapped ethnic Polish territory for Lithuania as easily as American kids swapped baseball cards." Carley, 1939: The Alliance the Never Was and the Coming of World War II (Chicago: Ivan R. Lee, 1999), p. 215.
way for Soviet territorial aggrandizement.9 Others argue that Soviet policy toward
Germany was generally pragmatic, driven less by ideology than realpolitik, if not by
institutional and policy chaos within Russia.10 Others argue that Soviet foreign policy


toward Germany was the result of both highly ideological and pragmatic decisions by Stalin and his advisors.\textsuperscript{11} Still others, notably Soviet scholars and a few Western historians argue that the Soviet Union was driven into Germany's arms primarily by a failure of the West to conclude an alliance with the Soviet Union, caused primarily by Western anti-communist hostility and paranoia.\textsuperscript{12}

Despite these differences, most historians concur that the Soviet-German agreements of August and September 1939, and their accompanying secret protocols, provided "the framework"\textsuperscript{13} for Soviet actions in 1939-40, which "set the conditions for Soviet political and territorial advancement westward."\textsuperscript{14} With the pledge of neutrality in the summer of 1939, the Soviets acquiesced to the German invasion of Western Poland and pledged to stay out of a European war. For Hitler, this pledge removed his

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\textit{Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1991: A Retrospective}, ed. Gabriel Gorodetsky (London, Frank Cass, 1994). Roberts, \textit{The Soviet Union and the Origins}, p. 93, argues that there was no grand plan, or even inclination, for Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe in 1939. Instead the Soviets reacted to events and exploited advantages that came their way: "The Soviet movement into Eastern Europe was more like a series of improvised and often clumsy reactions to a changing German threat," he writes "There was no grand plan of Soviet expansion in 1939-40." \textit{The Soviet Union and the Origins}, p. 104.


\textsuperscript{12} The most notable western historian who holds this view is Michael Carley. See his \textit{1939}.

\textsuperscript{13} Roberts, \textit{The Soviet Union and the Origins}, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{14} Raack, \textit{Stalin's Drive to the West}, p. 2.
fear of a joint Franco-Soviet military response to his planned invasion of Poland. In exchange, the Germans acquiesced to the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland, the Baltic states and Bessarabia. As one historian characterizes it, "The secret protocols attached to the pact set the price the USSR charged for its benign neutrality in the forthcoming war: Bessarabia, Estonia, Latvia, and the better part of Poland, up to and including half of its capital, Warsaw."\footnote{Jan T. Gross, \textit{Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).}

\textbf{B. The Russian Textbook View}

During the Soviet period the myth of 1939-40 rested in large measure on the denial of the existence of the secret protocols.\footnote{The Soviet interpretation is drawn heavily from Graham Lyons, ed., \textit{The Russian Version of the Second World War: The History of the War as Taught to Soviet Schoolchildren} (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1976), but also relies on a sampling of Soviet and World History textbooks written between 1975 and 1990 covering a variety of grade levels: T. C. Golubeva and L. C. Gellershtein, \textit{Rasskazy po istorii SSSR dlia 5 klassa}, uchebnik dlia 5 klassa srednei shkoly, sixteenth ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1990) [hereafter Golubeva (1990); P. I. Potemkin et al., \textit{Istoriia SSSR (1938-1981)}, uchebnik dlia 10 klass srednei shkoly, twelfth ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1983) [hereafter, Potemkin]; V. K. Furaev et al., \textit{Noveishaia istoriia (1939-1974)}, uchebnoe posobie dlia 10 klassa srednei shkoly, 6th ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1975) [hereafter, Furaev (1975)], and idem., \textit{Noveishaia istoriia (1939-1988)}, uchebnik dlia 11 klassa srednei shkoly (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1989) [hereafter, Furaev (1989).}} Indeed, of all the previously taboo subjects now mentioned in Russian history textbooks, the secret protocols are the most significant. Yet, the texts are extremely tentative in both their detailed descriptions of the protocols, and in criticizing Soviet action. The protocols are often mentioned only...
in passing, or in some cases parts of the document itself are simply excerpted without comment. Virtually the only description of the protocols in the eleventh grade text by Ostrovskii and Utkin is a single vague sentence: "The treaty had a secret additional protocol which talked about the fate of the Polish state."\textsuperscript{17} What exactly that "fate" is goes unanswered.

As with many events that portray Russia in a critical light, the texts avoid direct criticism of the Soviet Union and instead seek to spread the blame. Ostrovskii and Utkin write of the protocol's designs on Poland: "An unscrupulous political game in which each of the three sides tried to gain security at the expense of the others, led to the fact that the peoples of all the countries lost."\textsuperscript{18} Not only does this avoid the entire question of legality, but blame is shifted to all parties involved, including Poland. Indeed, by stating that "each of the three sides" was involved in political machinations to "gain security" one is left with the impression that German and Soviet actions may actually have been justified, and Poland was equally responsible for its own occupation and dismemberment.


More importantly, the protocols are never directly linked to Soviet expansion.\textsuperscript{19} In fact, Soviet behavior is rationalized by emphasizing, post-hoc, that the agreement enhanced the security of the Soviet Union. This is essentially an extension of the same line of argument advanced by Soviet textbooks to justify the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact itself: it prevented a two-front war and allowed time for the Soviets to build up their military capabilities. "The acceptance of the German proposition," goes the Soviet view, "enabled the Soviet Union to avoid war on two fronts in unfavorable conditions, and to gain time to strengthen the country's defenses."\textsuperscript{20}

Despite the fact these "advantages" were largely illusory, as revealed by the German invasion in 1941, the new post-Soviet texts extend this old argument to justify the signing of the secret protocols. By doing so, they offer a truly unique argument not found in the Soviet era textbooks: that the expansion of Soviet territory as proscribed by the secret protocols enhanced Soviet security. For example, Danilov and Kosulina write:

By concluding the treaty with Germany, Stalin significantly removed the USSR as an initial point of attack by a potential enemy, and received a gain in time for

\textsuperscript{19} Kreder's \textit{Contemporary History} is the one exception. He writes, "The secret protocol was witness to the fact that the USSR became a co-participant in the subsequent redrawing of the map of Eastern Europe. Hitler's decisive decision to begin aggression against Poland became an indirect result of the signing of these documents" A. A. Kreder, \textit{Noveishaia istoriia, XX vek}, uchebnik dlia osnovoi shkoly, third ed. (Moscow: Tsentr gumanitarnogo obrazovaniia, 1997) [hereafter, Kreder (1997)], p. 127.

\textsuperscript{20} Lyons, p. 10.
the strengthening of the defenses of the country and a real possibility to reestablish the Soviet state in the borders of the former Russian empire.²¹

"Since the main forces of both fighting coalitions were located on the western front," states Soroko-Tsiupa's tenth grade World History, "the Soviet Union adopted new measures to expand its territory, following from the secret Soviet-German protocols."²²

According to Dmitrenko's eleventh grade Russian history text, "In accordance with the division of 'spheres of interest' the Soviet leadership strengthened the security of the country, securing its military-strategic position."²³

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²¹ A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina, Istoriia Rossii, XX vek, uchebnaia kniga dlia 9 klassa obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii, second ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1996) [hereafter, Danilov (1996)], p. 204. The text is identical to the first edition as well. See idem., Istoriia Rossii, XX vek, uchebnaia kniga dlia 9 klassa obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii, first ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1995) [hereafter, Danilov (1995)], p. 204. The Soviet textbooks do make the argument that the expansion of the western borders did benefit the USSR, but it is of course not explicitly linked to the secret protocols. See, for example, Potemkin, p. 18.

²² O.S Soroko-Tsiupa, Mir v XX vek, uchebnoe posobie dlia 10-11 klassov obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii, first ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie) [hereafter, Soroko-Tsiupa], p. 170.

²³ See V. P. Dmitrenko, V. D. Esakov, and V. A. Shestakov, Istoriia Otechestva, XX vek: 11 klass, uchebnoe posobie dlia obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchebnih zavedenii, first ed. (Moscow: Drofa, 1995) [hereafter, Dmitrenko (1995)], p. 277, and idem, Istoriia Otechestva, XX vek: 11 klass, uchebnoe posobie dlia obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchebnih zavedenii, first ed. (Moscow: Drofa, 1998) [hereafter, Dmitrenko (1995)], p. 277. The new generation of history textbooks also diminish the significance of Soviet behavior by comparing it to that of the west and, without actually condemning Soviet behavior, imply that it was no worse than that of Britain or the United States. As Soroko-Tsiupa's tenth grade world history text, p. 160, notes: "The secret protocol witnessed a turn in Soviet foreign policy to the same kind of 'Munich' course of 'appeasement' of Germany, which had been carried out previously by Britain and France in the time of American neutrality."
This argument—that the expansion of Soviet territory as proscribed by the secret protocols enhanced Soviet security—not only whitewashes the Pact's significant contribution to the onset of war by easing the German invasion of Poland, but provides yet another justification for Soviet annexation of the western republics.

Indeed, the overall significance of the protocols, particularly the whole question of the legality and morality of occupation and incorporation of the western republics, is considerably downplayed. In this sense it continues to follow the lead taken by Soviet authors. No textbook explicitly discusses the relationship between the protocols and the Western interventions and occupations. The protocols are never related to the invasion of Eastern Poland, and occupation of Western Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic States, and Bessarabia, and the brief, yet bloody war with Finland. They do not discuss international reactions to the signing of the protocols, nor do they discuss the legality of the protocols under contemporary or subsequent international law.

Despite the added justification of the annexations noted above, the new Russian textbooks continue to advance the Soviet argument that the annexations of the western republics were either historically justified, or widely supported by popular opinion, and thus in either case, a legitimate action. In most cases, the Soviet-orchestrated election fraud, coups and causus belli that precipitated Soviet military interventions in those countries are ignored. Soviet texts state that the expansion of the Soviet Union's western borders was universally embraced by the local populations; that it was the beginning of the "liberation" of Europe, further confirming that the Great Patriotic war
was just. The new Russian texts are much more subtle, and instead stress that little military action was taken in these states. This, in conjunction with the argument that the advance was historically justified, strongly implies popular support for the interventions:

The 'hidden diplomacy' preceding the conclusion of the secret additional protocols with Germany, created the conditions for the expansion of the Soviet Union's borders in the west. The Stalin leadership's geopolitical gains were achieved practically without any active military action to unite again the territory of the former Russian empire lost in 1918-1920.²⁴

This view dominates the discussion of events of the period, reflecting several important features of the Myth of 1939-40 that are prominent in the interpretations of the Western interventions discussed below. First, Russian history texts omit any discussion of the human cost of the secret protocols and Soviet interventions in the West in 1939-40—the mass arrests, detentions, torture, executions, mass civilian deportations, and Sovietization policies in the annexed territories. This omission, along with factually-accurate statements regarding the general absence of any direct military conflict in the region (with the exception of Finland), strongly implies that Soviet intervention was generally peaceful. Such a view, however, is a considerable distortion of the Soviet experience in the region in that period. Second, by emphasizing how Soviet actions served to "reunite" former "lost" Russian territories, the new texts

strongly imply that Soviet action was just and good. Both points serve to justify Soviet intervention and rationalize Soviet behavior.

Though all of the major Western interventions in 1939-40 were undeniably expedited and eased by the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the secret protocols, the circumstances surrounding each of them were unique and deserve closer attention. The following sections discuss the Russian textbook treatment of three specific cases—the invasion, occupation and annexation of eastern Poland, the Baltic states, and the Winter War with Finland. Each section is preceded by a discussion of the historical consensus view of each of the events.

II. Intervention in Eastern Poland

A. The Historical Consensus

Just as historians still debate Soviet motives for the rapprochement with Germany, they also debate the motives for Soviet intervention in Poland. Pointing to the secret protocols, some argue that it was motivated largely by imperial ambition and revanchism—to regain lands lost to Poland in the Russo-Polish war of 1919-20. Others argue that it was purely a defensive move, anticipating a future war with Germany. Though historians still don’t know Stalin’s precise thinking—and Stalin, more than any other Soviet leader controlled the direction of Soviet foreign policy in the 1930’s—the truth probably lies somewhere in between. The Soviets had, of course, legitimate security interests in the West. They also had grievances over the loss of western
territory. Rapprochement with Germany, and Poland's misfortune in September 1939, gave Stalin the opportunity to secure both of these interests.

At the time, however, the Soviets denied the existence of the secret protocols and went to great lengths to portray their subsequent interventions as the result of German provocation, motivated not by imperialism, but by altruistic concern for the local populations. With regard to the invasion of Eastern Poland on 17 September, Soviet officials offered two justifications, both largely humanitarian in nature. First, they claimed that the Red Army was forced to intervene to protect Ukrainians and Belorussians from the German advance. Second, they claimed that the Red Army presence in Poland was necessary to assist the liberation of the local Slavic minorities (Ukrainians and Belorussians) from the "oppressive yoke" of the Polish landlords. At the time, Soviet officials spoke of the moral imperative for intervention and its accordance with international law.

Despite disagreement over Soviet motives, few historians accept these arguments as anything other than self-serving Soviet propaganda. The protocols themselves are the most powerful evidence available that undermines Soviet claims of humanitarianism, morality and legality. Indeed, it is in part because of the inculpatory nature of the protocols that they were kept secret and why, for more than 40 years, Soviet authorities

25 Indeed, until the Soviet Union admitted the existence of the secret protocols in the late 1980's, this version of events remained the official view. Even the Polish communist party openly proffered this version of events. See for example, "Polish Officials Ignoring 1939 Soviet Invasion," Seattle Times, 17 September 1986, p. B2.
denied their existence. Beyond that, available records document extensive high-level Soviet-German military and diplomatic consultations over Poland that belie Soviet concern for the treatment of Poles or non-Polish minorities at the hands of the Germans. Molotov, for example, phoned the German ambassador in Moscow on September 8 to congratulate the Germans on their entry into Warsaw.\textsuperscript{26}

Moreover, there is abundant evidence—including admissions by Soviet officials—that such arguments were purely for public consumption within the USSR. For instance, to maximize the credibility of the humanitarian intervention argument, the Soviets carefully waited to intervene in Poland until Warsaw had fallen to the Germans. When German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop asked on 3 September why the Soviets had yet to occupy "their portion" of Poland, Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov replied that "...through excessive haste we might injure our cause and promote unity among our opponents."\textsuperscript{27} In response to concern over the anti-German content of Soviet propaganda, Molotov reassured the German ambassador on 10 September that such public statements were required "to make the intervention of the Soviet Union more plausible to the masses and at the same time avoid giving the appearance of an aggressor."\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Carley, 1939, p. 215.

\textsuperscript{27} Quoted in Gross, Revolution from Abroad, p. 10. To defend their intervention on humanitarian grounds, the Soviets needed to wait until Warsaw had fallen to the Germans before sending the Red Army across the border.

\textsuperscript{28} Quoted in Gross, Revolution from Abroad, p. 11.
Most scholars agree that the intervention in Poland was hardly consistent with international law. The intervention ran afoul of a number of international and bilateral treaties to which the Soviets were party. It violated the 1921 Riga Treaty, signed with Poland after the Soviet defeat in the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, and the Polish-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty of August 1932.²⁹ It also likely constituted a violation of international law under the terms of the 1933 London Convention on the Definition of Aggression.

Finally, the political justification for the Polish intervention was designed to deflect criticism by casting Soviet behavior in a moral light. Again, the secret protocols make this argument quite dubious. More importantly, the well-documented brutality of the Soviet intervention and occupation of Poland significantly undermine such moral claims. Specifically, we know that the Polish intervention, occupation and eventual annexation of Polish territories into the USSR was hardly the peaceful affair that Soviet propaganda made it out.

²⁹ See The Soviet Takeover of the Polish Eastern Provinces, 1939-41, ed. Keith Sword (London: MacMillan, 1991), pp. xvi-xvii, citing Documents on Polish-Soviet Relations (London: Heinemann, 1961), pp. 3-8, 15-17. The point here is not to make a normative argument about Soviet actions, but to simply establish the empirical record, actions and statements of Soviet leaders and scholars about these and others events and arguments made about the nature of Soviet foreign policy in the 1930's. As will be shown below Russian textbooks portray Soviet foreign policy as entirely peaceful, or at least motivated by entirely peaceful intentions: support and adherence to the spirit and letter of international agreements (the only international obligation ironically, that they seemed to adhere to was their agreement with Germany, which allowed their war machine to be built up against the USSR. Russian texts are righteously indignant about how they adhered to those agreements and the Germans "stabbed them in the back."
Invasion. Consistent with the non-aggression pact and the secret protocols, the Germans offered no resistance to the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland. Nor did the Red Army experience much resistance from the remnants of the Polish army, which was devastated by the Wehrmacht more than two weeks earlier.

However, the Soviet invasion was hardly a bloodless affair for the Polish military. At least 15,000 Polish military personnel were killed between September 1939 and June 1941, mostly as a result of summary executions carried out by the NKVD. Though the Soviets did not formally declare war on Poland, instead claiming that it's mission was largely humanitarian, they held at least 240,000 Polish officers, NCO's and soldiers as POWs in the initial period of the intervention.30 Many were turned over to the Germans, while approximately 45,000 were detained without formal charges in nearly 100 camps throughout occupied Poland and in the Soviet interior.31 In April-May 1940 the NKVD executed thousands of Polish officers who were being held at three separate camps in the Soviet Union (with another several thousand still unaccounted for).32 The most widely known of these mass executions occurred in the Katyn forest near Smolensk, where at least 4,500 Polish officers were killed.33 While

30 Figures from Repressii protiv poliakov, pp. 4-5.

31 For details on the camp system see Gross, "Polish POW Camps in the Soviet-Occupied Western Ukraine," in The Soviet Takeover, pp. 44-56.

32 On this, see also Zbigniew Siemaszko, "The Mass Deportations of the Polish Population to the USSR, 1940-41," in The Soviet Takeover, pp. 217, 233 n. 2.
Katyn has come to symbolize NKVD brutality in Poland (and one which both the Soviets and the Germans widely exploited for propaganda purposes as early as 1943\textsuperscript{34}), it was in fact only one of three such mass executions carried out during this period: The Politburo order authorizing the officers' executions at Katyn also called for the execution of more than 4,000 officers near Kharkov and more than 6,000 in Kalinin (currently Tver) (as well as an additional 11,000 executions of civilian prisoners in occupied Eastern Poland.\textsuperscript{35}) The Soviet Union long denied that such atrocities ever took place, or that any such orders were given, and instead emphasized the "peacefulness" of the Soviet intervention.

The civilian population of Eastern Poland also would have been hard-pressed to characterize the Soviet invasion as a "peaceful" affair. Initially, there was some popular support for the Red Army's arrival among certain parts of the population—primarily young Ukrainians, Belorussians and Jews.\textsuperscript{36} Yet, this is little surprise since these

\textsuperscript{33} To date the most authoritative study of the Katyn massacre is \\textit{Katyn': Plenniki neob"javlenoi voiny}, ed. G.I. Reznichenko (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond "Demokratiia," 1997.


\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Repressii protiv poliakov}, p. 4; \textit{Katyn'}, p. 36.

\textsuperscript{36} Soviet propaganda long attributed the ease of the military operation to mass sympathy for the Soviet Union. However, the best available scholarship on the Soviet intervention casts serious doubt on this claim. In some cases local populations did welcome the Red Army and even spontaneously erected triumphal arches to greet them.
groups, who were fiercely anti-Polish (Ukrainians and Belorussians were harshly discriminated against), constituted a majority in eastern Poland. Many saw either Soviet or German occupation as an acceptable alternative to Polish rule. For many, particularly Ukrainians, the end of Polish subjugation was the first stage of national liberation. Jews welcomed the Russians because many were genuinely sympathetic to communism, but also because of legitimate fear of the Germans: Soviet occupation meant not being under German authority. In addition, Jews (and even many Poles) welcomed the Red Army's arrival in September 1939 if only because it brought with it the possibility of the reestablishment of public order, which had quickly collapsed in September 1939—a collapse that witnessed the murder of thousands of Jews and Poles in many parts of eastern Poland and Belorussia during the first few weeks of September. Ukrainian and Belorussian mobs beat and robbed Poles and Jews, looting and burning their homes.37

Yet, any initial enthusiasm quickly faded in the first days of the Red Army's advance. Vigilante violence continued upon the Red Army's arrival. The available evidence indicates that many Red Army officers encouraged Ukrainians and

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Yet, there is ample evidence that the Soviet intelligence cooked-up many of these "spontaneous" warm welcomes in advance. In some cases Red Army units themselves erected triumphal arches a day or two after arriving in a town. In other cases, after the initial days of the invasion, word got out that warm greetings were expected, or specific requests were made in advance. In many cases local populations went along grudgingly or were forced to do so. In some cases even the retreating Germans ordered the local population to make arrangements for greeting the soon-to-be arriving Russians. See Gross, Revolution from Abroad, pp. 28-30.

Belorussians to take retribution against their enemies, which many did with great relish. As a result they widely condoned and even incited widescale Ukrainian and Belorussian peasant attacks against Jews and Poles in the early days of the invasion. Soviet army officials frequently recognized the authority of vigilante groups as local militias, and thus sanctioned their actions. Polish and Jewish appeals to the Soviet authorities to restrain Ukrainian and Belorussian violence were routinely dismissed.  

_Repression Under Soviet Occupation._ After the first few weeks of occupation, as authority passed from the Red Army to the NKVD, the majority of the population of eastern Poland was subjected, directly or indirectly, to mass arrests, torture, summary executions and deportations. With regard to civilian arrests and detentions, the best known estimates put the total number of civilians held at one time or another during 1939-41 at approximately 500-750,000, or more than 10 per cent of the entire male population. Available NKVD records document arrests of more than 100,000 Polish citizens for various "counter-revolutionary activities." Most prisoners were held in detention six to eight months in appalling conditions until they were sentenced, often

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38 See Gross, _Revolution from Abroad_, pp. 35-45.

39 Gross's estimate is 500,000 (_Revolution from Abroad_, p. 155), while the official Polish estimate is 750,000. One indicator of the extent of Soviet repressions is the number of prisons and detention centers that sprang up throughout Eastern Poland. Due to mass arrests, demand for prisons was high. Schools, church cloisters, warehouses, basements of police stations and entire office buildings throughout the occupied area became makeshift jails used for detention of civilian prisoners, nearly doubling the number of prisons that existed before the Soviet occupation. Those prisons, old and new, were filled with hundreds of thousands of Polish citizens. See Gross, _Revolution from Abroad_, pp. 151-53.
as a result of tortured confessions. Most were given various terms of hard labor in
Soviet Gulags. No less than 18,000 are known to have been executed.\textsuperscript{40}

Some of the worst atrocities came during the summer of 1941, when the Red
Army frantically retreated in the face of the German invasion. There is considerable
evidence of mass executions of thousands of Polish citizens who were held in detention
at the time of the Soviet evacuation. The most notorious of these occurred in Lwów,
where more than 12,000 civilian prisoners were executed in the first week of the Soviet-
German war.\textsuperscript{41} Most of the prisoners, however, were sent on forced marches to labor
camps in the Soviet interior. The weak and infirm prisoners, those who dropped from
heat or exhaustion, were usually shot. The most reliable estimates put the number of
deaths on these marches at around one in ten.\textsuperscript{42}

Mass deportations of Polish citizens—primarily family members of "counter-
revolutionaries and nationalists”—were also a central feature of Soviet repression in
Eastern Poland, particularly in the period after the annexation in 1940. More than
300,000 Polish citizens were deported to various locations in the USSR during four
separate operations in February, April and June of 1940, and May-June of 1941. The

\textsuperscript{40} See Introduction to Repressii protiv pol'jakov i pol'skikh grazhdan,
Istoricheskie sborniki "Memoriala" (Moscow: Zven'a, 1997), p. 5; O.A. Gor'lanov and
A.B. Roginskii, "Ob arestakh v zapadnykh oblastiakh Belorussii i Ukrainy v 1939-1941
gg.," in Repressii protiv pol'jakov, pp. 77-113. On the conditions in the prisons see
Gross, Revolution from Abroad, pp. 144-86.

\textsuperscript{41} Gross, Revolution from Abroad, pp. 179-81.

\textsuperscript{42} Gross, "Polish POW Camps in the Soviet-Occupied Western Ukraine," p. 52
May-June 1941 operation also targeted populations in the occupied territories of the Baltic States (as noted in the next section), Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Each operation was announced and carried out in a single 24-hour period, so most victims had little if any warning of their departure.\footnote{The most recent and authoritative estimate of 309-321,000 deportees is found in A.E. Gur'ianov, "Pol'skie spetsereselentsy v SSSR v 1940-1941," in Repressii protiv poliakov, p. 116. However previous estimates were not terribly far off: Siemaszko estimated 250,000 in "The Mass Deportations of the Polish Population to the USSR, 1940-41," p. 217. Gross, citing official Polish estimates, put the total number at approximately 450,000 (Revolution from Abroad, p. 194).} Travel by cargo trains into the Soviet interior took two to four weeks, with several additional days to reach final destinations. Numerous first hand accounts have described the appalling conditions of those trips, with over-crowded wagons, lack of proper sanitation, food, water and heat.\footnote{Summarized in Gross, Revolution from Abroad, pp. 187-224.} An estimated 6,500 hundred people, primarily children, the elderly and infirm, died en route. At least 22,000 became seriously ill.\footnote{Gur'ianov, "Pol'skie spetsereselentsy," p. 121, estimates that 2 per cent died and 7 per cent fell ill en route.}

After the Red Army reoccupied Western Ukraine and Belorussia in 1944, the population was subjected to further arrests and deportations. Approximately 39-48,000 Polish citizens were sent to internment camps in the Soviet Union in 1944-45.\footnote{Repressii protiv poliakov, p. 8.} As late as 1951, some 4,500 former members of Polish anti-fascist military units
(along with their families) who had decided to be repatriated from the West after the war, were arrested and shipped off to Siberia.

Estimates of the total number of victims—i.e., arrests, deportations, injury and/or death—directly from the Soviet occupation between 1939-41 and 1944-51 are speculative. Polish sources list the number of victims in the millions, though most agree that this is probably high. A more reasonable figure has been put at 510-540,000. Historian Jan Gross puts the total number of deaths at 300,000 people. Even these conservative estimates are staggering.

Annexation. Annexation of eastern Poland followed shortly after the Soviet intervention. In 1940 western Ukraine and western Belorussia joined their respective titular Soviet republics. The Soviets went to great lengths to make the annexation appear as a peaceful, voluntary union that was an expression of popular will. Just weeks after the invasion, Soviet authorities began organizing elections to two new

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47 The Polish units were formed under the terms of an agreement between the Polish exile government and the Soviet government in August 1941. In accordance with the agreement the Soviet government annointed Polish military personnel held in Soviet camps and Polish deportees, many of whom joined the anti-fascist units.


49 Represii protiv poliakov, p. 9.

50 This estimate is for the period through June 1941. Gross compares that figure to the number of Polish citizens killed by the Nazis in German-occupied Poland during the first year of occupation (120,000). He concludes that “the Soviets killed or drove to their deaths three or four times as many people as the Nazis from a population half the size of that under German jurisdiction." Gross, Revolution from Abroad, p. 229. Norman Davies in God's Playground, 2, p. 451, puts the figure at 750,000, as cited in Gross, p. 229.
National legislatures (The People's Assemblies of the Western Ukraine and of Western Belorussia), held in late October 1939. The elections were largely determined in advance. Electoral commissions were composed mostly of Soviet authorities—members of both the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviets, Soviet military and security officers, and hand-selected locals. Candidates—usually only one per district—were also selected in advance. There is abundant evidence of widespread voter intimidation and abuse, as well as flagrant corruption and fraud during the election.  

Election turnout was greater than 90 per cent in both regions, and more than 90 per cent of voters cast ballots for the official candidate.

Both People's Assemblies met in late October and, at the end of the two-day sessions, each assembly appointed delegations to travel to Moscow to request incorporation into the Soviet Union. On November 1, 1939, the requests of both delegations were approved by the USSR Supreme Soviet and by the middle of that month, western Ukraine and western Belorussia had been incorporated into the Soviet Union.

**B. The Russian Textbook View**

The new Russian interpretation of the Polish intervention differs little from the Soviet version. The view of the intervention, occupation and annexation of Eastern Poland is marked by factual distortion and omission that serves to justify Soviet actions.

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51 Details in Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, pp. 71-106.
and rationalize military intervention. Consistent with the "Myth of 1939-40," the Russian interpretation, like its Soviet predecessor, paints an image of the Polish intervention as legal—or morally justified—voluntary and peaceful.

The Soviet textbook interpretation, like Soviet propaganda, justified the Red Army invasion and occupation of Eastern Poland as a humanitarian move to protect the Ukrainian and Belorussian populations, whose "territories had been illegally included in the composition of Poland in 1920. . . ."52

The movement of the Hitlerites to the east meant slavery for the populations of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, which went to Poland according to the Riga treaty of 1921. The Soviet Union took under its protection the life and property of the western Ukrainians and western Belorussians, who met the Red Army with joy and universally called for the reunification of their land with the Ukrainian and Belorussian Soviet Republics.53

Despite mention of the secret protocols, the new Russian textbooks similarly interpret the Russian invasion of Poland. While not referring to the legality of the inclusion of these territories into Poland, the new Russian textbooks nonetheless advance the view that the annexation of these two republics was morally justified because it corrected an historical injustice. The very fact that they are referred to as Western Ukraine and

52 Lyons, pp. 11-12.

Western Belorussia is a not-so-subtle indication of this view:

In September 1939 [western Ukraine and western Belorussia], which went to Poland according to the Riga Treaty of 1921, were joined with the Soviet Union. The city of Vilnius, which was part of western Belorussia, was transferred to Lithuania. The **liberated regions**—western Belorussia and western Ukraine—**reunited** with the Belorussian and Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republics.\(^{54}\)

\(^{54}\) Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 277. Emphasis added. This subtle justification for intervention based on correcting an historical injustice and reunifying diaspora populations is also seen in the textbooks treatment of the Soviet occupation and annexation of Bessarabia. In recounting that intervention, Soviet texts stressed the prior "illegal" Rumanian annexation in 1918, the "harsh exploitation" of Bessarabia's Moldovan population and of ethnic Ukrainians in Northern Bukovina, and how, for more than twenty years, the Moldovan people "struggled for their liberation." This opportunity, according to Soviet texts, came in the summer of 1940, when, "on the demand of the Soviet government, Rumania was forced to return Bessarabia to our country, and also to give up the northern part of Bukovina, which is populated basically by Ukrainians [Potemkin, pp. 21-22]. The new Russian textbook interpretation is essentially identical:

In 1918 Rumania seized Bessarabia from the Soviet republic. The Soviet Union repeatedly protested the illegal occupation of Bessarabia by the Rumanians. However, the Rumanian royal government did not consider the protests.

On 26 June 1940 the Soviet government issued an ultimatum to Rumania for the return of Bessarabia. This demand of the Soviet government was satisfied [Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 279].

In addition, Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 280, refer to the annexation of Bessarabia as a "reunification of the populations of Bessarabia and the Moldavian Autonomous SSR, which was part of Soviet Ukraine." Eventually, "in August 1940 after the Red Army entered Bessarabia, the northern part of Bukovina, whose Ukrainian population tended towards Soviet Ukraine, was also transferred from Rumania to the Soviet Union and included in the Ukrainian SSR."

Similarly, Danilov's tenth grade history textbook states: "In June 1940, the government of the USSR demanded of Rumania the return to the Soviet Union of Bessarabia, which had been seized by Rumanian forces in 1918, and to give back Northern Bukovina, which is populated basically by Ukrainians. Not finding support
The author's choice of language here demonstrates how the Polish invasion and annexation of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia is considered entirely legitimate.

Beyond reference to the "liberation" and "reunification" of these territories, the new Russian texts refer also use language to emphasize the innocuousness of the Soviet intervention and obscure the fact that Soviet intervention was, in effect, an illegal, violent, military invasion and occupation of an independent state. For example, Germany's intervention in Poland in 1939 is referred to as an "invasion," while the Red Army simply "entered" or "crossed the border" into Poland. "In accordance with the secret protocol of the Soviet-German agreement of 17 September 1939," writes Dmitrenko and his colleagues, "a portion of the Red Army entered Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia."55 Danilov and Kosulina's discussion of the Poland invasion states:

The invasion of Poland by German forces began on 1 September 1939. The Soviet leadership in the conditions of the beginning of war in Europe began the realization of the secret protocols signed with Germany. On 17 September 1939 Red Army forces crossed the Polish border and took Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine under its control.56

from Germany, which was busy completing military operations in the west, Rumania was forced to satisfy the Soviet ultimatum." Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 204.


The statement concludes, "In November of that year [Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine] legally became part of the Belorussian and Ukrainian SSR." The texts, therefore, are quite explicit in the view that the intervention was no only just, but also legal. In addition, by failing to mention the human costs of the intervention, by emphasizing the ease of the military operation, the Russian texts strongly imply that there was popular support for Soviet intervention and annexation.

**Repressions.** Indeed, hardly any mention is made of the mass repressions and significant death toll that resulted from the Soviet intervention. One exception is discussion of the 1940 massacre of Polish officers in the Katyn forest. This very likely receives mention because it remains one of the most widely-publicized and politically volatile of the atrocities committed during the occupation. Its inclusion is notable in that, like the secret protocols, it too was a taboo subject during the Soviet years. Yet, as with the secret protocols, though the new Russian texts include previously taboo subjects, they tend to obscure the relevance of these events, and diminish their overall significance. Further, only a few of the new textbooks even mention the event, and even then the significance of the event is rarely noted.

In 1942 in the Katyn forest in the area of Smolensk remains were discovered of several thousand Polish officers who happened to be on the territory of the USSR after 17 September 1939. At first the Germans decided to carry out an

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58 The only textbooks that even mention Katyn are Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 282 and Soroko-Tsiupa, p. 169.
independent investigation by Polish doctors. They came to the conclusion that the deaths of these people took place in 1940, but [the Soviet government] refused to go along with anti-Soviet pronouncements, not wishing to give the trump card to the Nazis, their sworn enemies. A commission of the International Red Cross publicly announced that the Polish officers were shot in 1940. The USSR then refuted this announcement, putting all the blame on Germany. Only in 1990 did the leadership of the USSR officially admit responsibility of the NKVD for the Katyn shooting.\(^{59}\)

Despite this candid admission, it is not used as a point of discussion of other, equally horrific NKVD crimes in Poland and the western republics. Indeed, the deaths of the Polish officers at Katyn amounted to only about three per cent of all Polish deaths at the hands of the Soviets. There is also no mention of the mass arrests, deportations and other repressive Soviet policies. Only Dolutskii refers to the deportations (however he doesn't mention Katyn): Of the "three to five million Poles" on Soviet territory, "A significant portion of them were sent to Siberia, several tens of thousands fell victim to repressions."\(^{60}\) Yet, what does this mean? One has the sense that "repressions' are bad, but we are never told exactly what they are.

Katyn is significant in that it provides a point of discussion of Soviet-Polish relations in general, particularly at the end of the war. Instead of addressing the issue of Katyn in the context of negotiations with the West over the future of Poland, for example, most Russian textbooks simple state innocuously that, for example, "the

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question of Poland occupied a large place in the [Crimean] conference" without any
further explanation.  

61 Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 364. The new Russian texts also continue to
omit other questions directly related to the Katyn massacre, namely Stalin's desire to
dominate Poland. Most notably is the absence of any real discussion or even mention of
the Polish uprising of 1943. Soviet texts mention the event, but offer a justification for
Soviet behavior. Not only was the uprising "led by "forces of internal reaction," but,
innocently, "the Soviet command was not given advance notice of the uprising, which
took place with little or no preparation." In classic understatement, Soviet texts stated
that "the attempt of the Soviet troops to link up with the insurgents was not crowned
with success. By the beginning of October the Hitler troops had put down the rising
and razed Warsaw to its foundations" [Lyons, p. 71]. However, with few exceptions,
the new Russian texts don't even mention the uprising. In one case, the text avoids
placing blame on the Soviet leadership, which Western historians generally agree were
responsible for inciting the Poles to rise up, and then leaving them to be slaughtered by
the Germans:

On 1 August forces loyal to the exile government began an anti-fascist uprising in
Warsaw, supported by a majority of the Warsaw's residents. The leaders of the
uprising had as their goal not only the liberation from the fascists, but also to
consolidate themselves in Warsaw before the arrival of the Red Army. Stalin
called them a "click of criminals." On 2 October the leaders of the uprising
capitulated, the Germans moved in and left the city in ruins [Ostroiskii (1995)
and (1997), p. 305].

In another case, the authors ask "Could the Red Army in August-September 1944 have
liberated Warsaw?" ostensibly in an attempt to objectively present both sides of the
issue. Yet, the explanation is strongly biased in favor of the traditional Soviet
interpretation:

Western publications claim that the Soviet command deliberately left forces at
the walls of Warsaw and by so doing condemned the uprising to failure. Their
opponents believe that the exhausting 40-day offensive of the First Belorussian
front, which carried heavy losses, had been cut off from their bases, and did not
have air support, did not have the strength to fulfill this mission [Ostroiskii

It would of course be virtually impossible for readers to adequately assess the validity
of the alternative "Western" view.
III. Intervention in the Baltic States

A. The Historical consensus

As with Poland, the Soviet authorities went to great lengths to justify legally and morally the occupations and eventual annexations of the Baltic states in 1939-40. However, on the eve of Soviet occupation in November 1939 the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania looked nothing at all like Poland on the eve of Soviet occupation in September of 1939. They were not under attack by Nazi Germany nor had state authority completely collapsed, both of which were pretexts for Soviet intervention in Poland. In short, there was less obvious political justification for intervention in the Baltics. Instead they claimed that the presence of the Red Army was widely popular in those states, that they were acting in accordance with the wishes of their elected leadership, and that the Soviet presence in those states was largely peaceful. Again, though, the secret protocols and the available historical record have led historians to reach very different conclusions about the Soviet experience in the Baltic states.

Historians still debate the motives and intentions behind Soviet intervention in the Baltics. In essence the views fall into two camps. One believes that Soviet actions were fundamentally imperialist in nature and design: that Stalin planned to sovietize and annex the Baltic states ever since the signing of the secret protocols in the summer of 1939; that the Soviets had ambitious territorial aims in the region. Others argue that Soviet policy was driven primarily by security concerns in the Baltic region; that Soviet
aims in the Baltic were limited, and occupation and annexation came only in response to
the heightened threat of Nazi hegemony in Europe (the occupation of the Baltic states
followed the German invasion of Norway and Denmark in mid-March, and then France
in June 1940).62

In the absence of "smoking gun" archival evidence, particularly that which
reveals Stalin's motives and interests, the most plausible view lies somewhere in the
middle. The Soviets did have legitimate security interests in the Baltic area, hence their
reasonable desire for politically- and militarily-acquiescent neighbors.63 The secret

62 A good review of the debates and the current state of knowledge on these
events is Geoffrey Roberts, "Soviet Policy and the Baltic States, 1939-1940: A
Reappraisal," Diplomacy and Statecraft 6, no. 3 (November 1995), pp. 672-700.
Roberts's own view falls into the latter camp, though he too hastily pronounces the
death of the former. He argues that "there is no evidence that Moscow had any plans . . . [in
the fall of 1939] . . . to Sovietize the Baltic states. Moscow made plain the limits of
its ambitions both to Baltic statesmen and, more importantly, to its own diplomatic
representatives in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, who tended towards the advocacy of a
more radical policy" (p. 696). However there is also no evidence that disconfirms this
hypothesis. Statements by Molotov and Stalin that Roberts cites as evidence of more
limited Soviet aims are not inconsistent with the alternative view. It is not at all
surprising, for example, that Stalin and Molotov assured Baltic officials in October 1939
that signing a mutual assistance treaty and allowing Soviet troops on their territories
would not be a threat to their independence and that the Soviet Union had no designs on
their territories. Nor is it surprising that this was stated publicly. Indeed, we know that
Stalin and Molotov were extremely sensitive to foreign and domestic perceptions of
Soviet policy and that Moscow frequently fabricated "incidents" and utilized
propaganda in order to justify Soviet actions for foreign and domestic audiences. It is
not unusual therefore, that so soon after the signing the mutual assistance treaties,
Molotov would chastise Soviet diplomats who seemed to encourage the Baltic left to
declare the victory of socialism and Soviet power in the Baltic states. It was clearly in
Moscow's interest at that point to maintain the appearance of an honest broker. The
bottom line is that we still don't know for sure what Stalin's intentions and motives were
in the fall of 1939.
protocols gave the Soviet Union the opportunity to secure Baltic control through threats, intimidation and brute force, rather than Baltic consent and legal international agreement. In addition, we know that Stalin had at least limited imperial aims in Eastern Europe (most historians agree that the Stalin had little desire for world, or even European domination). The secret protocols, then, gave Stalin the opportunity to allay his fears about the Baltics while at the same time satisfying Soviet revanchism, allowing the regaining of former imperial Russian lands “lost” in the 1920s.

Despite the debates, historians generally agree that Soviet policy, whether purposeful or impromptu, was intent on ensuring Baltic acquiescence to Soviet domination in the region. Moscow wanted to see the Baltic states firmly within the Soviet orbit. Whether the Soviets intended to sovietize and annex the Baltic states from the day they signed the secret protocols, or whether that policy developed slowly over time, two facts remain undisputed: First, the Soviets did see the Baltic region as falling within their legitimate sphere of interest. Second, they saw Soviet control of the Baltic states as central to their security in the west. Control meant ensuring that the Baltic states remained firmly within the Soviet orbit and free of German influence. Perhaps this could have been done diplomatically in cooperation with the Baltic states rather than imposed through the use of force. But the fact remains that Stalin eventually chose the latter option. There is little dispute among historians that, whether for security or ideological reasons, the Soviets sought direct control and influence over the Baltic

states. Whether Stalin intended annexation and Sovietization from the outset is of secondary importance.

In addition, while historians may disagree about the Soviet Union's actual motives and intentions towards the Baltic states in 1939, most agree on the basic nature of Soviet actions toward those states following the Soviet-German rapprochement. First, in late September-October 1939, after the successful Soviet invasion of eastern Poland, Stalin summoned representatives of the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, to the Kremlin where they were "offered" mutual assistance treaties with Moscow. Though Molotov and Stalin personally reassured the Baltic representatives that the Soviet Union had no designs on their territory, they obviously intimidated the Baltic officials into signing the agreements, which established Soviet military bases and the stationing of 25,000 Soviet soldiers on each of their territories.

64 See Roberts, "Soviet Policy and the Baltic States."

witness accounts of those meetings show both Molotov and Stalin openly threatening the Baltic representatives with "the consequences" of a failure to sign.66 These threats were backed up by large-scale Soviet troop deployments along the borders of the Baltic states.67 While the treaties were signed by each of the governments, few argue that they were mutually agreed upon and voluntary.68 The "mutual assistance" pacts essentially constituted the first stage of Soviet military occupation, which would culminate in the spring of 1940, and eventual annexation that summer.69

66 Molotov, for example, told Selter, the Estonian foreign minister, that "You can be sure that the Soviet Union one way or another will safeguard its security. If you do not agree to our proposal, the Soviet Union would take security measures of another kind, according to its own wishes and without the agreement of Estonia." Quoted in Roberts, "Soviet Policy and the Baltic States," p. 678.


68 Even Michael Carley, whose interpretation of the outbreak of war in Europe is largely sympathetic to the Soviet Union, notes, "The Soviet government imposed mutual assistance pacts on the Baltic states in September and October allowing, inter alia, for the stationing of Soviet troops in those countries. The Baltic governments had no choice but to agree to Soviet terms." Quoted in 1939, p. 215.

69 According to Roberts, "[B]y September and October the practical outcome of the agreement was already evident. For the Baltic States it meant being forced to sign mutual assistance treaties with the USSR and the establishment of Soviet military bases on their territory." Unholy Alliance, p. 162. As John Keegan writes, "There Russia at once capitalized on the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to demand basing rights for its troops in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, a manoeuvre which eventually led to the annexation of all three countries to the Soviet Union in June [sic] 1940." The Second World War (New York: Penguin, 1989), p. 47.
 Annexation. Most historians agree that—despite the mutual assistance pacts—in the spring of 1940 the Soviet Union militarily occupied and subsequently annexed the three Baltic states.\textsuperscript{70} In May and June, in the aftermath of the Soviet "victory" over Finland in the Winter War and in the wake of German successes against France, the Soviets took decisive action to solidify the inclusion of the Baltics in the Soviet orbit. They did so with complete confidence in German acquiescence, as per their mutual understanding initialed in the August-September 1939 agreements. On the pretext of anti-Soviet activity—in particular, that the three Baltic states had transformed the Baltic Entente into a military alliance directed against the Soviet Union (the so-called, "Baltic conspiracy")—the Soviets issued ultimatums to all three Baltic states.\textsuperscript{71} They were ordered to dismantle their governments, submit to Soviet military occupation, and turn over power to pro-Soviet regimes. To oversee the transition, Stalin dispatched his special representatives to the Baltic states—Zhdanov to Estonia, Vyshinskii to Latvia, and Dekanozov to Lithuania.

In early July 1940, in the presence of nearly 650,000 Red Army soldiers, and during the first of several waves of mass deportations to the Soviet Union, Moscow's


\textsuperscript{71} The Lithuanians, the first to be charged with breaching the mutual assistance treaty, were accused by Molotov of kidnapping two Red Army soldiers who had obviously defected. See Roberts, "Soviet Policy and the Baltic States," pp. 691-2.
representatives organized Soviet-style elections: only individuals approved by the
Communist Party were allowed to run. The elections, which took place on 14-15 July,
were marked by massive fraud.\textsuperscript{72} With new "freely elected" People's Assemblies in
place, all three countries applied for admission into the Soviet Union. In August 1940
all had become Soviet republics.

In effect, despite promises to the contrary made during the mutual assistance
treaty negotiations in the fall of 1939, the Soviet Union annexed the Baltic states. The
pattern was nearly identical to that which took place several months earlier in eastern
Poland.\textsuperscript{73} There is little doubt among most historians of the period, as well as among
specialists of international law, that Soviet actions in 1940 constituted annexation.

\textsuperscript{72} On the elections see Taagepera, pp. 60-63; Misiunas and Taagepera, pp. 23-
30; V. Stanley Vardys and Judith B. Sedaitis, Lithuania: The Rebel Nation (Boulder,
Toward the Baltic States, 1918-1940 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame
Press, 1959), pp. 216-35. Many of these studies tend to rely heavily -- though not
exclusively -- on eyewitness testimony presented in Third Interim Report of the Select
Committee on Communist Aggression, 83rd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, DC:

\textsuperscript{73} See Gross, Revolution from Abroad. Unfortunately, there is no single
scholarly study on the Soviet occupation and annexation of the Baltics that is the equal,
in scope and quality, of Gross's study. The majority of the literature on this topic
published in the 1940s - 70s was written almost exclusively by Baltic émigrés or émigré
organizations that harbored obvious political and ideological biases. Therefore, the
works cited here have been written in the less ideologically-charged atmosphere of the
post-Soviet period, and almost exclusively written by professional historians. Despite
the national origins of the authors, all make judicious use of evidence and sources, and
present sound and dispassionate analyses. While there are points of history that remain
open to interpretation given the state of available data, I have focused on more broad
Soviet actions in which there is general agreement among historians, and in which the
evidence is rather unambiguous.
Indeed, these events have served as the classic textbook cases of what constitutes "annexation" under international law.\textsuperscript{74}

\textit{Repression Under Soviet Occupation.} Most significantly, just as in Eastern Poland, massive political repressions followed the Soviet occupation in 1940—large-scale arrests, torture, summary executions and deportations, have all been well documented. While thousands were arrested on the eve of the summer elections in 1940 as an obvious message of intimidation, the most significant wave of mass arrests, executions and deportations took place on the evening of 13-14 June 1941, and then again on the eve of the Nazi advance. During that operation, according to NKVD records, some 10,000 Estonians, 17,500 Lithuanians and 17,000 Latvians were deported to Soviet camps in Siberia and Central Asia.\textsuperscript{75} Based on a careful analysis of Baltic demographic data, an estimated 85,000 Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian citizens were detained, arrested, interned and/or deported between 1940 and 1941.\textsuperscript{76} Of those


\textsuperscript{75} A.E. Gur'ianov, "Mashtaby deportatsii naseleniia v glub' SSSR v mae-iune 1941 g.," in \textit{Repressii protiv poliakov}, pp. 149-153. As noted above, this was the fourth mass deportation operation in the region, encompassing all territories in the "Pact zone"—Eastern Poland (western Ukraine and western Belorussia), the Baltic states, and Bessarabia, including Northern Bukovina. All told, some 90,000 citizens of those regions were deported to camps in the Soviet Union in May-June 1941.

deported, an estimated 55,000 died or were killed.\textsuperscript{77} As in Eastern Poland in the wake of the Red Army's retreat, thousands who had been incarcerated by the NKVD were executed: a fate which befell an estimated 4,600 Baltic citizens between 1940 and 1941.\textsuperscript{78} Including forced evacuations, as well as those mobilized into the Red Army but effectively treated as prisoners, the total number of victims—deported, arrested, executed—in the wake of the June 1941 Red Army retreat rose to an estimated 130,000.\textsuperscript{79}

After reoccupation the Soviets carried out even more mass arrests and deportations. In the immediate reoccupation period, 1944-45, executions and deportee deaths have been estimated at 30,000.\textsuperscript{80} A massive wave of deportations occurred in the late 1940's, peaking in the spring of 1949 in the wake of intensified collectivization and dekulakization efforts. According to analysis of Soviet documents, Rein Taagepera estimates that during the last ten days of March 1949, each of the Baltic states lost

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Soviet deportee deaths between 1940 and 1943. Misiunas and Taagepera, Appendix 3, "War and Occupation Deaths, 1940-50: Educated Guesses," p. 356.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Misiunas and Taagepera, Appendix 3, "War and Occupation Deaths, 1940-50: Educated Guesses," p. 356.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Vardys, "The Baltic States Under Stalin," p. 286 and p. 290, n. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Also includes guerrilla war losses. Misiunas and Taagepera, Appendix 3, "War and Occupation Deaths, 1940-50: Educated Guesses," p. 356.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
about three percent of their native populations (about 60,000 from Estonia, 50,000 from Latvia, 40,000 from Lithuania) to deportations.\textsuperscript{81} All told, in the first decade after the war's end, Soviet officials arrested and deported an estimated 640,000 Baltic inhabitants.\textsuperscript{82}

Finally, soon after Soviet reoccupation in 1944 a bitter partisan war ensued in all three countries that lasted nearly a decade. During that time an estimated 40,000-50,000 Lithuanians, 25,000 Latvians and 15,000 Estonians were killed.\textsuperscript{83}

\textbf{B. The Russian Textbook View}

As an extension of Soviet propaganda, the Soviet textbook version of the Baltic interventions went to great lengths to justify the incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union. Texts stressed how the governments of those states were involved in "anti-Soviet" activity and that the people of the Baltic states welcomed Soviet incorporation. They also asserted the legality of the intervention by emphasizing the popular elections that led to incorporation in 1940.\textsuperscript{84} Most importantly, Soviet texts

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{82} Misiunas and Taagepera, Appendix 5, "Population Changes, 1945-55," p. 358. See also
\item \textsuperscript{83} Misiunas and Taagepera, Appendix 5, "Population Changes, 1945-55," p. 358. See also Vardys and Sedaitis, pp. 60, 81-84; Taagepera, pp. 70-72, 77-82; Raun, pp. 174-75; Anatol Lieven, \textit{The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 87-92.
\end{itemize}
omitted mentioned of the secret protocols, which obviously cast Soviet actions in 1939-40 in much harsher light, as well as the repressive policies in the region—the mass arrests, executions and deportations. In short, the Soviet textbook interpretation adhered to the Myth of 1939-40, describing the Soviet intervention as legal, voluntary and peaceful; at worst it was an innocuous affair, at best it greatly benefited the Baltic peoples, and enhanced Soviet security.

Despite a plethora of revelations about the Soviet past that began to emerge in popular and scholarly literature in the late 1980's, the latest Russian textbook view is scarcely better than Soviet texts: The main features of the Myth of 1939-40 continue unaltered. In a nutshell, according to the Russian view, the Soviet Union neither occupied nor annexed the Baltic states. Relations were governed by mutual agreements and treaties, which were signed by heads of state and endorsed by the Baltic peoples through popular elections. While the Red Army and Soviet representatives were present in the Baltic states, elections were held there and the process of incorporation into the Soviet Union was legal. There were arrests and deportations, but such things happened all over the Soviet Union at that time and, most importantly, paled in comparison to the sacrifices made by non-Balts in the struggle against Nazi aggression. In short, true to the Myth of 1939-40, the Russian view of the Baltic incorporations is that they were legal, voluntary and peaceful.

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84 Potemkin, p. 20-1.
As with the interpretation of the Polish intervention, the only distinct difference between the Soviet and post-Soviet view is the obvious absence of class-based rhetoric, and a more subtle tendentiousness: In the narrative of events presented in the textbook history, the facts themselves are often indisputable. It is rather the particular emphasis, organization and presentation of these facts, and the omission of others, that leads to a highly pernicious interpretation.

**Occupation and Annexation.** Russian textbooks view the occupation and annexation of the Baltic States as legal, voluntary and peaceful—a highly selective and ultimately distorted reading of the historical record. Through the description of the events surrounding the 1939-40 occupations and annexations, the new Russian history textbooks imply that Soviet actions were either historically justified, or widely supported by Baltic popular opinion—in either case, a legitimate action. The Soviet-orchestrated election fraud, intimidation and violence that precipitated the annexations are largely omitted or only obliquely mentioned. The unsavory aspects of Soviet involvement tend to be treated gingerly, with oblique references and innocuous language.

Take for example the signing of the mutual assistance pacts with the Baltic states in the fall of 1939. Ostrovskii and Utkin's eleventh grade *History of Russia* notes, "In accordance with treaties concluded with the USSR government, by September-October 1939 Red Army garrisons were located in these states."\(^8^5\) Danilov and Kosulina's ninth grade text similarly states, "In the fall of 1939 the Soviet Union concluded with Estonia,  

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Latvia and Lithuania a mutual assistance agreement, in accordance with which Soviet forces were introduced into the country. There is no mention of the coercive nature of the agreements. Unlike these texts, Dmitrenko and Shestakov's standard eleventh grade *History of the Fatherland* does refer to Soviet pressure in the fall of 1939 by noting that "in the conditions at the beginning of the Second World War" the Baltic governments "were forced to accept a Soviet government proposal on the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact." However, the authors go on to write:

> According to the agreement, which was signed in September-October 1939, the Soviet Union was obligated to provide aid, including military aid, to the Baltic republics in all cases of threats to the independence by any European power. The Baltic states in turn were obligated to aid the USSR in the case of an attack by any European power through their territory or from the Baltic Sea.

Thus, while the reader is told that the Baltics may have been "forced" into signing the agreement, it was simply an unfortunate and inevitable result of "conditions" on the eve of the war. Further, without any additional detail the innocuous description of the agreement's content makes it all seem perfectly reasonable, even beneficial to the Baltic states—after all the Soviets pledged to defend the independence of the Baltics! This

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87 Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 280. Soroko-Tsiupa, p. 169, also refers directly to "an ultimatum to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to conclude a mutual aid treaty with the Soviet Union and to agree to the disbursement of Soviet garrisons on its territory," yet concludes matter-of-factly, "these demands were accepted." Kreder says nothing at all about the fall 1939 agreements.
qualification makes Soviet actions seem somehow more understandable and less worthy of condemnation.

The Russian texts—just as Soviet textbooks before them—offer innocuous descriptions of the events of the summer of 1940 that strongly imply that they were legally defensible and reasonable. While the texts note some Baltic opposition to early Soviet moves, the overall emphasis is that elections were eventually held, the Baltic states themselves requested incorporation into the Soviet Union, and the request was accepted by the Soviet legislature and thus legally codified:

In the summer of 1940 "people's governments" were formed in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, headed by public figures and anti-fascists who sought to be united with the Soviet Union.

In June 1940, elections took place for the People's Sejm of Latvia and Lithuania and the State Duma of Estonia. In the elections candidates of blocs headed by communists gained victory. Sessions of the People's Sejm of Latvia and Lithuania and the State Duma of Estonia on 21-22 July 1940 announced the establishment of Soviet power in the Baltic countries and appealed to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to accept Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In the beginning of August 1940 the Supreme Soviet of the USSR satisfied the request of the Baltic states and accepted them into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.\(^{88}\)

This reading of the events in the larger context implies that the incorporation of the Baltics was as much, or more, a result of Baltic popular will than Soviet political machinations. Notably, the texts almost universally fail to use the highly descriptive—and far more accurate—word "annexation." One rather backhanded

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exception is Dmitrenko, who writes, "But the world did not recognize it as a joining

together [prisoedinenie], instead evaluating it as an annexation by the USSR."89 Indeed,
this continues a central theme in the Russian (and Soviet) narrative of World War II of
Russia as aggrieved victim: Soviet behavior was really in the best interest of the states
involved and the incorporation was legal, yet the Russians were misunderstood and
labeled aggressors. The subtle implication here is that the Russians, not just the people
of the Baltic states, are also "victims."

Ostrovnikii and Utkin's eleventh grade text is a bit more generous, noting that "In
June 1940, under the pretense of defending against an unfurling of anti-Soviet activities,
additional forces were introduced in the Baltic states and the closest figures to Stalin
were sent there. Under their control new governments were formed and in June-July
elections were carried out."90 However, the discussion ends there: nothing more is said
about the nature of the elections, or what it actually meant to have Stalin's "closest
figures" sent to the Baltics. Similarly, Danilov and Kosulina's standard ninth grade
History of Russia only obliquely questions the validity of the elections: "The new
organs of power that were elected under the control of the Soviet representatives


requested that the Supreme Soviet of the USSR accept Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia as part of the Soviet Union.\footnote{Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 204. Only a single textbook, Dolutskii’s Fatherland History, vol. I, pp. 409-410, provides any kind of objective description of the events, actually using the words "ultimatum" and "occupation." Yet while it was initially approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools, for a variety of reasons it is one of the least used eleventh grade textbooks. As will be addressed in greater detail below, it is also one of a few Russian history texts that have been roundly attacked for presenting an "unpatriotic" and "anti-Russian" version of events. This emphasis on the annexations as voluntary and as a response to popular desire, is also find in discussions of the Soviet annexation of Bessarabia. Dmitrenko and his colleagues emphasize how "the idea of uniting the Moldovan peoples was widespread." Therefore, in response to popular will, "the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in August 1940 adopted a law forming the Moldavian Union Soviet Socialist Republic with the capital in Kishinev." Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 280.}

Repressions. The most striking and least subtle feature of the Myth of 1939-40 as expressed in new generation of history textbooks is the almost complete absence of any mention of the repressive policies instituted in the immediate occupation and post-war period. The conduct of the Soviet occupation of the Baltics in 1940—the mass deportations and sovietization policies—are either rarely mentioned, or their significance deflated. For example, after several pages of descriptions vividly cataloging the physical damage inflicted on Russia at the hands of the Nazis, and the immediate measures taken to return the economy and society to normal, Dmitrenko and his colleagues make only a single vague reference to "deported peoples," who, along with GULAG inmates and former prisoners of war "entered peacetime along their own particular path.\footnote{Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), pp. 391. Danilov and Kosulina’s text (1995) and (1996), p. 261, at least specifically mentions the Balts among other deported peoples, but says little else: "One of the first strikes was carried out against servicemen, the majority of whom (about 2 million) were sent off to camps in Siberia and Ukhtii after}
The absence of any mention of the occupation policies also helps to imply that the incorporations were popularly supported and acceptable to the local population, or that the Balts were at least complicit in any "excesses." (This tendency to shift the blame off of Soviet actions and onto others—extremely pervasive in the Soviet narrative of the pre-war years—will be discussed in greater detail below.) Indeed, rather than discuss the bloodshed that occurred during the occupations, the texts prefer to emphasize how they occurred relatively peacefullly. As noted above, one of the standard eleventh-grade history texts notes how "Stalin leadership's geopolitical gains were achieved practically without any active military action..." while another emphasizes that, "The expansion of the Soviet territory in the west took place without any kind of military conflict." Yet, such statements are disingenuous. While true that there was no conflict like that which occurred with Finland, the occupations were quite brutal and the human and material devastation was immense.

To the degree that texts do discuss the occupation and Sovietization very little detail is offered, or discussion tends to be vague and unsatisfying:

On those territories that had entered into the Soviet Union either on the eve of the war or after it, there occurred conflictual processes. In the Baltics, Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, in Moldavia, along with industrialization and their liberation from fascist slavery. 'Foreign elements' from the Baltic republics, Western Ukraine and Belorussia were also exiled there."


94 See Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 204. Danilov's text, however, is alone in noting that Finland is the exception.
the establishment of cities and villages, collectivization was carried out along the lines of the 1930's. Traditional ways of life were destroyed, "dekulakization" occurred, and large-scale expulsion of people was carried out.\textsuperscript{95}

The use here of the passive voice, which omits any reference to agency, is also especially relevant.\textsuperscript{96} Similarly, Danilov and Kosulina write,

Along with other changes, the war led to an increase in ideological [ideinykh] and political movements, including national movements, that could not be controlled "from above." They were of a particular scope on the territories that had entered into the USSR in 1939-1940. There the struggle against collectivization and sovietization continued until the early 50's.\textsuperscript{97}

"Participation in these [movements]," we are told, led to "deportation, exile, or arrest."

While these descriptions certainly go farther than their Soviet predecessors, they are still disappointingly consistent with the Myth of 1939-40. Aside from the absence of any actual detail (this in contrast to the detailed descriptions of Nazi horrors inflicted on the Russians), there are a number of problems. First, the Baltic states and others occupied and annexed are again innocuously referred to as "territories" that had "entered into the USSR." Not only does this continue to imply a generally peaceful and voluntary process, but referring to them as "territories" overlooks the fact that these

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\textsuperscript{95} Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 324
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\textsuperscript{96} Though the use of passive constructions is common in the Russian language, textbook authors frequently use direct constructions that convey agency when they wish to do so.
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\textsuperscript{97} Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 262.
\end{flushright}
were in fact internationally-recognized independent states. And although repressions took place, we are told that these territories also received the benefit of industrialization and urbanization. This added qualification is similar to the claim noted above that the signing of the mutual assistance treaty, although it may have been "forced," brought the benefit of collective security to the Baltics.

Second, while the anti-Soviet guerrillas in the Baltic states were certainly fighting "collectivization and Sovietization" they were ultimately fighting against foreign occupation by the Soviet Union. To fail to characterize their struggle this way implies that their grievances were similar to that of many other disgruntled Soviet citizens, when in fact they were much different.

Third, the passage implies that the victims of the deportations, exiles and arrests were only those involved in some kind of organized national movements or guerrilla activities, when in fact the terror was much more arbitrary and the types of individuals persecuted much broader. The Soviets deported entire classes of individuals deemed "counter-revolutionary" along with their families, often regardless of their political sympathies, associations or actual deeds.\textsuperscript{98} In fact, a great deal of guerrilla activity in the Baltics was focused on disrupting the mass deportations that were being carried out. Further, most of those involved in the guerrilla activities were either killed in action, or arrested and then shot. This leads to the final point: While we are told that

\textsuperscript{98} Based on Soviet documents, among those targeted for arrest and deportation in addition to anti-Soviet political activists: ethnic Poles, philatelists, Esperantists, and others. Misiunas and Taagepera, 41.
"deportations, exiles and arrests" occurred, these descriptions gloss over the number of those who were murdered while under arrest, or who died in captivity.

IV. Intervention in Finland

A. The Historical Consensus

While the immediate origins of the Winter War of 1939-40 are also found in the secret protocols, the sources of Soviet-Finnish hostility in 1939 went back to at least 1920, when the Soviet Union gave up significant portions of the Karelian Isthmus to Finland in the Tartu peace treaty. The treaty moved the Finnish border within a mere 18 miles of Leningrad, a fact that greatly worried Soviet military and political leaders. In 1932, in an effort to increase the security of the region, the Soviet Union secured a non-aggression pact with Finland (and the Baltic states). Six years later, in April 1938, with the threat from Nazi Germany growing, the Soviets revisited the issue of Baltic security with Finland. The Soviets wanted a demonstrable guarantee of Finnish neutrality, namely the signing of a trade agreement with the Soviet Union and a commitment to oppose any German intervention in Finland. As a declared neutral country, however, Finland saw no need to offer such a guarantee, and instead saw the Soviet initiative as a disguised attempt at intimidation and control.99

In August of that year, the Soviets proposed another agreement: a mutual assistance pact that would provide Soviet military aid to Finland in the event of a German attack. In exchange, the Soviets agreed to allow the Finns to fortify the Aaland islands in the Gulf of Finland, though only as long as the Soviets could fortify one of those islands closest to the approach to Leningrad. Fearful of the establishment of a Soviet military base on their territory (regardless of the marginal value of the island to Finland), the Finns rejected the offer. In March 1939, the Soviets made yet another offer: this time they proposed leasing the island and several others, or exchanging them for Soviet territory on the Karelian Isthmus, and agreed not to fortify them. Yet again, fearful of giving up any Finnish territory to the Soviets, suspicious of Soviet promises, and bound by their commitment to neutrality, the Finns again refused.

With the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact and the secret protocols in August 1939 and the successful Soviet occupation of Poland, Stalin refocused his attention on the question of Baltic security. Soon after summoning the leaders of the Baltic states to Moscow in October 1939 and imposing mutual assistance treaties, Stalin turned to Finland. He proposed a mutual assistance pact and territorial concessions from Finland beyond those proposed in March. These included, a shift in the Finnish-Soviet border westward along the Karelian Isthmus and Ryabachii Peninsula; the dismantling of all Finnish fortifications in Karelia; the establishment of a Red Army base on the Hangrö

Peninsula; and cession of all the islands in the Gulf of Finland. This time the Finns agreed to offer the Soviets the Gulf islands and some territorial concessions on the Karelian Isthmus, but they rejected the Red Army presence on Hangö as well as major border changes and defortification in Karelia. The Soviets offered a favorable exchange of greater Soviet territory along the northern border, for much less Finnish territory on the Karelian Isthmus. But, the Finns refused.

Over the course of a month and three separate negotiations the Finns stubbornly held their ground. The Finns believed the arrangement would have seriously compromised Finland's neutrality, gutted its already weak defenses, and put the Soviets in a position to make further demands. They also believed the Red Army was essentially weak and that Stalin would never risk going to war over the issue.100 For their part, the Soviets were overly optimistic that the Finns would cave in to Soviet demands. This was because of the ease with which they had asserted Soviet hegemony over the former tsarist empire according to the terms of the secret protocols, and because of grossly inaccurate Soviet intelligence reports that described the Finnish government was weak, unpopular and on the verge of collapse. We know that Stalin and Molotov were genuinely surprised at the Finnish obstinacy, and assumed that given Finland's weak military position, their rejection of Soviet terms could only be explained by a secret alliance with the Germans.101

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100 On this point, see Van Dyke, The Soviet Invasion of Finland, pp. 14-21.

101 Trotter, A Frozen Hell, p. 17.
After the second round of Finnish-Soviet talks in late October 1939, Stalin finally ordered preparations for an invasion.\textsuperscript{102} Demonstrating a consistent sensitivity to public reaction to Soviet actions, a propaganda campaign commenced in the Soviet press charging Finnish leaders with plotting war against the Soviet Union. The propaganda was designed to justify an impending Soviet attack as well as to help aggravate class divisions in Finland. Indeed, the public relations problem both at home and abroad of an unprovoked attack on Finland was not lost on the Soviet leadership. An attack would present particular problems internationally, especially since the Soviet Union had as a member of the League of Nations relentlessly condemned acts of aggression and derided the Western powers for their failure to take action.\textsuperscript{103} So, in early November Stalin approved plans for the creation of a new Finnish "people's government" headed by Otto Kuusinen, a Finnish émigré and close ideological advisor to Stalin. Upon its invasion of Finland the Soviets would acknowledge the Kuusinen government, which would then authorize the presence of the Red Army on Finnish territory.

When the third and final round of talks failed in mid-November, plans for the invasion had already been prepared. The Soviets then set about orchestrating a casus belli that would give them legal and political justification to renounce the Soviet-Finnish


\textsuperscript{103} Baryshnikov and Manninen, "V Kanun zimnei voiny," p. 135.
non-aggression treaty.\textsuperscript{104} On 26 November the infamous "Mainila shots" became the necessary justification for war. Molotov charged the Finns with firing seven artillery shots in the Karelian Isthmus near the border outpost of Mainila, allegedly killing several Red Army soldiers. There is no evidence, however, that the Finns fired the shots (Finnish troops and artillery, for example, had been withdrawn from the region precisely to avoid such an incident; the only Finnish soldiers in the area were lightly armed frontier guards). Nor is there evidence that any Red Army soldiers were killed.\textsuperscript{105} While the archives have not revealed any definitive answer to who fired the shots, the overwhelming circumstantial evidence points to the Soviets.\textsuperscript{106} The Finns protested their innocence, proposing a mutual troop withdrawal from the border to defuse tensions. Calling the Mainila incident a deliberate act of aggression, the Soviets cut off diplomatic relations. Molotov accused Finland of a buildup of its forces in Karelia, a

\textsuperscript{104} According to Van Dyke: "On the one hand, the Soviet government was still obliged to respect Finland’s sovereign rights according to the terms of the non-aggression pact of 1932. On the other hand, Lenin’s teachings on the development of the ‘world socialist revolution’ did not justify the conduct of limited wars for the purpose of territorial expansion. Stalin’s solution to these limitations was to orchestrate the denunciation of the non-aggression pact and to try to replace the existing Finnish government with a socialist government that, once in power, would automatically recognize the Soviet Union’s security interests in the Baltic.” The Soviet Invasion of Finland, pp. 21-22.


\textsuperscript{106} See Baryshnikov and Manninen, "V Kanun zimnei voiny," pp. 136-138 Van Dyke, The Soviet Invasion of Finland, pp. 24-25; Trotter, A Frozen Hell, pp. 21-22; Tillotson, Finland at Peace and War, pp. 128-29; Semiryaga, The Winter War, pp. 17-19.
move that "not only threatens [Leningrad], but is in itself an act hostile to the Soviet Union."\textsuperscript{107} Just as with Poland and the Baltic states, Soviet propaganda set about to "absolve the Soviet government from all responsibility for the more violent course of action it was about to follow."\textsuperscript{108} On November 30, without an official declaration of war, 600,000 Soviet troops crossed the Finnish border while Soviet aircraft bombarded Helsinki.

The judgment of most historians is that the Soviet invasion of Finland constituted a clear violation of international law. It broke the terms of the London Convention for the Definition of Aggression (the Litvinov Treaty) that the Soviet Union signed with its neighbors, including Finland, in 1933, as well as bilateral treaties with Finland: the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty of 1920, and the Non-Aggression Treaty of 1932. As a result, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations in December 1939.

\textit{Finnish Obstinacy vs. Soviet Belligerence.} Historians have pointed to both Finnish obstinacy as well as Soviet belligerence as the main causes of the deterioration of Soviet-Finnish relations in 1939. However, at the time Soviet propaganda, and subsequent Soviet historiography, claimed that the breakdown was solely the result of Finnish actions, in particular a conspiracy with Germany and the Entente against the Soviet Union; ultimately, Finnish "provocations" forced the Soviet Union into war.

\textsuperscript{107} Quoted in Read and Fisher, \textit{The Deadly Embrace}, p. 404.

\textsuperscript{108} Van Dyke, \textit{The Soviet Invasion of Finland}, p. 26.
There is, however, no evidence of such a conspiracy or of any provocations. Further, while the Finns were indeed obstinate, their actions were not entirely irrational or inexplicable. According to most historians, the Soviets seemed to offer genuine concessions in the negotiations with Finland. Stalin’s willingness to compromise was likely sincere since his tone and style differed markedly from the “negotiations” with the Baltic states earlier in the fall. The uncompromising demands, intimidation and threats that marked those negotiations were seemingly absent from the talks with Finland. Unfortunately, the Finns had little reason to believe the sincerity of Soviet offers. From their perspective any concession to Moscow would simply have been the first step toward occupation and eventual incorporation into the USSR. Ironically, it

109 Carly, 1939, and others have argued that the British, sensitive to charges of appeasement over Munich, encouraged Finnish resistance to Soviet demands. However, there is no evidence from the Finnish side that the views of British diplomats in Helsinki played any significant role in Finnish decisionmaking in the fall of 1939. See Van Dyke, The Soviet Invasion of Finland, p. 221.


111 Roberts argues that the Soviets showed signs of genuine compromise in their negotiations with Baltic leaders, but his evidence is not entirely convincing. He points to Soviet "concessions" to lower the number of Russian troops that would be required to be stationed in the Baltic states under the terms of the mutual assistance treaties. However, an equally plausible explanation is that this was a simple a negotiating tactic. It is quite likely that Soviets simply highballed their original troop figures to allow them to make a "concession" and therefore look reasonable in the eyes of the Balts and the rest of the world. If one compares the Baltic and Finnish negotiations, however, it is clear how little the Soviets actually negotiated and compromised in the former case. See Roberts, "Soviet Policy and the Baltic States," pp. 679-80.
may have been this compromising stance, marked by ambiguous statements of Soviet intentions and lack of explicit ultimatums\textsuperscript{112} that led the Finns to believe that Stalin would never resort to war, thus encouraging Finnish obstinacy. At the same time, the Finns, quite understandably, were skeptical of Soviet intentions. They simply did not believe Soviet claims of benign intentions.\textsuperscript{113} We simply don't know whether the fate that befell the Baltic states would have also fallen upon Finland had they agreed to Soviet demands. But it should be noted that in October 1939, Molotov and Stalin—with great earnestness—also pledged to honor and defend Baltic independence. So, while they can be accused of blind, almost suicidal, obstinacy in the face of Soviet demands, the Finns can hardly be portrayed as aggressors, as they have been by Soviet propaganda and historiography.

In fact, the evidence for primary responsibility for the war overwhelmingly points to Stalin. First, according to the most recent Russian and Western scholarship it is clear that by late October 1939 he had decided to wage a preventive war and ordered military and political preparations for an attack.\textsuperscript{114} Stalin was encouraged not only by

\textsuperscript{112} For example, at one point Stalin told the Finnish delegation, "We are not demanding and taking, but proposing" Quoted in O. Manninen and N. I. Baryshnikov, "Peregovory ocen'iui 1939 goda," in Zimniaia voina, 1939-1940, p. 125.

\textsuperscript{113} In the words of historian Carl Van Dyke, "Given the Soviet Union's volte-face in relations with Nazi Germany and the preemptive character of its relations with the Baltic States a few weeks later, the Finnish Cabinet had every reason to suspect Stalin's overtures concerning the defense of the Baltic region." The Soviet Invasion of Finland, p. 221.

\textsuperscript{114} For a survey of this research see Van Dyke, The Soviet Invasion of Finland, pp. 221-24.
military successes in the Far East the previous year, the "liberation" of Poland, and his diplomatic coup in the Baltic States, but also the belief that Finland was ripe for socialist revolution. He was convinced that the Finnish population awaited an opportunity to overthrow the Finnish government; if the Soviets invaded, the masses would embrace the Red Army. We don't know whether Stalin would have unleashed war had Finland met all of the Soviet's terms. However, there is reason to believe that after military preparations were ordered in late October 1939 an attack would have taken place regardless of the negotiations with Finland. Thus, rather than being provoked, Stalin had made up his mind to attack at least a month before the "Mainila shots" were fired. Even if Stalin had hoped to avoid war with Finland, he nonetheless had little doubt that he would achieve his territorial aims with or without Finnish cooperation; that is, either through compromise, diplomatic pressure or war. It is this fact that has led most historians to point to Stalin as the main culprit. He was more than willing to wage war to achieve his territorial aims in the Baltic. The decision to go to war rested with the Soviet Union and that decision was made by Stalin perhaps as early as October, if not late November. And while some historians place more of the blame for the deterioration of relations on the Finns, arguing that their obstinacy was unnecessarily provocative toward the USSR, even they don't dispute the fundamental fact the Soviets prepared for war in October 1939 in the event that the Finns rejected Soviet demands. Nor do they dispute that the Soviets fabricated or provoked a causus belli, which led to war in November.
Second, though the Soviets had legitimate security concerns in the Baltic, there is some doubt that the use of force was Stalin's only option in November 1939. A true compromise short of the use of force might very well have been possible. Yet, while Stalin genuinely negotiated the finer points of troop numbers, fortifications, leases and land swaps, ultimately he was never willing to accept genuine Finnish neutrality. No matter how much Stalin compromised, Soviet terms ultimately undermined Finnish neutrality, which, from the Finnish perspective, jeopardizing Finnish independence and security. In fact, the Finns did accept those terms that least threatened its neutral position. For Stalin, a Finland that was squarely within the Soviet orbit was the only acceptable outcome and as a result made a peaceful resolution in the absence of Finnish capitulation nearly impossible.

Finally, it is unlikely that Soviet attack would have even been an option in the absence of Soviet-German rapprochement. Ultimately, then, what made this belligerent option possible were the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact and the secret protocols. They afforded Stalin the opportunity to achieve his aims, through the use of force, totally unimpeded by Germany. This is not to say that Stalin wanted war with Finland in 1940 but, as we know, he was willing to use deadly force if, like its Baltic neighbors, the Finns did not succumb to Soviet demands.

*The Aftermath.* After the Finns sued for peace in March 1940, one Soviet general remarked, "We have won just about enough ground to bury our dead."115 The Soviet

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attack on Finland was poorly planned and poorly executed. Stalin thought it would be a
cake-walk, largely because of his false belief, encouraged by his close advisor Otto
Kuusinen, that the Finns would warmly embrace an invading Red Army. Choosing to
fight in the midst of a brutal winter also proved a major Soviet blunder. The impending
winter was one reason why the Finns believed that an immediate Soviet attack was
unlikely. While the precise figure is not known, the most reliable estimates put the
number of Soviet casualties at a staggering 126,000 dead, 250,000 wounded. In the
month of December alone, during the failed attempt to break through the Mannerheim
Line, the Soviets suffered nearly 70,000 casualties. In addition, more than 4,300 of the
5,500 Soviet POWs repatriated after the war were immediately sent to the GULAG. At
least 350 were immediately executed before transfer to the camps. It is likely that many
of those 4,300 may also have been killed or died in camps.

The Finns also suffered considerable casualties, though comparatively fewer than
the Soviets in absolute terms. Approximately 66,000 were killed, 43,000
wounded—significant figures considering the Finnish population numbered less than 4

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116 Figures from Soviet military archives cited in Soviet Casualties and Combat
Christine Barnard (London: Greenhill Books, 1997), pp. 68, 77 [English translation of
Gif Sekretnosti Sniat (Moscow, 1993)]. O. Manninen, "Moshchnoe sovetskoe
nastuplenie," in Zimniaia voina, 1939-1940, pp. 324-25 gives a slightly higher estimate
of 1300,000 dead, citing a 1989 Finnish study. Trotter, A Frozen Hell, p. 263, gives an
even higher estimate of 230,000-270,000 dead, citing "modern Finnish historians, who
keep close tabs on anything about the war that appears in the Russian language," though
he provides no references.

million.\textsuperscript{118} Finland also lost approximately 25,000 square kilometers of land—the entire Karelian Isthmus, Hangö, the entire Ryabachii Peninsula, and large portions of Karelia north of Lake Ladoga. The territorial losses led to the displacement of 420,000 Finnish civilians.\textsuperscript{119}

It was a short, intense and bloody war. The Soviets gained the territory that Stalin so desperately needed to defend the USSR, but the security those gains provided was illusory. They did little to help deter Germany's attack fifteen months later. Only control of the northern Ryabachii Peninsula seemed to strengthen Soviet defenses by helping to repulse the German advance on Murmansk. Perhaps the one positive outcome of the war, as many historians have pointed out, is that massive Soviet blunders and military failures spurred major organizational reforms within the Red Army that eventually contributed to Germany's defeat.

**B. The Russian Textbook View**

As with the Polish and Baltic interventions, the Russian view of the war with Finland has changed little compared with Soviet texts. Russian textbooks continue to purvey an interpretation of the war's origins, conduct and consequences that are consistent with features of the Myth of 1939-40. First, they emphasize the righteousness of Soviet diplomacy in 1939 and the legality of Soviet actions, while

\textsuperscript{118} Manninen, "Moshchnoe sovetskoe nastuplenie," p. 325.

\textsuperscript{119} Trotter, A Frozen Hell, p. 263
Finland is portrayed as obstinate, threatening, aggressive and ultimately responsible for the war. Second, they avoid any serious assessment of the war's conduct and consequences. Instead they focus on the "positive" results of the war—the "benefits" to Soviet security through territorial revisions and the invaluable battlefield experience, which would help defeat fascism a few years later. Of the reckless political decisions and military blunders that led directly to hundreds of thousands of military and civilian dead, wounded and displaced, Russian textbooks have surprisingly little to say. What they do say, is based largely on self-serving factual distortions and omissions that ultimately justify the Soviet invasion and purveying an image of the Soviet Union as a victim of Finnish and Western intrigue and overt threats.

_The Origins._ Predictably, the Soviet interpretation of the origins of the war mirrored Soviet propaganda, charging Finland with threatening the USSR and provoking the Soviet Union, and actually starting the war:

The Soviet state was faced with the acute problem of further strengthening its security, in particular on the frontier with Finland. At that time the Soviet-Finnish border passed 32 kilometers from Leningrad. On the isthmus of Karelia, Finland, with the help of the large imperialist states, had constructed huge fortifications, thus creating a military spring-board for an attack on the USSR. The Finnish Government declined the invitation of the USSR to conclude a mutual aid agreement and broke off negotiations concerning the exchange of Finnish territory near Leningrad for twice as much territory in Karelia. At the end of November 1939, artillery fire directed in provocation against our territory from the Finnish side forced the Soviet government to take retaliatory measures.

Thus Finnish reactionary forces, incited by Fascist Germany and the other imperialist powers, unleashed war against the Soviet Union.  

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Here the Soviet Union is portrayed as an innocent victim of an irrational, obstinate and provocative Finland. While the Soviet Union is seen as fair and reasonable, acting entirely in good faith, the Finns conspired with other "imperialist states" against the USSR. They rejected Soviet offers, cut off negotiations, and ultimately, through military provocations, "forced" the USSR to act in self-defense and retaliate. In short, Finland bears ultimate responsibility for the war, while the Soviet Union deserves our sympathies.

The new Russian texts have moderated this view only slightly. Finland is no longer charged with "unleashing" war against the Soviet Union—indeed, some texts even admit that the Soviet Union actually "initiated military action."\textsuperscript{121} However, most generally fudge the question of culpability either by using vague and innocuous language ("On 30 November 1939 military action began between Finland and the USSR"\textsuperscript{122}) or ambiguous, unqualified statements (". . . [both] the USSR and Finland adopted a course

\textsuperscript{121} Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 204.

\textsuperscript{122} Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 278. Ostrovskii simply ignores the question entirely and goes from "Finland was issued an ultimatum in which they did not accept" to "The Red Army came up against bitter resistance by the Finnish forces." However, it does mention that the USSR was excluded from the League of Nations at the time because it was "an aggressor" (Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 252). Dmitrenko also notes this, yet by stating that "the Soviet Union was excluded from the League of Nations as an aggressor," it leaves open the possibility that this is simply an unjust claim and excuse to exclude the Soviet Union from the League. Only Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 205, openly states that the Soviets attacked first: "The Soviet Union, not considering the Finnish army a serious enemy, made use of an insignificant border incident and on 30 November 1939 began military action."
of military action to solve the problem"{123}. Such ambiguity is especially insidious since it diverts attention away from any critical evaluation of well-documented Soviet conduct in 1939, obscuring the Soviet role in instigating the war and its horrible consequences. Even the rare text that admits Soviet initiation of hostilities nonetheless justifies Soviet action as entirely defensive, and continues to purvey some of the old myths about Finnish behavior—that they collaborated with the Germans and that they provoked the USSR by undertaking offensive military preparations against Russia. Thus, in the guise of an objective, critical interpretation, the critical emphasis remains solely on Finland: how it threatened Soviet security, how it rejected reasonable Soviet concessions; how it collaborated with Germany and others; how it deliberately antagonized the USSR through military provocations. Take Dmitrenko's eleventh grade textbook, for example. The text notes:

In accordance with the division of "spheres of interest," the Soviet government took measures to reinforce the security of the country, and to strengthen its military-strategic position. At that time, the strengthening of the defenses of the north-western border of the USSR, and most of all of Leningrad, was an issue of particular concern. The Soviet government proposed to Finland that they conclude a mutual assistance pact. Negotiations took place in Moscow in mid-October 1939. In the course of the negotiations, the Finnish delegation rejected practically all of the Soviet Union's offers. Exhausting all possibilities for a political settlement, the USSR and Finland adopted a course of military action to solve the problem. Mobilization was announced in Finland and on 28 November 1939 the USSR denounced (declared null and void) the 1932 non-aggression pact with Finland."{124}

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124 ibid.
The text clearly distorts the question of responsibility for the outbreak of the war. It diminishes Soviet responsibility by portraying Soviet action as solely defensive, and strongly implies that Finland is the main culprit. While certain phrases give the appearance of a "balanced" objectivity presentation—laying blame on both Finland and the USSR—they actually have the opposite effect. For example, referring to events leading up to the outbreak of the war, the text states that the USSR and Finland both decided on a military course of action. Yet, this statement is accurate as a description of both Soviet and Finnish behavior only after November 30, 1939, when both sides were effectively in a state of war, and not prior to November 30, as the text states. As a description of events leading to the outbreak of war it is highly disingenuous. There is hardly any ambiguity in the historical record about Soviet actions between November 28-30, 1939: the Soviet Union initiated hostilities, and indeed planned an attack on Finland as much as a month earlier. Further, there is little doubt among historians that Finnish military preparations at the time were responding to Soviet diplomacy and military planning. Thus it is far more accurate to state that the USSR alone "adopted a course of military action" prior to November 30.

Yet, the text does not simply obscure the question of responsibility for the outbreak of the war. It also strongly implies overwhelming Finnish culpability. While, on one hand, the statement above implies that the war was like an unavoidable train wreck, on the other, it continues to emphasize the threat from Finland, Finnish
obstinacy in negotiations, and Finnish military provocations. When one looks to this
text for an answer to the question of responsibility for the war, the Russian view points
firmly at Finland. Indeed, there is a strong causal logic imbedded in the narrative above
and found in virtually all the Russian textbooks: First, the Soviet government offers
concessions to Finland. Finland then rejects those offers and announces mobilization.
Finally, the USSR renounces the non-aggression treaty and war "breaks out." Thus, the
USSR is portrayed as an honest broker whose seemingly reasonable offers are rejected
by Finland, which not only rejects those offers, but actually mobilizes, presumably in
preparation for an offensive against the USSR. Only then is the USSR forced to
abandon the non-aggression pact—which clearly Finland has violated—the result of
which is war.

To draw such a conclusion is hardly a stretch. First, readers are never told why
Finland might have rejected Soviet terms during the October talks. Instead, readers are
simply told that the "Finnish delegation declined practically all of the Soviet Union's
offers," thereby "exhausting all possibilities of a political settlement."125 The texts often
provide a detailed description of those concessions, emphasizing their generous terms,
and then noting that "talks were soon broken off."126 But, the question of why talks

125 ibid.

126 Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 252. He states, "It was proposed to the
Finnish government to exchange the territory on the Karelian isthmus for a large but
unfamiliar territory, as well as to lease out the Finnish peninsula of Hangö and the port
of Petsamo. Talks began but were soon broken off. Finland was issued an ultimatum
which they did not accept." (In fact, the Soviets did not issue an explicit ultimatum,
broke off and why the Finns rejected Soviet offers is never clarified. As noted above, historians no longer question the sincerity of Soviet concessions to Finland in the fall of 1939. But at the time Finland had little reason to trust Soviet promises. But readers are never told what Finnish perceptions of the Soviet Union were in 1939. It is also difficult for readers to infer Finnish perceptions given that the texts obscure the larger context within which the talks took place—namely the recent Soviet rapprochement with Germany and the forced security treaties with the Baltic states. Though texts make oblique reference to the Nazi-Soviet pact and the secret protocols, they are never seen from the perspective of the Soviet Union's neighbors. Instead, as noted above, they are characterized as harmless, innocuous documents. Out of context, it is unlikely that a reader would see how Finland might view Soviet offers with suspicion.

Second, readers are never told exactly what is meant by "mobilization." The context strongly implies that Finnish mobilization was a preparation for an attack on the USSR (and hence a violation of the non-aggression pact). Since Soviet behavior is portrayed as fair and reasonable and there is no discussion of legitimate Finnish fear and mistrust of Stalin, there is no reason for readers to assume that Finnish actions would be defensive. Indeed, since the Finns are portrayed negatively—rejecting reasonable and generous Soviet offers—there is no reason to assume that Finnish actions could be anything but offensive. In fact, there is little ambiguity in the historical record regarding Finnish military planning in general and military activity in November 1939. Though

which was one of the major sources of Finnish misperception during the talks.) See also Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 204.
Soviet propaganda consistently referred to the Mannerheim Line as part of an offensive military plan against the USSR, there is no evidence of Finnish offensive military planning, of any Finnish military provocations in the fall of 1939, or of any conspiracies with other powers. Further, we know, for example, that Mannerheim (who, unlike the members of the Finnish Cabinet, believed that the Soviet Union would attack Finland) went to great lengths to avoid the appearance of any threatening behavior along the border.

Finally, the Russian view strongly implies that Finland is to blame for the war through a number of critical omissions. Readers are never told that Stalin planned an invasion of Finland as early as October 1939; that the Soviets undertook a vigorous propaganda campaign to derail the final round of negotiations and to stir up opposition within Finland in anticipation of a Soviet invasion; that the Soviets fabricated many of the border incidents in late November to justify breaking the non-aggression pact and "legally" attacking Finland; and, with one exception, that the Soviet Union actually invaded Finland. That the texts omit reference to the Soviet orchestrated border "provocations," the invasion plans and the invasion itself, leads the reader to an obviously critical view of Finland.

Ultimately, in the Russian view the Soviet Union comes out looking like an innocent victim of international threats and intrigue. Danilov's tenth grade textbook provides a further illustration:
The Soviet government demanded that Finland push back the Soviet-Finnish border in the region of Leningrad 30-35 km into the depths of the Karelian Isthmus, promising territorial concessions in other regions. Finland, sensing secret support from Germany and open support from England and France, rejected these proposals and announced a general mobilization. The Soviet Union, not considering the Finnish army a serious enemy, made use of an insignificant border incident and on 30 November 1939 initiated military action.\textsuperscript{127}

Again, the text focuses on Finnish mobilization—the implication being offensive military preparations—as the key turning point in the outbreak of the war. And while the Soviets receive some blame, it is not for orchestrating the "border incident" on 30 November (i.e., the Mainila shots), but rather for misinterpreting its significance.

Further, by omitting any detailed discussion of the incidents themselves, and of Stalin's role in orchestrating them, the text implicitly links this "border incident" to Finnish mobilization.\textsuperscript{128}

Again, the historical consensus, based on fairly unambiguous evidence, is quite clear on the question of culpability: Finland deserves some blame for the deterioration of

\textsuperscript{127} Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 204.

\textsuperscript{128} The emphasis on Finland as the primary antagonist in the fall of 1939 also serves to reinforce an image of a perfidious and hostile West. The texts, for example, continue to emphasize how Finnish belligerence toward the USSR (i.e., through mobilization) was the result largely of German and Western influence—a fact that is simply unsupported by the historical record. This negative view of the West is further reinforced in discussions of the Finnish rejection of Soviet offers: Soviet goodwill is rebuffed and, despite all efforts on the part of the Soviet government, there is a war. This is an interpretation that is entirely consistent with the Myth of the Great Patriotic War, in which Soviet good faith efforts to secure international peace and stability are repeatedly rebuffed by the West.
hostilities in 1939, largely for its gross misperceptions and blunders (rather than any malicious or aggressive intentions). But the Soviet Union shares an equal, if not greater, responsibility: While Soviet leaders greatly mistrusted Finland and genuinely feared a German-, Franco- or Anglo-Finnish conspiracy against the USSR, its response was entirely aggressive, and its attack on Finland was a clear violation of bilateral commitments and international law. Yet, Russian texts avoid a truly balanced view by explicitly avoiding critical evaluation of Soviet action. By casting Soviet conduct—not just intentions—as entirely innocent and defensive, it ultimately serves to justify Soviet behavior in 1939.

*Conduct and Consequences.* Like the Soviet interpretation, the new Russia textbook view also avoids critical discussion of the war's conduct and consequences. They make almost no mention, for example, of Soviet strategic misperceptions, poor military planning, the general disasters on the battlefield and the enormous casualties. True to the Myth of 1939-40, there is no sense that Soviet actions had tragic consequences for both Russians and Finns. When they do discuss the conduct of the war, the texts opt for heroic tales of military valor and self-sacrifice. Of the hugely disastrous Soviet offensive against the Mannerheim Line, for example, Dmitrenko writes,

As a result of the general advance, by the 10th of December the forces had made it to the front line of the Finnish fortified area, having overcome continuous battles along various fronts from 25 to 65 km. In the course of bitter battles, the Red Army broke open what was considered to be an impregnable fortification—the "Mannerheim Line," located 32 km from Leningrad and
numbering more than 2,000 weapon emplacements stretching 135 km and up to 90 km deep. The war lasted 105 days.\textsuperscript{129}

The emphasis here is on the resilience and fortitude of the Red Army, breaking through "what was considered to be an impregnable fortification." Yet, how many soldiers died taking the Mannerheim Line? Indeed, how many died in the entire 105 days of the war? Consistent with the Myth of 1939-40, the texts paint a portrait of the Finnish intervention as a largely bloodless affair, with not a single mention of the horrific human toll of the war.

The textbook treatment of the lessons of the war also contributes to the old view that, in the end, the war enhanced the security of the Soviet Union. Again, the implication is that Soviet aggression against Finland was necessary and ultimately justified. Soviet texts, for example, emphasized how the war was a serious test of Soviet combat capabilities, an important, perhaps necessary, "trial by fire" in preparation for war in 1941.:  

The Red Army Command had gained experience from the battles fought in the Soviet-Finnish war and they were attentively studying the military operations that had begun in Europe. All this helped to prepare the Soviet Armed Forces to wage a modern war.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{129} Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), pp. 278-79.

\textsuperscript{130} Lyons, p. 24.
The new Russian texts depart only slightly from this view, noting how the "Red Army's failures" were warning calls to the Soviet leadership to shore up their "defensive capabilities." As one textbook writes, "The failures of the Red Army in the war with Finland demonstrated to the leadership the need to strengthen its defensive capability." 131 Oddly, though, the texts never mention what those failures are. And despite, this less militaristic shift, the emphasis remains on the long-term security benefit of the war: by providing invaluable field experience and revealing certain weaknesses, it ultimately strengthened the Red Army and allowed it to defeat Hitler.

In addition, the Russian texts, like the Soviet ones before them, emphasize the gains in territorial security that resulted from the war. As one Russian textbook states, "The peace treaty with Finland strengthened the security of Leningrad and Murmansk and the Murmansk railroad." 132 We know, however, that any increase in security was at best marginal, and at worst illusory. While many historians note how the war revealed extensive weaknesses in Soviet military planning, strategy and training that led to beneficial changes, few if any would argue that the territorial adjustments that resulted significantly increased Soviet security in the region. Further, most historical assessments agree that any marginal increase in security was outweighed by the enormous loss of life in the war. Unfortunately, the Russian treatment of the war offers


no such evaluation. And it is impossible for readers to make their own evaluations of the war—whether it truly increased Soviet security, how much it increased security, and whether it was worth the heavy costs—based on the information provided in those texts. The larger problem here is one of omission. Evaluation requires more complete information. In the absence of clear descriptions of the less positive outcomes, particularly the human cost of Soviet military action, a fair assessment is impossible. Yet, the texts implicitly provide their own evaluation: By emphasizing only the "benefits" of the conflict the texts strongly imply that the war was necessary and worth the costs. Sadly, most Russian texts simply treat the Finnish war like the other western interventions: essentially as a footnote to the diplomacy of the 1930's and to the more glorious and heroic struggle that lay ahead—the Great Patriotic War.

V. Conclusion

A. Summary

The interventions of 1939-40 were unquestionable low-points in Soviet and Russian history, and were especially traumatic for those who bore the brunt of the interventions. For that reason it is all the more important that the history be critically evaluated. Instead, Russian textbooks explicitly and implicitly diminish the importance of these events, justify Soviet conduct, or rationalize away the necessity to discuss them. They avoid self-critical evaluations, through subtle and not so subtle emphasis, and factual distortion and omission of many critical details that shed light on questions of culpability and responsibility. Across all the cases discussed in this chapter, a
number of such omissions and distortions stand out. Prominent among them is the absence of discussion of the human consequences of the interventions—the executions, the mass deportations, and Sovietization policies in the Baltic and Eastern Poland, and the military blunders and enormous death toll in the Finnish war. In their absence, the interventions and annexations, seem almost trivial and innocuous.

The Russian textbook interpretation also diminishes the significance of the interventions, justifies them, or rationalizes away the need to discuss them through the interpretation of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the secret protocols. As seen above, it is impossible to understand the Western interventions without reference to these agreements. It was largely the guarantee from Germany of non-intervention in the Soviet sphere that allowed Stalin to intervene in Eastern Poland, impose mutual security treaties on the Baltic States, annex those states into the Soviet Union, and to wage war against Finland. But, as shown above, while the new texts mention the secret protocols they do so only superficially.

Finally, diminishing the significance of the interventions and justifying Soviet conduct is vividly revealed within the larger context of the Russian interpretation of World War II and the German-Soviet War. It is easy to see how, in comparison to the treatment of that war, the Myth of 1939-40 is perpetuated and the Russian failure to substantively evaluate the interventions is rationalized away: First, as already noted in the previous chapter, the Myth of the Great Patriotic War is infused with arguments of moral relativism. The texts imply that although "excesses" may have taken place in
Eastern Poland, the Baltic states or Finland, the Nazi occupation was obviously much worse. This is clear from the omission of the details of Soviet occupation, compared with the great detail about Nazi atrocities committed in those states. Further, the Myth of the great Patriotic War rests on arguments of comparative suffering. The texts imply that the suffering of ethnic Russians was much greater and therefore deserving of more attention. This is clear from the great detail that is offered on Russian deaths and depravation during the war in comparison to the level of discussion of Soviet atrocities in the pre-war period. Again, this is not to say that Russians didn't suffer terribly or that this shouldn't be prominently discussed. But one is struck by the difference with which suffering is treated. The suffering inflicted by Russians on others is barely noted, while the suffering inflicted by others on Russians is discussed in great detail.

**B. Generalization and Variation Among Textbooks**

The above conclusion is, of course, a general statement about the Russian interpretation of the Western interventions as a whole, and the ideas and images reflected in that interpretation. Yet, while excerpts from a variety of texts have been used above as illustrative examples, questions may remain about the variation of views across textbook titles. We know that there was great uniformity of interpretations across Soviet textbook titles, but is it reasonable today to conclude that consistent views are found across all texts currently in use? Clearly there is some variation among the new Russian texts. However, the variation that exists among the most widely-used textbooks, that is, those that have been federally-evaluated and sanctioned, is
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Note: The table above lists the titles, volumes, and editions of books related to the history of the Russian Empire from 1990-1998. The language column indicates that all texts are in Russian.
remarkably small. Table 4.1 summarizes the extent of variation of the treatment of the Myth of 1939-40 among all of the 20th century Russian and World history textbooks published since 1992.

As seen here, of 16 relevant texts, all but two purvey, to some degree or another, the basic features of the Myth of 1939-40. Of the two outlying texts, one (Zharova and Mishina) is no longer in print, and the other (Dolutskii) is a fairly unconventional text, which has received much less distribution than its two main competitors, Ostrovskii & Utkin and Dmitrenko, et al.\(^{133}\) Thus, despite decentralization in textbook writing and publishing, there is a remarkable consistency of views across textbook titles.

**C. Perniciousness and Significance of the Myth of 1939-40**

How pernicious, then, is the Russian view of the Western interventions? What does the Myth of 1939-40 tell us about the Russian view of wars and interventions more generally? What are the main ideas about war intervention and conflict that emerge from this analysis?

**Tests of Perniciousness.** The Russian view of the Western interventions passes all three of the tests of perniciousness—veracity, salience and role. First, in terms of veracity, there is little question that the Myth of 1939-40—that is, the dominant Russian textbook view of the Western interventions of 1939-40—is laden with historical distortions and critical factual omissions. Even those events that are still contested by

\(^{133}\) As noted in chapter 3, this point was made in interviews with education specialists, ministry officials, and history teachers in Moscow and St. Petersburg.
historians fail to receive balanced treatment in Russian texts. A single view, one consistent with the Myth of 1939-40, is always offered.

Second, it clearly passes the "salience" test—that is, the events have significant, lasting meaning for most of the states involved, particularly the victims. These were events of enormous bloodshed and horror. To many Poles Katyn' has come to symbolize not only the terrible destruction of the Soviet intervention and occupation in 1939-40, but the brutality of 45 years of communist rule. Though Finland's official accommodation with the Soviet Union rested in part on their tacit renunciation of all claims to Karelia territory lost to the Soviets in 1940, the taboo against discussing the issue of Karelia has slowly eroded since 1991. And for the Baltic states (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter six), the memory of these events has been a powerful catalyst of national feeling. Indeed, the Soviet annexation and occupation is one of the central foundations of modern national identity in all of those states. It served as the single unifying issue of the Baltic independence movements of the late 1980's. Recall, for example, that the entire "parade of sovereignties" that ultimately led

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134 See, for example, comments by Polish presidential aide Marek Siwiec on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the Red Army occupation of Poland, PAP "Poland: presidential aide says Russian statement on 1939 'a big mistake,' BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 15 September 1999.

to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 began in Lithuania. There, the central issue around which the pro-independence movement coalesced was the interpretation of history—a demand that the Communist Party leadership recognize the violent and illegal incorporation of Lithuania and the other Baltic States into the USSR. As Anatol Lieven has written: "In the Baltic the revelation of the full extent of the deportations and the executions of the 1940s played a part in undermining Soviet rule, but the key factor was of course the publication of the truth about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the way the Balts came to be annexed in 1940."\(^{136}\)

Finally, it passes the "role" test—that is, those historical distortions and factual omissions clearly purvey certain Russian images of itself and others that are explicitly pernicious. The myth continues to excessively emphasize Russia's role as a victim; it is rife with self-exculpating rationalizations and justifications for the interventions and their consequences; the treatment of the Finnish war is tinged with self-glorification; and, at least indirectly, it denigrates the victims of the interventions by minimizing the pain and suffering inflicted on those people and generally distorting the historical record of Soviet conduct.

In addition, an important test of role is the degree to which historical distortions and factual omissions reflect or purvey larger principles, beliefs, or values that are inherently pernicious. The treatment of the Western interventions continues to purvey ideas of imperialism, insecurity, militarism and to some degree principles of authoritarianism and racism. Table 4.2 shows the extent to which these indicators are present in the Myth of 1939-40.

As seen here, the Myth of 1939-40 satisfies 20 out of a total 32 individual predictions of perniciousness, or more than 60 per cent. The myth reflects especially strongly ideas of militarism (six of eight predictions, or 75 per cent); insecurity (three of three predictions, or 100 per cent); and imperialism (four of four predictions, or 100 per cent).

**Significance.** The significance of the Myth of 1939-40 is two-fold. First, it provides further support for the view that the Russian textbook treatment of World War II discussed in the previous chapter is in fact representative of the Russian view of wars and interventions more generally. Here, the Soviets were clearly the perpetrators rather than the victims of aggression, yet the interpretation of those events are just as pernicious as the Myth of the Great Patriotic War. In fact, the interventions of 1939-40 are only a handful of many that the Soviet Union undertook during the latter half of the 20th century. The major post-war interventions, such as those in Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Afghanistan in 1979-89, just to name a few, are equally as devoid of self-critical evaluations. The texts minimize Soviet culpability or offer
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>PREDICTIONS</th>
<th>CONFIRMED?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>War/Foreign Relations</strong></td>
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</table>
| Xenophobia | 1. negatively characterizes foreigners.  
2. describes foreigners as aggressive and anti-Russian.  
3. emphasizes, explicitly or implicitly, Russia's uniqueness and exceptionalism.  
4. expresses self-glorifying views by portraying Russia as exceptional/unique and more honorable than others. | No  
Yes  
No  
Yes |
| Militarism | 5. glorifies warfare and Russia's conduct in past wars.  
6. uncritically portrays military figures.  
7. emphasizes Russian military victories, downplays Russian military defeats.  
8. military victories attributed to the uniqueness and exceptionalism of Russia, Russia's soldiers, and officers; defeats attributed to the adversary's duplicity or failures.  
9. military victories are achieved "against all odds" and at great Russian sacrifice.  
10. military or political decisions to use force are not evaluated.  
11. Russian military action against others is always justified, while aggression against Russia is always unprovoked, without justification, or motivated purely by anti-Russian sentiment.  
12. whitewashes, downplays or ignores consequences of Russian military action, while describing the consequences of foreign military action against Russia as incomparably brutal, cruel and unrestrained. | Yes  
No  
Yes  
No  
Yes  
Yes  
Yes |
| Insecurity | 13. emphasizes constant foreign threats to Russia.  
14. attributes the causes of wars to others' threatening intentions or behavior.  
15. rationalizes Russia's own war-causing actions or military interventions based on threats to security (i.e., Russian invasions will be attributed to other's threatening or menacing behavior, or provocation.) | Yes  
Yes  
Yes |
| Imperialism | 16. inflates the value of empire and expansion.  
17. rationalizes or justifies expansionism, or whitewashes the negative aspects of past imperial behavior, both conduct and consequences.  
18. negatively characterizes loss of empire.  
19. omits discussion of imperial expansion and the conduct and consequences of that expansion. | Yes  
Yes  
Yes |
| **Politics/Society Relations** | | |
| Authoritarianism | 20. behavior, personality or policies of authoritarian rational leaders is not critically evaluated.  
21. whitewashes, downplays or ignores consequences of authoritarian/anti-democratic policies or behavior, and rationalizes or justifies such actions.  
22. negatively portrays, directly or indirectly, notions of democracy, democratic institutions, and practices. | Yes  
Yes  
No |
| Deification | 23. portrays in glowing, uncritical terms Russian national leaders.  
24. uncritically praises national leaders' policies and contributions.  
25. inflates national leaders' contributions to national and world history | No  
No  
No |
| Ethnic/Religious Relations | | |
| Racism | 26. omits discussion of contributions of other non-dominant ethnic groups.  
27. omits discussion of past negative treatment of non-dominant ethnic groups.  
28. negatively portrays, or advances stereotypes, of non-dominant ethnic groups.  
29. praises ethnic Russians, "Russian" national qualities, traits, characteristics, behavior and values.  
30. causes and consequences of war are attributed to or associated with non-Russians. | No  
Yes  
No  
No  
Yes |
| Anti-Semitism | 31. omits discussions of past negative treatment of Jews.  
32. negatively portrays, or advances stereotypes, of Jews. | Yes  
No |
obviously self-exculpatory rationalizations for Soviet actions. For the most part this is accomplished through thin, opaque and innocuous discussions of these Cold War interventions. Again this is troubling given the salience of these issues in the history of the Cold War and their significance in galvanizing national sentiments in those countries.

This consistent view of war and conflict across these cases begins to indicate some general, enduring beliefs, values and ideas with regard to a Russian worldview and self-image, and to a view of the causes of war and the legitimate use of force. This small variation between Soviet and Russian texts and among Russian texts is strong circumstantial evidence that these ideas are widely-held and deeply-ingrained among society and elites. Indeed, the refusal of Russian textbooks to treat the events of 1939-40 candidly and honestly, despite the overwhelming historical record, can be explained in part by the depth and resilience of certain features of Russia's worldview and self-image—a view that seems to have transcended the regime change of 1991. Candid discussion of the secret protocols and their consequences, for example, would seriously question—or at least understandably complicate—the Russian self-image that is found in the Russian view of World War II and the Myth of the Great Patriotic War.

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137 One text, for example, in discussing the "Prague Spring," emphasizes how the intervention in 1968 was a "collective undertaking" of the Warsaw Pact countries of USSR, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and the GDR. In many accounts the intervention is portrayed almost as "peacekeeping" operations. Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 527.
CHAPTER 5
THE MYTH OF SLAVIC BROTHERHOOD:
WAR AND INTERVENTION IN THE BALKANS, 1806-1914

The Russian textbook treatment of wars and interventions, whether those perpetrated against Russia or by Russia, reflect a number of highly pernicious beliefs, ideas, assumptions and images. The consistency of these views in opposite cases, as well as the similarities of interpretations across Soviet and Russian textbooks, and among Russian textbook titles, strengthens the view that these ideas are deeply-embedded and, very likely, widely-held. But thus far we have focused solely on the interpretation of events in the Soviet period. What about the interpretation of events outside the Soviet period? One could argue that there is something inherently unique about the Soviet experience, or the way it is remembered, that makes it more prone to pernicious interpretation than non-Soviet events. As a result, analysis of Soviet-era events may be less indicative of Russian views than argued in the previous chapters.

To address this concern, this chapter further broadens the analysis to include cases of Imperial Russian intervention and war between 1806-1914. The particular focus in this chapter is on interventions and wars in the Balkans—with particular attention paid to Russia’s relations with Serbs and other Balkan Slavs—from 1806-1914: the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1806-1812 and 1877-78 and World War I. These cases are selected for several reasons: First, they encompass cases where Russia is a victim of foreign attack, and cases where Russia is a perpetrator. Second, most of these
conflicts and interventions involve Western powers, allowing for comparison with the Soviet cases, in which the theme of anti-Western hostility and paranoia is quite strong. Third, it is an area that has experienced intense warfare and Russian intervention throughout the 19th century. The Russo-Turkish wars, for example, ravaged the region. killed tens of thousands of Turks, Russians and Balkan Slavs, and spurred years of bloody nationalist conflict in the region. World War I, of course, was one of the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th century. Fourth, most of these wars and interventions have been significantly glorified and distorted by pre-revolutionary and Russian and Soviet historiography, and thus serve as important cases for measuring the extent of change in Russian historical interpretation from the Soviet period. Finally, the Balkans remain particularly important in contemporary Russian foreign policy, and have continued to experience war and foreign intervention in the post-Cold War period. As a result, understanding how these events are popularly viewed, as will be shown in the following chapter, sheds light on the nature and conduct of Russian foreign policy today.

All of these cases in fact continue to reveal many of the same ideas, beliefs, assumptions and images found in interpretations of Soviet wars and interventions. As in the Soviet cases, these views have changed little from those presented by Soviet historiography, thus adding further support to the view that these views are enduring and pervasive. In particular, the interpretations of these wars and interventions continue to be characterized by factual omissions, distortions, and self-glorifying and
self-exculpating rationalizations for condemnable Russian foreign policies and conduct. They continue to purvey strong views of imperialism, militarism, and insecurity. The image of Russia as a victim remains strong, as does the image of the West as hostile and anti-Russian. In addition, the interpretation of these particular wars and interventions remain a cornerstone of the Russian "Myth of Slavic Brotherhood"—the notion of a unique Russian-Slav (and particularly Russian-Serb) bond that drives Russian policy toward the region.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one presents the Soviet and Russian textbook view of two major Russo-Turkish Wars in 1806-12 and 1877-78. Section two turns to the origins of the First World War. The final section summarizes these views and assesses their degree of perniciousness.

I. The Russo-Turkish Wars

A. Overview: The Russian View of the Eastern Question and the Russo-Turkish Wars

The Russian textbook treatment of the "Eastern Question" and Russia's involvement in the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th century continues to purvey many of the same images and distorted interpretations that characterize Soviet-era textbooks. In particular, texts continue to advance the "Myth of Slavic Brotherhood and Unity"—namely that Russians were heroic, self-sacrificing "liberators" of "Slavic brothers" in the Balkans, rooted in a "special relationship" between Orthodox Balkan Slavs and Russians. Russian foreign policy in the Balkans is characterized as almost
entirely altruistic, honorable and defensive, while Turkey and the Western powers are portrayed exclusively as ruthless oppressors of Orthodox Slavs. It is a largely self-glorifying view that omits discussion of Imperial Russia's well-documented manipulation of Balkan nationalism to expand its empire and secure control over the Straits and the Balkans. Indeed, since Russia's efforts to dominate the Balkan peninsula and control the Straits were fleeting and eventually failed altogether, it is no surprise that Russian popular history has emphasized the seemingly "positive" results of these centuries-long bloody and costly wars and instead has focused on the "liberation" of the Orthodox and Slavic peoples of the Balkan peninsula.

This romantic and self-serving view is pervasive in both Soviet and Russian textbook histories. The standard Soviet textbook interpretation saw Russia as having played the critical and decisive role in the liberation of the Slavs, emphasizing how "the Russo-Turkish wars at the beginning of the 19th century were the most important period on the path of liberation of the Balkan peoples and their struggle for independence," and how "those peoples, enslaved by the Turkish Sultans, put their hopes in the brotherly and friendly Russian people."¹ Similarly, the new Russian textbooks on the period rank Russia's support for the Slavs and the liberation of the Balkan peoples to be among Russia's greatest achievements in the 18th and 19th centuries. Listed among events such as the war with Sweden and Napoleonic France are

¹ I. A. Fedosov, Istoriia SSSR, uchhebkoe posobie dlia 8 klassa, tenth ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1975) [hereafter, Fedosov (1975)], p. 86.
"the struggle with Turkey under Catherine II and the liberation of the Balkan peoples from the Turkish yoke under Nicholas I and Aleksandr II." These events, we are told, were important "for the fate of Russia and all of the world. . . . The activity of soldiers and sailors and emperors left an indelible footprint on the consciousness of the people, promoted national consolidation, and the raising of national self-consciousness to the highest level."\(^2\)

Russian texts, like their Soviet counterpart, continue to glorify Serb and Balkan national liberation, and emphasize a "special relationship" between Balkan Slavs and the Russian people. However, on certain points, the Soviet texts are actually better than the new Russian versions. They correctly emphasize, for example, that the tsarist regime manipulated Serb and Balkan nationalism to strengthen its own regional power and desire for control of the Straits. Referring to the "Eastern Question," one of the standard textbook accounts of the Soviet period writes,

At the same time the autocracy strove to strengthen itself on the Balkan peninsula. Tsarism used the struggle of the Balkan peoples—Romanians, Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians—against the Turkish yoke. Those peoples, enslaved by the Turkish Sultans, put their hopes in the brotherly and friendly Russian people. Independent of the desire of the Russian tsar, who had no goals of liberating the Balkan peoples, the Russo-Turkish wars at the beginning of the 19th century were the most important period on the path of liberation of the Balkan peoples and their struggle for independence. Turkey was forced to

\(^2\) V. I. Buganov and P. N. Zyrianov, Istoriia Rossii: Konets XVII-XIX vek, uchebnik dlia 10 klassa obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdeni, first ed. (Moscow: Prosveshenie, 1995) [hereafter, Buganov], p. 7.
recognize the autonomy of Moldavia, Wallachia, Serbia and the independence of Greece.\textsuperscript{3}

Though critical of the tsarist regime, however, both the Soviet and Russian history textbooks, as the above statement demonstrates, continue to be effusively sympathetic toward the Serbs and the other Balkan peoples; aid to their Slav brethren is portrayed as both a duty and an honor despite the enormous bloodshed involved.

In addition, a pervasive and sustained image of the West as deceitful, untrustworthy, aggressive and fundamentally inferior to Russia is also found in the Soviet and Russian textbook histories of Russia's wars in the Balkans. Such a view represents not only a sense of anti-Westernism but also a self-image of Russia in competition with the West. Hence the tone of the textbook treatment of these events is markedly defensive, insecure, and constantly emphasizing not only Russia's inherent uniqueness and contributions to world civilization, but also its superiority—generally moral superiority—to the West. As the standard new Russian history of the period writes: "Unfortunately, it is true that at other times Russians received from neighboring countries not only that which was good and useful for them, but often that which promoted destruction, particularly from spheres of spiritual life from the West. . . . Everything that was done in two centuries was the fruit of the efforts of the Russian peoples."\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{3} Fedosov (1975), p. 86.

\textsuperscript{4} Buganov, pp. 9-10.
B. The War of 1806-12

1. The Historical Consensus

The onset of the Russo-Turkish war coincided with an already two-year-old Serbian revolt against Ottoman rule. At that time, the Porte was prepared to grant the Serbs the limited aims they had sought—largely autonomy within the empire. However, Russia, now at war with the Turks, encouraged the Serbs to continue their rebellion, enticing them with the idea of complete independence in the event of Russian victory. Though by all accounts the Serbs were willing to settle for autonomy within the Ottoman empire, they abandoned that goal in favor of complete independence due largely to Russian pledges of military and economic aid. Yet, in 1807, Russia abandoned its pledges to Serbia by signing the Treaty of Tilset with Napoleon, bringing a temporary halt to the Russo-Turkish War for the next two years. When fighting resumed in 1808, Russia again pledged support to the Serbs in their rebellion, which at that point had turned desperate. Russian troops entered Serbia in 1810. However, in 1812, with the threat from France growing, Russia sued for peace—just two years before Napoleon's devastating invasion and occupation of Russia. Once again, the Russians abandoned their Serb ally, and they did so without any consultation with them or without giving any advanced warning. The Serbs actually learned of the negotiations and their terms from the Ottoman government, not from their Russian allies.\(^5\)

\(^5\) One of the best general histories of this period from the perspective of Russian diplomacy remains M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (New York: St. Martin's, 1966), and from the Balkan
Russia made considerable concessions to end the war. While the reality on the ground yielded much more, her desperation to end the conflict led Russia to settle for control of northern Bessarabia. In terms of the Balkan Slavs as a whole, the war—and the peace—brought them comparatively little: they retained their traditional, though essentially chimerical autonomy within the Ottoman empire. Those portions of Serbia that revolted were also granted this nominal status. Ironically, this was the Serb's chief aim of their revolt in 1805, before the Russians encouraged them to expand their aims. However, the peace terms now called for Turkish forces to regain control of the fortifications there. As Russian troops withdrew, Ottoman forces entered Belgrade, and the Serb revolution was finally crushed.

2. The Russian Textbook View

The textbook account of Russia's war with the Ottoman empire beginning in 1806 offers a good example of the generally romantic views of their role in the Balkans and of solidarity with the Serbs. The Russian popular portrayal of this period in Russian history textbooks paints a much more sanguine picture. Common to the Russian portrayal of such military failures, not only for itself, but for its allies, the texts offer banal, terse, or self-glorifying descriptions that stress the seemingly "positive" aspects of events:

In 1811 Mikhail Illarionovich Kutuzov (1745-1813) was named commander of the army in the south. He managed to win a number of victories. Then, displaying outstanding diplomatic skill, Kutuzov persuaded the Turkish representatives to sign a peace treaty. The border with Turkey was established at the river Prut, and Bessarabia went to Russia. Serbia, which was under Turkish rule, received autonomy. This was the beginning of complete independence.\(^6\)

Thus, the peace treaty—rather than portrayed as an obviously desperate attempt to end the war—is seen as a "brilliant" bit of diplomacy by Kutuzov. Rather than selling out the Serbs and finishing off their revolution, the peace agreement is seen as providing Serbia with "autonomy," without offering the details of what that meant in practice. In general, the war with Turkey is seen not as a defeat for the Serbs, but as a victory in the larger on-going struggle for independence.\(^7\)

\(^6\) Buganov, p. 130; also P. N. Zyrianov, Istoriia Rossii, XIX vek, uchebnik dlia 8 klassa obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchezhdений (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1997) [hereafter, Zyrianov (I)], p. 19; P. N. Zyrianov, Istoriia Rossii, XIX - nachalo XX vv, uchebnaia kniga dlia 8-9 klassov srednei shkoly (Moscow: Antikva, 1997) [hereafter, Zyrianov (II)], p. 17-18.

\(^7\) Russia's war with Turkey in 1828 was much more of a military and diplomatic success in terms of Russian strategic interests in the Balkans. The military campaign was enormously costly and bloody, and included an epidemic of dysentery affected more than 5,000 men. But the Russians secured free access through the straits and significant territorial gains in the Caucasus. The Russian popular view, however, focuses primarily on the gains to the Orthodox and Slav peoples of the peninsula—Greek independence, an increase in the Serb area covered by the autonomy status, and the granting of nominal autonomy to Moldavia and Wallachia. See Buganov, p. 167.
C. The War of 1877-78

Compared to the war of 1806-12, the war of 1877-78 receives a much more prominent place in textbook histories. It offers an excellent example of Russia's image of Serbia and its own role in the Balkans. It also offers a taste of the pervasive anti-Western bias that runs through most of the popular view of the history of Russian foreign policy. The war of 1877-78 is popularly portrayed as an honorable, just and glorious war in defense of the heroic Slav brothers in the Balkans. In discussion of the war's aftermath, texts portray the West—as distinct from Russia—as deceitful, manipulative and aggressive.

1. The Historical Consensus

Origins of the war. The war of 1877-78 grew largely out of nationalist revolts in the Balkans—first in Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 1875, and then in Bulgaria the following spring.\(^8\) Responding to massacres of Turkish civilians by Bulgarian rebels, the Ottoman authorities unleashed irregular Turkish forces who brutally suppressed the Bulgarian uprising, killing an estimated 12-15,000 people.\(^9\) That move set off a wave of

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\(^9\) While precise demographic data is not available, it is generally agreed that the number killed was no less than 3,000 and no more than 15,000. This range is offered by the leading scholar on the demographic history of the Ottoman empire, Justin McCarthy. See his *Death And Exile. The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-
heated anti-Turkish sentiment among Slavs, both inside and outside the Ottoman empire. In June, Serbia, at the urging of the Russian consul in Belgrade, declared war on Turkey. While a militarily unprepared Russia took a cautious approach to the conflict, the increase in popular Panslav sentiment throughout Russia pressured the government to act. Sympathetic Russians raised millions of rubles in aid for Serbia; volunteers fought in the Serbian army. But the Serb army was no match for the Turks, and, in August, they sued for peace (though the Montenegrins, with more success, continued fighting). While the Turks agreed to an armistice, it took a Russian ultimatum—backed by the partial mobilization of the Russian army—to bring about a temporary end to the fighting.

At this time, the representatives of the Three Emperor's League, formed in the early 1870s by Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, met to deal with the crisis. They agreed in a formal pact that in the event of a defeat of the Balkan states, Russia and Austria would cooperate to maintain the status quo. In the event of victory, they would partition the Ottoman Balkan territories, with the stipulation that no single large Balkan state be established. Among other things, southern Bessarabia—which the Russians were compelled to give up to Romania after the Russian defeat in the Crimean war—would go back to Russia; Bosnia and Herzegovina—the main Serbian territorial objective in the war with Turkey—would be annexed by Austria-Hungary.

1922 (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1996), p. 64. The higher-end figure comes primarily from two investigations conducted independently by American and British consular staffs, respectively, immediately following the massacre. See Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, p. 171, n. 1.
Leading historians of the period generally concur that rather than being motivated by loyalty to Serbia and the Balkan Slavs, Russian policy was driven by geopolitical ambitions and desire for territorial and political expansion in the area. Through either diplomacy or war, the Russians were determined to gain control of the Balkan peninsula—primarily through the establishment of a large independent Balkan state under de facto Russian control. To this end, during the Serbo-Turkish cease-fire, the Russians pressured the Serbs to fully support Russia in the event of war with Turkey. But they did not offer the Serbs any territorial guarantees (because Russia had already secretly promised Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Austrians). Literally exhausted from their failed war with Turkey and not receiving any guarantees for territory from Russia, they resisted Russian pressure and promptly concluded a peace with the Porte, restoring the status quo ante bellum. The move hardly endeared the Serbs to Russia. In addition to signing secret treaties with Austria-Hungary, reassuring them of their right to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina in exchange for neutrality in the event of a Russo-Turkish War, the Russians signed an agreement with Romania securing military passage through their territory in the event of war with Turkey. The Romanians, fearing Russian domination, reluctantly signed the agreement in the hopes of gaining complete independence after the war—a belief that was implicitly supported by the Russian stipulation that they would guarantee Romanian territorial integrity.

In March 1877, the Great Powers met in London to address the crisis in the Balkans, and issued a protocol, which the Russians signed. The protocol, among other
things, urged the Turks to demobilize; to carry out (unspecified) "reforms" in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and to respect the rights of Christians. In exchange, the Russians agreed to "begin negotiations" on disarmament, however only with the stipulation that the Turks conclude a peace with Montenegro. In the event of a recurrence of massacres of Christians, the Russians reserved the right to cease demobilization. It was highly unlikely the Turks would accept the terms of the agreement. Not unreasonably, they saw the Russian declaration as an attempt to incite Montenegrin and other Orthodox uprisings, and thus as an excuse to avoid demobilization. The agreement was set up to fail. Indeed, the Russians already had a war manifesto prepared when the Turks did reject the terms.

**Conduct of the war.** The war of 1877-78, like most of the previous Russo-Turkish conflicts was, in the words of historian Nicholas Riasanovsky, "a difficult, bitter and costly war" for both the Russians and the Turks.\(^{10}\) Though the Russians eventually achieved a decisive victory, they suffered considerable casualties, particularly in the first months of the war. The Russians lost thousands of lives taking and defending the Shipka pass and carrying out the siege of the Plevna fortress in Northern Bulgaria. Though they intended to wage a quick war without the assistance of their Balkan allies, they soon had to call for help. The Serbs, again failing to receive any territorial guarantees from Russia, and still weak from the war with Turkey, balked at

the Russian request, a move that greatly irritated the Russians. The Serbs eventually entered the war only when Russian victory was guaranteed. The Romanians entered the war earlier, enticed by the Russian offer to Romanian Prince Charles of a command position. In the end, the Russians achieved victory at great human cost both to itself and its Balkan Slav allies.

Aftermath of the war. With Russian troops close to Constantinople, the Turks sued for peace and accepted especially harsh terms in the Treaty of San Stefano. Most historians concur that the treaty violated numerous international agreements—including the pacts with Austria-Hungary signed at the beginning of the war—and jeopardized the balance of power in the region: It called for the establishment of a large, independent Bulgarian state, in violation of Russia's earlier pledge, and an increase in the territory of Montenegro to three times its original size. As a reflection of Russia's irritation with the Serbs, they received only a small increase in size, though Serbia was granted complete independence along with Montenegro and Romania. Bosnia and Herzegovina received nominal autonomy. Russia itself annexed southern Bessarabia, again in violation of its earlier pledge to guarantee the territorial integrity of its ally Romania. An extremely large indemnity was levied against Turkey, and a new agreement was to be signed safeguarding Russian access to the Straits.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{11}\) One historian has called the Treaty of San Stefano "the fullest practical expression ever given in Russian foreign policy to the Panslav ideal." Anderson, The Eastern Question, p. 203.
Further, Russia had long agreed to submit to international vetting any post-war treaty that affected the interests of the other Great Powers. Ripe with victory, and a bit of hubris, Russia simply ignored this pledge, and its previous treaty obligations, when negotiating San Stefano. Since the terms of the treaty also directly affected the balance of power in the region, the Great Powers forced Russia to revise the terms at the Congress of Berlin. At the Congress, the size of the new Bulgarian state was significantly reduced. Serbia, Montenegro and Romania maintained independence, but with significantly less territory.

2. The Russian Textbook View

Origins of the war. The Russian textbook view of events on the eve of the war glosses over key distinctions and Russian actions. It portrays Russia as a benevolent advocate for Orthodox and Slav rights, focusing on the harsh Turkish treatment of the Slavs, the moral imperative for Russian action, and Russia's role in averting destruction of the Serbs. It is a view that not only glorifies the role of the Slavs, and the Serbs in particular, but also conveys a Russian self-image of heroic savior of oppressed Slavs. It is a view not very different from that offered in Soviet texts: "The Balkan peoples selflessly struggled for freedom," writes one Soviet textbook, "but they were unable to throw off the hateful Turkish yoke on their own. They turned their gaze upon Russia. The Slavic peoples saw in the Russian people their brothers, defenders and liberators.
from foreign domination." The Russian society showed a deep sympathy for the struggle of the Slavic Orthodox peoples," writes one new Russian text.13

The Russian textbook view of the origins of the war has two key features that serve to justify Russian intervention and glorify its role in the Balkans, both of which, in the end, perpetuate the Russian Myth of Slavic Brotherhood. First, the Russian view stresses the harsh Turkish treatment of Balkan Slavs in order to bolster the argument that Russia had a moral imperative to intervene. Take for example a typical passage found in several of the leading Russian texts:

In the spring of 1875 an uprising began against the Turkish yoke in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After a year, in April 1876, the uprising flared up in Bulgaria. The Turkish punishers put down these uprisings with flame and sword. In Bulgaria alone they butchered more than 30,000 people. In the summer of 1876 Serbia and Montenegro started war against Turkey. But the forces were uneven. The poorly armed Slavic armies suffered failures.14

Interestingly, the figure for the number of Bulgarians killed in the spring 1876 uprising is clearly inflated, despite the fact that such exaggeration seems gratuitous: the authoritative figure of 12-15,000 deaths would seem sufficiently horrific to justify a


Russian response. Instead, the exaggeration only emphasizes the victimization of the Balkan Slavs and bolsters the view that Russian intervention was noble and righteous.  

Several new textbooks describe "how the bloody massacre by the Turkish forces elicited the indignation of Russian society," and "calls rushed in from everywhere for Russian military intervention." In addition, the Russian view stresses how it was bold Russian action that averted the destruction of the Serbs, thus perpetuating the image of Russia as savior of the Orthodox Slavs:

At that very time Serbia suffered defeat. The Serbian King Milan appealed to the Tsar for assistance. In October 1876 Russia issued an ultimatum to Turkey: immediately conclude a peace with Serbia. It was the intervention of Russia that averted the fall of Belgrade.

As another text writes, how Russian intervention was necessary "in order to save Serbia from a decisive crushing defeat." Indeed, as the Russian view emphasizes, it was the

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15 Another text notes, for example: "When the Turks organized the slaughter of the peaceful population of Salonika Alexander II ordered mobilization." Liashenko, p. 172.


18 Danilov and Kosulina, p. 301.
"traditional Russian role as the defender of the Slavic peoples of the Balkans," that weighed heavily on the tsar's decision to go to war in 1877.\textsuperscript{19}

Second, the Russian view of the origins of the war emphasizes the peacefulness of Russian intentions in the Balkans in order to cast Russian intervention as defensive and morally just. In the Russian view, the war was essentially forced upon Russia, even though Russia clearly initiated war against Turkey in 1877. It did so only because it had to exercise its unique role as defender of the Orthodox Slavs and because of the failure of others, namely the West and Turkey, to take advantage of Russia's peaceful offers. Even the Soviet texts, which are critical of tsarist diplomacy, portray the Russians as the peaceful honest broker, reluctantly "forced to start war."\textsuperscript{20} Similarly, the new Russian texts emphasize how "Russia, as forcefully as possible sought to solve problems [with Turkey] with political methods, believing that military intervention should be considered only as a last resort."\textsuperscript{21} Danilov and Kosulina's eighth grade text notes,

Russia tried to solve the conflict by peaceful means, organizing several conferences with European powers that worked out proposals for solving the situation in the Balkans. But Turkey, encouraged by England, answered all proposals with either a rejection or arrogant silence.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Danilov and Kosulina, p. 302.

\textsuperscript{20} Fedosov (1975), p. 155.

\textsuperscript{21} Liashenko, p. 171.

\textsuperscript{22} Danilov and Kosulina, p. 301.
The texts justify Russia's decision to declare war by pointing to Turkish resistance to the terms of the London protocol. Though the historical record is rather clear that the Turks rejected the London protocol because Russia's stipulation for compliance could easily be construed as intending to provoke anti-Turk violence, the Russian textbook view omits reference to these stipulations. Thus, Russian texts strongly imply that the Turks rejected the terms simply because they wished to continue harming the Orthodox population:

Russian diplomacy managed to use the indignation of the world community with the atrocities of the Turkish punishers. In March 1877 in London the representatives of the great powers agreed to a protocol in which it was proposed that Turkey carry out reforms in favor of the Christian population in the Balkans. Turkey rejected the London protocol. On April 12 the tsar signed a manifesto declaring war on Turkey.  

The result here is not only to morally justify Russian action, but to shift any culpability for the outbreak of the war away from Russia itself.

**Conduct of the war.** Typical of textbook descriptions of Soviet wars and interventions, both Soviet and Russian texts offer innocuous detailed descriptions of military tactics and maneuvers, and vignettes of the exceptional skill and heroic exploits of great Russian generals. The story told in Russian textbooks is one of heroic self-sacrifice on behalf of the Balkan Slavs, and particularly the Bulgarians. The message

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conveyed in Russian texts is one of Russians overcoming enormous adversity—being
greatly outnumbered by Turkish forces, suffering from lack of supplies, reinforcements,
adverse weather, and high casualties—to prevail against the enemy in defense of
religious and political liberties for oppressed Slavs. Further, Russian victories on the
battlefield are always made prominent, while failures are minimized, sanitized or cast in
the most positive light. Significant Russian casualties or outright defeats are cast as
heroic exploits of "defenders" and examples of their tragic self-sacrifice. The Russian
defense of the Shipka pass in the first months of the war in 1877 offers a good example:

The enemy had a five-time superiority. The defenders of Shipka had to fight off
up to 14 attacks a day. Unbearable heat intensified thirst, but the stream was
under artillery fire. Near the end of the third day of battle, when the situation
became desperate, reinforcements arrived. The threat of encirclement was
eliminated.\textsuperscript{24}

Though one text notes that "failures followed the first victories of Russian forces," a
decidedly positive spin is put on events:

Significant forces were thrown by the enemy [at the Russian forces] in order to
take back the Shipka pass. But all attempts by the Turkish forces—which had a
five-time superiority—to take Shipka ran directly into the heroic resistance of
Russian forces and Bulgarian irregulars.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} Buganov, p. 242; Zyrianov (I), p. 152; Zyrianov (II), pp. 157-58.

\textsuperscript{25} Danilov and Kosulina, p. 303. "At Shipka," writes another text, "five
thousand Russian soldiers and Bulgarian volunteers managed in the course of several
months to hold their positions, denying Turkish reinforcements access to Plevna." Liashenko, p. 172.
Such views are vividly portrayed not only in the narrative but also in supporting materials. For example, several of the most widely-used ninth and tenth grade 19th century history texts include a prominent full-page map of the war. The key to the map indicates not simply the movement of Russian and Turkish forces and the "location and years of the most important battles," but a separate specific indicator for the "Heroic defense of the Shipka pass, 8 August-28 December 1877."\textsuperscript{26}

When the texts do discuss Russia's horrifically bloody attacks against Plevna, they do so with the least possible detail: "At the same time," writes Danilov and Kosulina's eighth grade text, "the undertaking of three attacks by Russian forces against Plevna, which stood as the fundamental center of resistance, ended with failures."\textsuperscript{27} No other detail is given about the three disastrous Russian attacks on Plevna and the huge numbers of Russians killed. Ironically, at the same time that the Russian textbook view minimizes Russian casualties, it also plays up—indeed glorifies—Russian sacrifices. Doing so further contributes to the narrative of Russians overcoming hardship and adversity on behalf of their fellow Slavs. For example, several texts ignore the first two failed attacks altogether and instead focus on the third. There, the heroic, yet ultimately futile, exploits of General Mikhail Skobelev—one of the great Russian heroes of the

\textsuperscript{26} Buganov, p. 243; Zryianov (I), p. 151; Zryianov (II), p. 158. Interestingly while the texts stress that Russian victories are always the result of a triumph over adversity, Turkish forces are described not simply to have retreated, but to have "retreated in disarray." Buganov, pp. 241, 244; Zryianov (I), pp. 150, 153; Zryianov (II), pp. 157, 160.

\textsuperscript{27} Danilov and Kosulina, p. 303.
war—are described in some detail.\textsuperscript{28} And when texts do give actual figures for Russians killed (Turkish deaths are noticeably absent from any discussion), it is done in such a way as to emphasize the tragic sacrifice of Russian forces on behalf of the Slavs.\textsuperscript{29} Ultimately, as will be discussed in more detail in the next section, those deaths are justified as part of a larger noble cause, not only on behalf of the Slavs, but also Russia itself, all of which is central to the Russian Myth of Slavic Brotherhood:

The prestige of Russian military glory was fully established. And this occurred mostly thanks to the simple Russian soldier, who exhibited determination and bravery in battles, surprising endurance in the most difficult of tactical situations, and in the absence of the necessary material provision of the armed forces. The local population, for whom the Russian soldier became a symbol of national liberation, provided significant assistance to the Russian soldiers. Victory was promoted by the very atmosphere of unanimous support that took shape in Russian society, and an inexhaustible flow of volunteers who, at the cost of their own lives, were prepared to fight for Slavic freedom.

\textit{Victory in the war of 1877-78 was the greatest military success of the Russian state in the second half of the 19th century. It demonstrated the effectiveness of the military reforms carried out in the country and promoted the growth of the authority of Russia in the Slavic world.}\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Buganov, p. 242; Zyrianov (I), p. 152; Zyrianov (II), pp. 158-9.

\textsuperscript{29} For example, Buganov, p. 242; Zyrianov (I), p. 152; Zyrianov (II), p. 159. Liashenko's text may be an exception. Not only does it mention that "tens of thousands of Russian soldiers and officers were killed," but notes that "poorly prepared and planned, the three attacks against the city—one of which was timed to coincide with Alexander II's name-day—collapsed." Nonetheless, it too emphasizes the noble cause of the war and thus rationalizes the terrible losses. See p. 172.

\textsuperscript{30} Danilov and Kosulina, pp. 307-8 (emphasis in original). It is a view that is unchanged from Soviet texts: "The fighting spirit of the Russian army, deeply sympathetic with their brother Slavs, was very high. Bravery and self-sacrifice of the
Aftermath of the war. The Russian textbook treatment of the aftermath of the war is especially revealing of the Russian Myth of Slavic Brotherhood. Through factual distortion and omission, Russian textbooks continue to justify and glorify its war in the Balkans, and to pillory the West as anti-Russian and anti-Slav. The treatment of the treaty of San Stefano, which ended the war, and the Congress of Berlin, which significantly revised the terms of San Stefano, offer pointed examples.

The Treaty of San Stefano is widely seen by historians as a harsh and provocative peace, an act of hubris that not only threatened the European balance of power, but violated several prior agreements between Russia and the European great powers. However, the Russian popular view—little changed from Soviet textbooks—portrays it as a great and just treaty, codifying a glorious Russian victory and the liberation of the oppressed Balkan peoples.

On 19 February in San Stefano a peace treaty was signed. According to its terms, Bulgaria received the status of an autonomous kingdom, independent in its internal affairs. Serbia, Montenegro and Romania found full independence and significant territorial increases. Southern Bessarabia, which was seized by the Treaty of Paris, was returned to Russia, and the Karss region in the Caucasus was transferred to Russia.  

"...soldiers, intense desire to help the Slavs in the struggle for national liberation, determined the high quality of their morale." Fedosov, p. 155.

31 Buganov, p.244; Zyríanov (I), pp. 153-54; Zyríanov (II), p. 160. The Soviet version is virtually identical, if not more detailed: "The conditions for the signing of a peace treaty were advantageous for Russia and the Slavic peoples. A new large independent state was created—Bulgaria. Turkey recognized the independence of Montenegro and Serbia. Their territory significantly increased. Romania was declared an independent state. Its territory also increased: it received Northern Dobrudzha. In all the regions of Turkey populated with Christians, the Sultan's government was
This summary of the treaty, though seemingly innocuous, is marked by subtle factual
distortions and omissions that cast it as a generous treaty and Russia as a benevolent
imperial state. The Romanians, we are told, actually increased their territory—a
disingenuous claim given that Romania actually lost part of its own territory (southern
Bessarabia) to Russia and was instead—and quite unhappily—compensated with
Turkish lands (Northern Dubrudzha). We are also told that Serb land, along with
Montenegro, significantly increased. However, this was true only for Montenegro,
which was compensated for its consistent servility to the tsar during the war—in sharp
contrast to Serbia.

Russia's own territorial gains in the war are seen not as territorial
aggrandizement, but instead are justified—and hailed—as reuniting Russian lands
"seized" by the West twenty years earlier. Indeed, as the Russian textbooks make clear,
San Stefano vindicated the Russian defeat in the Crimean War and the severe terms
imposed on them by the Treaty of Paris, which ended that war.\textsuperscript{32} It is for that reason

\textsuperscript{32} Indicative of the Russian image of the West as closing in on them and poised
to attack, and of their self-image as law-abiding and peace-promoting, textbooks view
Russia as completely innocent in the onset of the Crimean war. It was caused, in the
popular Russian view, by the aggressive policies of the West: "A mighty coalition of
European states armed together against Russia" (Fedosov (1975), p. 87). Russia was
"forced to enter into a duel simultaneously with all the leading powers of the world at
that time" (Buganov, p. 177). The defeat in that war is seen as especially bitter in light
of how Russian textbooks treat the war itself: The texts focus almost exclusively, and at
that the Congress of Berlin, which significantly curtailed the terms of San Stefano, is seen as especially humiliating. At the same time, the Russian view justifies the territorial gains and the other terms of San Stefano by the great sacrifice that the Russians suffered in the war. It is also because of this "victory won in blood" that the Russian view so derides the Congress of Berlin. As one text writes, "Russia, suffering the war's greatest human, material and financial losses, was forced, under threat of the formation of a new anti-Russian coalition, to agree to the idea of convening a congress, which took place in Berlin under the leadership of German Chancellor Bismarck."\(^33\)

The image of the West as motivated by anti-Russian and anti-Slav feelings is especially evident here as well. In the Russian view, the European powers, fearful and jealous of Russia for its new powerful position in the Balkans, threatened and bullied Russia into revising San Stefano. This is not too dissimilar from the Soviet textbook view, which notes, significant length, on the heroic and glorious, yet ultimately futile, battles of the Russian Army and Navy on the Crimean peninsula. The loss of that war, therefore is seen as a particularly humiliating defeat, and the Paris Peace terms grossly unfair—the cruel terms offset only by the memory of Russian valor on the battlefield: "Along with that, the heroic defense of Sevastopol remained in memory of the people as a feat of majestic beauty and enormous moral force" (Buganov, p. 177; Zyrianov (I), p. 90; Zyrianov (II), p. 82).

The popular textbook view laments that in the aftermath of the Crimean War Russia's prestige had collapsed and its international role significantly curtailed. Russia was without allies, "i.e. in international isolation." And because "the humiliating and harsh Paris treaty of 1856 revoked Russia's right to have a navy and fortresses on the Black Sea, the Southern frontier of Russia was defenseless" (Fedosov (1975), pp. 152-53). Thus, Russian texts emphasize that Russia was compelled—and justified—to remove the "harsh terms" of the Paris peace treaty.

\(^{33}\) Danilov and Kosulina, p, 307.
England and Austria-Hungary were not satisfied with the strengthening of Russia's position in the Balkans and the creation of a large Slavic state of Bulgaria. They demanded a revision of the terms of the treaty in a European Congress and began to threaten war on Russia. Under these conditions, the tsarist government was forced to agree to a revised treaty at the Congress of Berlin in the summer of 1878.\(^{34}\)

The Russian view, only slightly more tactfully, notes how "the strengthening of Russia's political and strategic position in the Balkans did not leave England and Austria-Hungary indifferent;"\(^{35}\) how the "European powers were worried by the successes of the Russian forces;"\(^{36}\) and how "terms of the [San Stefano] treaty elicited the sharp dissatisfaction of the European powers, who demanded the convening of a general European conference for the review of the San Stefano treaty."\(^{37}\)

The Russian view, similar to the Soviet view, that the West threatened Russia to compromise in their hard-earned victory is quite strong. "Facing a united front of European powers, [Russian Foreign Minister] Gorchakov was forced to agree to new peace terms, writes one text."\(^{38}\) "Russia was isolated and was forced to compromise," writes another.\(^{39}\) That forced compromise is seen as especially harsh and even "petty."

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\(^{34}\) Fedosov (1975), pp. 157-58.

\(^{35}\) Liashenko, pp. 173-74.

\(^{36}\) Danilov and Kosulina, pp. 305-6.


\(^{38}\) ibid.
"The Congress of Berlin undoubtedly did not adorn the diplomatic history of Russia, or of the western powers. Prompted by petty advantages at the time and envy over the brilliant victory of Russian arms, the governments of those countries extended Turkish dominion over several million Slavs."40 Specifically,

The Western powers categorically objected to the creation of a single Bulgarian state. As a result, Southern Bulgaria remained under the control of Turkey. Russian diplomats managed only to ensure that within the autonomous Bulgarian kingdom that Sofia and Varna were included. The territory of Serbia and Montenegro was significantly cut.41

However, the texts fail to discuss why the Western powers feared the creation of large Bulgarian state, or to mention Russia's earlier commitment to those states not to organize the creation of such a state.

Even more outrageous, according to the Russian view, are the colonial adjustments that benefited England and Austria-Hungary:

There were significant cuts in the territory of Serbia and Montenegro, and reductions of Russia's acquisition in the Caucasus. At the same time, countries that did not fight with Turkey in the war were rewarded for the service of fighting for Turkish interests: Austria-Hungary received Bosnia and Herzegovina and England received the island of Cyprus.42


The Congress underscored the right of Austria-Hungary to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. England obtained for itself the right to introduce forces on Cyprus.\textsuperscript{43}

The implication here is that Russia earned the right to keep its new-found dominion over the Balkans (and the Caucasus) because it fought for those territorial gains, whereas England and Austria-Hungary simply teamed up against Russia—largely out of jealousy—in order to gain territory. Indeed, an obvious double-standard is revealed here as well: the texts condemn Austria-Hungary, for example, for "occupying" Bosnia-Herzegovina, though they say nothing of Russia's initial occupation of that territory or of its colonial acquisitions in the Caucasus.\textsuperscript{44} Further, the texts at this point never mention Russia's secret agreement with Austria-Hungary in 1876 guaranteeing their control over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, while Russia in effect sold out the Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is portrayed here as naked Western territorial aggrandizement.

All in all, the Russian view, just like its Soviet predecessor, portrays the Congress of Berlin as a great injustice. Soviet texts, for example, note how the "Berlin treaty cut down the results of Russia's victory and worsened the position of the Slavic peoples. . . ."\textsuperscript{45} Several new Russian texts, for example, note how, "in a report to the

\textsuperscript{43} Buganov, p. 245; Zyrianov (I), p. 161; Zyrianov (II), p. 154.

\textsuperscript{44} See also Liashenko, pp. 173-74.

\textsuperscript{45} Fedosov (1975), pp. 157-58.
tsar, the head of the Russian delegation, Chancellor A. M. Gorchakov, wrote: 'The Berlin Congress is the blackest page in my career of service.' The tsar noted: 'And in mine as well.' 46 The text's commentary on the Congress is equally as pointed:

Weakening the influence of Russia in the Balkans, the Berlin treat solved neither the eastern question, nor the disputes in the Balkans. In fact, it laid a slowly-working landmine under the principle of European balance and created a center of tension on the continent. It was namely the Balkan problem that became one of the important causes of the First World War in 1914. 47

Indeed, this is a bold critique, essentially placing the blame for WWI on the Congress of Berlin. The implicit, and rather dubious, counterfactual argument here is obvious: had San Stefano been allowed to stand, and Russian unchallenged influence and power in the region remained intact, then future Balkan wars, and World War I itself, would have been avoided.

Yet, despite the humiliation of the Congress of Berlin, the war itself is still considered a great Russian—and Slavic—victory. Texts stress the benevolent, almost altruistic, role of Russia in the Balkans, the "liberation" of their brother Slavs, and especially Russia's central role in that struggle. "Despite Russia's forced compromises at the Congress of Berlin," writes one text, "the war in the Balkans basically completed the national-liberation struggle of the southern Slav peoples against 400 years of Ottoman rule." 48 Further,


47 Liashenko, p. 174.
All the same the fruits of Russian victory were only partly destroyed. Laying the foundation of freedom of our brothers the Bulgarian people, Russia inserted a glorious page into our history. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 was part of the general context of the Liberation epoch and became its worthy conclusion.⁴⁹

Again this is a view that is not too dissimilar from Soviet texts:

Nonetheless the Russo-Turkish war had enormous positive significance for the Balkan peoples. Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania received full independence. The Russian army brought the Bulgarians liberation from centuries of Turkish domination. They became free citizens and created their own government. "The Bulgarian people correctly consider the Russian army their liberators. In honor of the Russian heroes who fell in the struggle for the liberation of the brother Slavs, the Bulgarian people raised numerous monuments on the battlefields and composed songs."⁵⁰

Similarly, Russian texts emphasize, for example, that "today in Shipka there stands a monument that shows the likeness of two soldiers bowing their heads—one Russian, the other Bulgarian."⁵¹ Of General Mikhail Skobolev, who took part in the siege of the Plevna fortress and captured San Stefano, the texts note how "many streets and squares in Bulgaria are named for him."⁵²

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⁴⁹ Buganov, p. 245; Zyrianov (I), p. 162; Zyrianov (II), pp. 154-55.

⁵⁰ Fedosov (1975), p. 158.

⁵¹ Buganov, p. 242.

⁵² Buganov, p. 244.
Overall, the particular Russian emphasis on the oppression of Balkan Slavs, the heroic exploits of the Russian army, and the duplicity and anti-Slavic behavior of the West, has important consequences for how readers evaluate Russia's behavior in the war. Based on the textbook narrative, there was a moral imperative—the defense of their Orthodox Slav brothers—that justified the losses on the battlefield. While the popular Russian view of the war recognizes that Russia was not prepared for a long war, that it was financially draining and costly in terms of human life, it nonetheless stresses the noble cause, and Russian heroism and the selfless sacrifice of Russians on behalf of the oppressed Slavs.

II. The First World War

A. Overview: The Historical Consensus and Russian Popular View

The Russian popular views of World War I—a war that began in the Balkans in a conflict between Serbia and Austria-Hungary—also conveys an explicitly sympathetic view of Serbia, a strongly negative image of the West, and a Russian self-image of heroic and benevolent self-sacrifice on behalf of the Balkan Slavs and world peace. It was Russia's defense of her ally Serbia in July 1914, that led Russia into war against Austria-Hungary, and then Germany, setting off World War I.\textsuperscript{53} Like many other European powers, Russia's contribution to the onset of war was a share of virulent nationalism

\textsuperscript{53} One of the best interpretive works on Russian politics and diplomacy on the eve of the war is D. C. B. Lieven, \textit{Russia and the Origins of the First World War} (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).
and militarism, blundering and provocative diplomacy, offensive alliances and military strategy, and distorted civil-military relations, in particular a fatally flawed and irrational mobilization system. However, the popular conception of the war as portrayed in Russian history textbooks is dominated by two themes: Russian benevolence and self-sacrifice in defense of the Serbs and European peace; and Russian victimization. In both cases, the popular view of the origins of the war portrays the West as aggressive and militaristic, while expressing sympathy for the Serbs and other Balkan Slavs.

The image of Russia as peaceful, benevolent, and well-intentioned—yet misunderstood—is found in the portrayal of Russian diplomacy in the years preceding the war. Post-Soviet textbooks, for example, focus much attention on Tsar Nicholas II's "Great Design" for global peace and disarmament. Nicholas is portrayed as a peacemaker who was "the first to propose in international practice the question of general disarmament."54 The implication of an aggressive, militaristic and mistrusting West also emerges in this discussion: We are told that Nicholas's proposal "elicited suspicion and bewilderment from the governments of the majority of the countries," and because of the West's resistance, the "results of the conference were very insignificant in

comparison with Nicholas's original ideas.\textsuperscript{55}

B. The July Crisis

1. Historical Consensus

The theme of Russian benevolent goodwill—as well as of Russian victimization—is continued in the discussion of the July crisis of 1914. That crisis followed the assassination by Serb extremists of the heir to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, and the provocative Austrian ultimatum to Serbia that followed. The Austrians accused the Serb government of having sponsored the attack, and demanded, among other things, to participate directly in the Serbian investigation—a move that was a direct affront to Serb sovereignty. The Serbs, surprisingly, accepted all the terms of the ultimatum except for one, at which time Austria mobilized against Serbia and shortly thereafter declared war. While it is clear that Austria's demands on Serbia—incited by Germany—were indeed provocative and likely written to be rejected, there is evidence that Serbian extremists were indeed supported by high ranking Serb military intelligence officials, acting independently of the government. Rather than a group of terrorists

acting alone (which is what the Serbs and their Russian allies claimed at the time), Serb officials likely assisted the organizers of the assassination, providing the weapons and helping the assassins enter into Bosnia illegally. While evidence indicates that the Serb civilian authorities found out about this late in the process, they did not try to arrest the conspirators, or to seriously warn the Austrians. Thus, members of the Serbian government were indeed complicit in the assassination, as the Austrians charged. As Dominic Lieven has written, "The fact that the Serb government could not control its own army or nationalists only in part diminishes its responsibility for the murder."  

Hours before the deadline for the Serbs to respond, Russia began preliminary mobilization against Austria. The move proved to be the most disastrous of the entire crisis: In practice Russian "preliminary" mobilization was a fiction: it was impossible to distinguish "pre-mobilization" and regular mobilization activities. Second, Russian "partial mobilization,"—i.e. mobilization only against Austria, which was announced the day after Austria announced mobilization against Serbia—was impossible; military planners had made no such contingency. There was in fact only a single and inflexible Russian mobilization plan that called for moving against both Austria and Germany simultaneously. Thus, Russians claimed—and civilian leaders falsely believed—that "partial mobilization" would not be a threat to Germany, when in fact it was. It was this provocative move that led the Germans to mobilize and put the Schlieffen plan into

56 Lieven, p. 139.
action—a plan that unleashed continental war.\textsuperscript{57}

2. The Russian Textbook View

Russian history textbooks, however, focus on many of the reasons why Russia was compelled to go to the aid of Serbia, but none of the reasons why doing so was a disaster for Russia and for Europe as a whole. Three examples illustrate this. First, according to the Russian popular view of events during the crisis, Russia's actions were wholly innocent, directed solely to defend their unjustly treated Serb allies, and to uphold their honor in the face of a national humiliation: "Anti-Serb pogroms began, and Austria issued an ultimatum to Serbia, which humiliated its dignity. The careful Serbs accepted all the conditions except for one: access to the Austrian officials in Serbia for carrying out an independent investigation."\textsuperscript{58} Russian history textbooks stress how Russia was forced to act beyond her will: Austria, as we are told, saw the assassination as a "convenient excuse to destroy Serbia"—a country whose independence Russia guaranteed.\textsuperscript{59} "The support of the Serbs, like the Bulgarians earlier, was justified in

\textsuperscript{57} On Russian military planning on the eve of the war see Jack Snyder, \textit{The Ideology of the Offensive} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

\textsuperscript{58} Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), pp. 116-17. This view is virtually identical to the one presented in Soviet texts. Berkhin writes that Austria-Hungary presented an ultimatum to Serbia with demands which were "humiliating to its national dignity... It was an open provocation for world war." I. B. Berkhin and I. A. Fedosov, \textit{Istorija SSSR}, uchebnik dla 9 klassa, pod redaktsiei akademika AN SSSR M. P. Kima, seventh ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1982) [hereafter, Berkhin], p. 105.

Russia as necessary to help the Orthodox Slav brothers. This policy was very popular."60

Second, popular textbook views presume a degree of Serbian innocence that is not entirely warranted by the historical evidence. Russian textbooks present only the most terse description of the events that precipitated the Austrian ultimatum: "On 28 June 1914 the Serb terrorist student Gavrilo Princip from the underground organization 'Black Hand' fatally wounded the heir to the Austrian throne Franz Ferdinand. The Austria-Hungarian government blamed the independent Serbian Kingdom for the organization of this act."61 Relevant and important nuances and counter-arguments are omitted from Russian textbooks, and thus convey a somewhat misleading and entirely uncritical view of Serb and Russian action.

Third, while the new Russian view purports to be impartial in identifying the war's main culprits, spreading the blame to all countries involved, they never actually identify the features of Russian policy that are worthy of condemnation, only those of other states, primarily Germany and Austria. "Each of the participating countries in the war pursued its own goals; each country carried an individual portion of responsibility

60 Berkhin, p. 105.

for stirring up world conflict. However, the biggest part of the blame lies with the Germany-Austro-Hungarian block." 62 Thus, rather than offering a critique of Russian policy—for example, viewing Russian mobilization in defense of the Serbs as ultimately self-defeating and dangerously provocative—the popular view tends to focus on German culpability. While Russian promises regarding mobilization are viewed as being genuinely sincere, Germany was fundamentally untrusting and suspicious of Russia, to the detriment of world peace:

In response Germany in fact issued an ultimatum to Russia to cease mobilization. Russia insisted that its forces would not be poised to cross the border during the negotiations. But the German ambassador on 19 July (1 August, new style) at seven hours and 10 minutes in the evening delivered an official note declaring war. And this means that war began, and the aggressor in this war was Germany. 63

The Russian view stresses how Russia in fact "advised the Serbian government to show maximum compliance [with Austria's demands]. However Austria-Hungary and Germany did not want a peaceful settlement of the conflict. On 28 July Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Russia started partial and then general mobilization." 64

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While placing the majority of the blame on Germany is not without historical foundation, such a portrayal of events strongly conveys an image of the West as aggressively militaristic and Russia as wholly well-intentioned and innocent, a victim of Western ill-will and aggression. The West is accused of inciting Russia to war and refusing to do anything to help avert peace. Russia's only crime is that it responded to the cries for help from innocent brotherly Serbia:

Russia proposed that England along with France act upon the Austrian government. The English refused, while at the same time advising Russia not to give in to Germany and Austria. Serbia, connected by traditional friendship to Russia, implored for help. Nicholas answered that Russia would strive to avert bloodshed, but in the event of necessity would not remain indifferent to the fate of Serbia. Nicholas II's answer was received in Belgrade on the day Austria declared war on Serbia.65

Hence, while many states are said to share responsibility, Russia alone is seen as one of the greatest victims, forced into war: "Russia was pulled into war against her will, having striven to play the role of a great peaceful power."66 One text stresses how it was "Russia's allies" who "requested that Russia begin general mobilization. The tsar hesitated, but intense pressure was put upon him, and he gave in. Germany used this as an pretext for declaring war on Russia on 1 August 1914."67

64 O. S. Soroko-Tsiupa, Mir v XX vek, uchebnoe posobie dla 10-11 klassov obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdenii, first ed. (Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1996), p. 70.


Indeed, the Russian textbooks frequently identify much more innocuous and intangible causes of the war, which has the effect of further diverting attention away from discussions of Russian culpability. The onset of the war is seen as "a series of accidents." Though Russian policy in the Balkans was a critical factor in destabilizing Europe, as it brought Russia into direct conflict with Austria and Germany, the Russian popular view prefers to place the blame on "larger forces." Not far from the Soviet textbook view, which saw the war resulting from colonial policies of all the imperial states—including Russia—the new Russian texts tend to see unfettered global competition, rather than deliberate government policy decisions, as the main culprit.

"The general reasons are well known," writes one of the most widely-used Russian texts: "the struggle for spheres of influence in conditions where a single European market and legal mechanism did not exist." Another leading text puts most of the blame on an existential malaise of modern society: "War became the consequence of a deep crisis in

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European civilization,"\textsuperscript{71} while another writes that the war "was the manifestation of a crisis of European industrial civilization."\textsuperscript{72}

Finally, rather than evaluating its causes or assessing Russia's role in bringing about the war, the new Russian texts instead tend to justify Russia conduct. Russia, of course, was "on the defending side, the victim of aggression." Further, its cause was noble and legitimate, and it heroically sacrificed on the battlefield behalf of that cause:

[The war] elicited significant patriotic feeling in all segments of the population. Aside from the fact that military action had to be carried out in the constraints of existing conditions, the Russian army conducted itself heroically, [and] Russia had objective national aims in this war: the destruction of the East Prussian spearhead directed at Russia.\textsuperscript{73}

While Russian texts don't stress that Russia entered into World War I solely on behalf of the Serbs, the description of the war does suffer from a larger conceptual problem. Russia's entry into the war was an obvious culmination of its aggressive Balkan policies over the previous century. Yet, this is downplayed or ignored. Instead emphasis is placed on the glorious, honorable, self-sacrificial aspect of the war—indeed of all the wars in the Balkans. While the Russians are proud of the fact that in this war, just as in previous wars in the Balkans, they fought honorably and defensively—often on behalf of the Serbs and other Balkan Slavs—such a claim shows a remarkable lack of

\textsuperscript{71} Danilov (1995) and (1996), p. 58.

\textsuperscript{72} Kredar, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{73} Ostrovskii (1995) and (1997), p. 117.
self-reflection and self-criticism. Today, such as in the conflict with Yugoslavia, as the next chapter will show, such views emerge.

III. Conclusion

A. Summary

As the cases examined in this chapter demonstrate, the interpretation of Imperial Russia's Balkan wars and interventions, whether Russia was object of attack or the perpetrator, is marked by many of the same images and assumptions that characterize the textbook view of Soviet wars and interventions. Indeed, it is a general view that has not changed significantly since the Soviet period. Specifically, the Russia view continues to purvey the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood—stressing the uniqueness of the Russian-Slav relationship and particularly of Russia's position as chief defender and liberator of the Slavs. It is a view that continues to justify Soviet interventions in the Balkans as almost entirely altruistic—to defend at great sacrifice not only the Balkan Slavs, but principles of peace, freedom and justice. It also justifies Russian intervention as largely defensive. Again these cases demonstrate how Russia sees itself largely as an innocent, peaceful actor, and thus the main victim of Western threats, intimidation or duplicity.

B. Generalization and Variation Among Textbooks

How much variation exists in this view across textbook titles? As table 5.1 shows there is much more consistency than diversity across the range of federally-
### Table 5.1

The "Myth of Slavic Brotherhood" in Russian and World History Textbooks [Federally-Approved], 1992-98

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Author</th>
<th>Ed./Pub.</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Years Covered</th>
<th>Tot. pp.</th>
<th>Purveys view of a unique Russian-Slav relationship and/or Russian leadership of Balkan Slaves?</th>
<th>Russian Balkan policy driven by desire to help Balkan Slaves?</th>
<th>Glorifies Serbs and Slavs?</th>
<th>Justifies and/or glorifies Russian intervention in Balkans?</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. History of Russia: Late-17th-19th Century/ Buganov &amp; Zyrianov</td>
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√ Of the two outlying texts, one (Zharova & Mishina) is no longer in print, and the other (Dolutskii) is a fairly unconventional text, which has received much less distribution than its two main competitors in 20th century history.
approved 19th century history textbooks. Of sixteen titles examined, all but two
purvey almost all the features of the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood: they characterize the
Russian-Balkan Slav relationship as inherently special and unique or stress Russia's role
as leader of the Balkan Slavs; they emphasize the argument that Russian's Balkan policy
was driven by its desire to help defend the Balkan Slavs; through factual omission and
distortion, they glorify the Serbs and the Balkan Slavs in general; and they justify or
glorify Russian intervention in the Balkans. As is true of 20th century history
discussed in the previous chapters, those two outlying texts are those that are either no
longer in print or are not widely used in comparison with other 20th century texts.

C. Degree of Perniciousness

Tests of Perniciousness. How pernicious then is the Myth of Slavic
Brotherhood? The Russian view of its wars and interventions in the Balkans passes all
three of the tests of perniciousness—veracity, salience and role. In terms of veracity,
the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood—the dominant Russian textbook view of the Russia's
Balkan wars—is marked by historical distortions and critical factual omissions. Even
those events that are still debated by historians, such as the origins of World War I, fail
to receive balanced treatment in Russian texts. Instead the texts are dominated by a
single view, consistent with the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood.

Second, it clearly passes the "salience" test—that is, the events have significant,
lasting meaning for both Russia and many Balkan states. The Balkan states, for
example, made great strides toward independence from Ottoman rule after the war of
1877-78.

Finally, it passes the "role" test—that is, those historical distortions and factual omissions clearly purvey certain Russian images of itself and others that are explicitly pernicious. The myth continues to excessively emphasize Russia's role as a victim and is rife with self-exculpating rationalizations and justifications for the Russian conduct. The treatment of the war of 1877-78 is tinged with self-glorification.

In addition, an important test of role is the degree to which historical distortions and factual omissions reflect or purvey larger principles, beliefs, or values that are inherently pernicious. The treatment of the Western interventions continues to purvey ideas of imperialism, insecurity, militarism and to some degree principles of authoritarianism, deification of national leaders and chauvinism. Table 5.2 shows the extent to which these indicators are present in the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood.

As Table 5.2 shows, the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood satisfies 22 out of a total 30\(^4\) individual predictions of perniciousness, or more than 70 per cent. The myth reflects especially strongly ideas of xenophobia (three of four predictions, or 75 per cent); militarism (seven of eight predictions, or 87.5 per cent); insecurity (three of three predictions, or 100 per cent); and the deification of national leaders (three of three predictions, or 100 per cent).

\(^{74}\) Evidence of anti-Semitism here is not relevant and is therefore not included in the larger set of indicators.
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**Table 2.1: The Myth of Shared Brotherhood in Post-Soviet Russian History Textbooks**
Significance. What then is the significance of this myth in the context of the larger study? As already noted, the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood—the dominant interpretation of Russia's wars and interventions in the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th century—is characterized by many of the same ideas, assumptions and images found in the Russian interpretation of Soviet wars and interventions discussed in previous chapters. This consistency across a wide range of cases in both the Soviet and Imperial Russian periods is further evidence that such views are widely-held, reflecting a set of larger beliefs, values and ideas that shape a dominant Russian worldview and self-image. Further, the continuity in interpretations from the Soviet period, despite significant institutional and ideological change in the past 10 years, provides further support for the view that such beliefs are enduring and deeply-ingrained among society and elites. The impact of those ideas on post-Soviet Russian foreign policy is the subject of the following section.
PART III

PERNICIOUS HISTORICAL MYTHMAKING AND INTERSTATE CONFLICT
CHAPTER 6


Ever since the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia regained independence in 1991 Russo-Baltic relations have been highly conflictual. While the conflict has yet to become violent, it is ripe for violent confrontation. By all accounts, Russo-Baltic violence would increase global tensions significantly more than any post-Cold War conflict we have seen. For that reason, it is crucial to understand the sources of that conflict, and on-going irritants in the Russo-Baltic relationship, in order to prevent such a catastrophe.

In many ways it is a conflict that makes little rational sense. Both sides have much to gain through political and economic cooperation. All suffered from years of Communist party rule and have thus faced many of the same political, social and economic dilemmas. As member states of the former Soviet Union, political, social and economic institutions were closely linked. Thus, since Russia and the Baltic states all seek to develop modern economies, cooperation would seem to yield much better results than confrontation. Yet, both sides—that is, the Baltic States and Russia—have consistently adopted policies, or made public statements, that have antagonized the other and have jeopardized gains that could be had through conciliation.

What, then are the sources of the conflict? What explains the on-going tensions in the Russo-Baltic relationship? As this chapter argues, the Russo-Baltic conflict cannot be understood outside of the context of the history of Russo-Baltic relations,
and, more importantly, the way in which that history has been remembered in Russia. Indeed, the Russo-Baltic case offers a clear illustration of how a pernicious historical myth, widely legitimated in society and articulated by publics and elites, can spur potentially-violent conflict among states. It also explains why such myths, and the conflicts that result, can become so intractable.

Specifically, this chapter argues that Russia's continuing refusal to admit that the Soviet Union occupied and annexed the Baltic states in 1939-40—a myth that follows directly from Russia's self-glorifying interpretation of World War II—has been the tap root of virtually all the serious conflicts in Russo-Baltic relations, from territorial disputes to Russian minority rights, to questions of Baltic security.

In particular, the case illustrates both emotional and cognitive mechanisms identified in the model of mythmaking dynamics presented in Chapter 1. First, the Myth of 1939-40 has directly—and the Myth of the Great Patriotic War has indirectly—precipitated conflict by generating measurable Baltic resentment and demands for an apology and a renunciation of the distorted Russian view. These demands in turn have caused Russian resentment and animosity, thereby hardening its resistance to apologize or renounce its offensive views, leading to and exacerbating conflict. Demands for an apology have also been linked to a wide-range of diplomatic issues, which have further increased tensions and confrontation. Second, Russian mythmaking has fostered Baltic nationalist stereotypes and particular images of Russia that have generated serious Baltic misperceptions. These misperceptions have
exacerbated Baltic insecurity, which has caused them to take steps that have in turn exacerbated Russian misperceptions and insecurity. This chapter elucidates each of these mechanisms.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section reviews the main features of the Myth of 1939-40 and the Myth of the Great Patriotic War and shows the important link between these two Russian views. The second section then demonstrates the extent to which these ideas have widespread legitimacy in Russia. The third section then lays out in detail the two main mechanisms by which Russian mythmaking has instigated and exacerbated the Russo-Baltic conflict. Section four then addresses competing explanations for the Russo-Baltic conflict.

I. Explaining the Persistence and Intensity of the Myth of 1939-40

Before examining in detail the effects of the Myth of 1939-40 on Russo-Baltic relations, it is necessary to restate the essential elements of the myth described in Chapter four, and to explicate in greater detail its relationship to the larger Myth of the Great Patriotic War, described in Chapter three. As will become apparent, the Myth has such a powerful impact on relations in part because it is so intensely held among the Russian public and elites. This section explains why that myth is so intense and has persisted for so long, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, and despite an ideological shift that is conducive to a more objective assessment of Soviet intervention in the Baltic States.
A. The Myth of 1939-40: The Essential Elements

One of the most striking features of the Myth of 1939-40 as it relates to the Baltic States is the egregious factual distortion and omission surrounding the Russian interpretation of the Soviet occupation and annexation of those states. Recall that the myth has three main elements: First, Soviet troops entered the Baltic States in 1939 as part of a negotiated, voluntary security arrangement with Baltic officials to establish Soviet military bases. Second, the incorporation of those states into the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940 was the result of appeals to the Soviet Union by the popularly-elected leadership of those states. Third, the incorporation, both from 1940-1941 as well as in the first decade after World War II, was generally peaceful and popularly supported.

B. The Myth of 1939-40 and the Great Patriotic War

The central factor explaining the persistence of the Myth of 1939-40 is its intrinsic link to the larger Myth of the Great Patriotic War. Recall that the Russian interpretation of the causes and conduct of the Soviet-German war of 1941-45 is marked primarily by Russian victimization, self-glorification and anti-western chauvinism. According to the Russian view of that conflict, the war was thrust upon an unsuspecting Russia—which sought only the peaceful settlement of international disputes—by an aggressive, deceitful West. Russia fought the war despite allied help, either material or financial, and paid the greatest sacrifice on behalf of the world. No
one else suffered as much as Russia. It is this strong emphasis on Russian suffering and victimization that has made the Myth of 1939-40 particularly resistant to change.

Whereas Soviet actions in 1939-40 may have been legitimately questioned, by June 1941 everything changed: the Soviet Union became the victim, and the war a heroic "just war." As Russian textbooks declare, the Soviet Union "carried out a just war, that predetermined the unity and cohesion of the army and the people, the enormous will to victory and mass heroism."¹ By 1944 the war had become one of "liberation" of the occupied areas of the West and of Eastern Europe as a whole. It was "the Red Army alone," goes the Russian view, that would "carry out the crushing defeat of the enemy and liberate the peoples of Europe from the Hitlerite occupiers."² The struggle between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany took on a Manichean cast and became for the Russians a "Holy War."³

The historical service of the Soviet people and its armed forces is that by defeating the fascist horde, they destroyed the danger of aggression spreading to other countries and continents. The Soviet Union became the main force that obstructed


³ This is the title of the chapter on the "Great Fatherland War" in Vorozheikina’s fifth grade text, Rasskazy po rodnoi istorii, p. 214.
German fascism's path to world domination. The peoples of the Soviet Union carried on their shoulders the central burden of war and played the decisive role in the crushing defeat of Hitlerite Germany.⁴

That view of the Soviet experience after 1941 colors the entire interpretation of the war—its origins, conduct and aftermath. The events of the immediate pre-war years are minor and insignificant in comparison to the mythical "Holy War" of 1941-45. As a result, the pre-war events simply don't warrant close attention. In short, describing the war as a "Holy War," a "just war" and a "war of liberation" that saved the world from fascism allows attention to be diverted away from the Soviet Union's pre-war conduct, or to absolve the Russians of any compelling reason to focus on, and condemn, Soviet actions. The interpretation implicitly invites comparison of Soviet actions against that of the Nazis—the glorious "Holy War" versus the brutal, bloody fascist aggression. It implicitly invites readers to weigh Soviet pre-1941 actions against the redeeming, heroic, self-sacrificial actions of 1941-45. The conclusion is obvious.

Thus, the popular interpretation of the Russian war experience emphasizes the uniqueness and exceptionalism of Russian suffering and sacrifice so much so that Russia's almost mythical "heroic struggle" overshadows previous or subsequent Soviet misdeeds and the suffering of other groups. The heroic, self-sacrificial deeds of 1944 in essence negate the need for the Russian narrative to dwell on Soviet pre-1941 misconduct. Undeniably, the Russians at times performed heroically and suffered

greatly from Nazi aggression. That is not disputed nor need it be minimized. Yet, the overwhelming sense in the popular view of the war of Russian exceptionalism and self-sacrifice has served as an explicit or implicit justification for minimizing or ignoring issues of Soviet aggression, and the suffering it caused in the Baltic states and elsewhere.

Specifically, the Russian Myth of the Great Patriotic War makes two implicit arguments that justify the neglect of more substantive discussion of Soviet aggression in 1939. First, is the detailed emphasis on the horror of the Nazi occupation in the newly-acquired Western republics. The implication is that the fate of the Baltic peoples at the hands of the Soviets before June 1941 pales in comparison to their fate at the hands of the Nazis. As the Russian textbooks state, "Preparing for so-called 'total war' the Hitlerites worked out a plan of monstrous evil in the occupied territories. The general plan 'Ost' occupied a particular place, according to which 120-140 million Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Poles, and Lithuanians were subject to deportation and destruction." On the seized territories," writes one text, "the fascists created death camps and concentration camps, thousands of prisons and ghettos. Brutal punishment was carried out against the local populations." Such descriptions of Nazi horror, and

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the specific mention of the non-Russians as victims, stand in sharp contrast to the
benign descriptions of the Soviet occupation in 1939-40. These detailed descriptions of
the brutal Nazi reign in the Western republics serve to excuse the superficial treatment
of the 1939-40 Soviet occupations.

At the same time the Myth of the Great Patriotic War offers a second implicit
line of argument that emphasizes how the Russians, in particular, made tremendous
sacrifices on behalf of the other victims of Nazi aggression. The view stresses the
particular enormity of the Red Army's sacrifice and suffering in defense of Nazi
victims. We are reminded that, "Soviet prisoners of war were methodically destroyed.
3.9 million Soviet prisoners of war were destroyed just on the occupied territory of the
USSR. On the territory of Poland 1.8 million of our prisoners of war died in camps.
Not a few rotted in camps and as workers both in Germany and in its occupied lands."7
Thus, the not-so-subtle message: In light of the horror inflicted on them by the Nazis,
all the peoples of the Soviet Union—particularly perhaps those of the new Western
republics—owe a debt of gratitude to the Soviet Union—most of all to Russia—for
paying such a high price for their "liberation": "In the course of liberating the peoples of

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Europe from the Hitlerite occupation, more than a million Soviet soldiers and officers were killed. The absolute majority of them were the sons of Russia.⁸

An especially important, yet subtle, element of these arguments, as revealed in the statements above, is the careful use of the term "Soviet" as distinct from the ethnonym "Russian." "The first hours of the war demonstrated that people were prepared, not sparing life, to battle for the freedom of the Fatherland," writes one text.⁹ "From the very first days of the war, the peoples of the RSFSR, as well as all the peoples of the country, defended their Motherland, its honor and independence," write another.¹⁰ But which people? Whose Fatherland? Whose honor and independence?

At times the term "Soviet," or reference simply to "the people," is used to obscure ethnic differences between Russians and non-Russians, for example in emphasizing the great horror of Nazi aggression inflicted upon the Western Soviet republics in 1941. At other times the texts conflate "Soviet" and "Russian." As was common in the Soviet period, the term "Soviet" simply becomes a synonym for "Russian." At yet other times, when convenient, the texts use the ethnonym in explicit distinction to the non-ethnic term as a way of showing that the Russians themselves


¹⁰ Dmitrenko (1995) and (1008), p. 309.
suffered more than others, and perhaps deserve greater reverence and respect.\footnote{This was a common feature of Soviet historiography of the war. As Tillett, Barghoorn and others have shown, the war was at first explicitly, and later implicitly, promoted as a Russian victory—a triumph of the "first among equals in the family of peoples of the USSR." The term "Soviet people" was often just a thinly veiled euphemism for "Russian." Lowell Tillett, \textit{The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 58-83; Frederick C. Barghoorn, \textit{Soviet Russian Nationalism} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 22, 26-66.} Most importantly, this use of language helps to deflect attention away from Soviet actions in 1939-40 within the narrative of the war and to absolve Russians of any sense of guilt for Soviet actions. In the final analysis, given the threat of destruction that they faced in 1941 and the heroic liberation by the Red Army in 1944, it is simply not important that these "new" members of the Soviet family were forcibly incorporated just months before the Nazi invasion.

Generally, there is a lack of sensitivity to the fact that the same feelings felt by Russians during the Nazi occupation were precisely those felt by the Baltic peoples not only in 1940, but also in 1944-45 when they were "liberated" by the Red Army. When one reads of the horrible losses suffered in "the struggle against the occupiers on the territory temporarily seized by the enemy,"\footnote{Dmitrenko (1995) and (1998), p. 386.} one can't help but think, "What about the Soviet occupations in the West in 1939-40?" While in terms of Russian casualties the Baltic occupation is treated as a footnote to the war, it is hardly a footnote to the Baltic peoples themselves.
And even though Russian history education now refers—often in some
detail—to events of the Stalin period that were previously considered taboo, this is little
consolation. In fact, that Stalinist repressions are now treated seriously and at some
length, while similar Soviet actions carried out in the Baltics (and elsewhere) are
ignored, is further testimony to the fact that the origins of the Myth of 1939-40 lie in the
particularly skewed interpretation of the war. The war is presented in such a way that
the tremendous sacrifice in the face of Nazi barbarism, in a sense, morally cleanses the
Russian people of any responsibility for the Soviet Union's pre-1941 conduct. At a
minimum it seems to ease the obligation to discuss Soviet actions in a more sensitive
way.

Thus, not just the intensity of the Myth of 1939-40, but also its persistence
despite more than a decade of revision of Soviet history must be attributed to its
inherent link the Myth of the Great Patriotic War. The war, and the Russian victory,
provides some of the few positive national symbols left to Russia in the wake of the
Soviet collapse. Indeed, it is the heroic, self-glorifying, and markedly uncritical view of
the war that has made the celebrations of the Russian victory, as one Russian observer
noted, "the only holiday we have about which there is no argument."\(^{13}\) Others have
called the Russian victory in the war "the sole element that binds the nation together as

\(^{13}\) Quoted in Robert G. Kaiser, "In the Throes of an Identity Crisis," \textit{Washington Post}, 22 May 1999. This observation has been made numerous times since 1991. Most
recently, for example, see David Filipov, With Holiday, Russians Celebrate Hour of
one family."\textsuperscript{14} The "Myth of 1939-40" persists, therefore, because telling the truth would shatter the larger myth and its positive symbolism. As studies on the development of more extreme forms of nationalism have persuasively argued, nationalist bias in history is common in societies that have suffered a national defeat of some kind.\textsuperscript{15} In Russia's case, the "loss" of the Cold War and collapse of its international prestige is more than enough to elicit defensiveness about its past behavior. One could add to that the collapse of Russia's economic and social infrastructure. Such traumas also lead nations to search for positive historical symbols that are not tied to the previous regime. The History Section of the Russian Academy of Sciences, for example, in a study of Russian history education stated explicitly that history often "emerges as a political weapon, as a means of healing social trauma. . . ."\textsuperscript{16}

World War II in Russia is indeed such a symbol, one of national unity, pride and

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\textsuperscript{14} \textit{RFE/RL Newsline} 4, no. 90, 10 May 2000.
\textsuperscript{16} "Materialy k obsuzhdeniiu novoi kontseptsii prepodavaniia istorii," \textit{Prepodavanie istorii v shkole} 4 (1993), p. 68. Volker Berghahn and Hanna Schissler have noted that, "Whoever engages in this kind of analysis will find that stereotypes and prejudices can be very resistant to advances in historical knowledge, and that they tend in any case to be related to the need of the society in question to find points of self-orientation in the process of its own development." "Introduction: History Textbooks and Perceptions of the Past," in Berghahn and Schissler, \textit{Perceptions of History}, p. 15.
patriotism. Therefore, it is not totally surprising that the ultimately Russian nationalist bias in the interpretation of the war still persists.

Indeed, that there is continued sensitivity over the subject of the war, and thus its continuing importance as a sacred national symbol, is demonstrated by recent controversies over the new Russian history textbooks. Some of the least chauvinistic textbooks that have been approved for use in Russia's schools have in fact been the subjects of the most vociferous attacks. Interestingly, it is almost universally their discussion of World War II that critics find objectionable. The most vivid example is the sustained attack against Kreder's *Contemporary History*. This book has been vilified both in the national and in regional legislatures for its "unpatriotic," "anti-Russian" content, particularly in its treatment of the war: too few references to Zhukov are high on the list of complaints.¹⁷ While many textbook authors and educators in fact

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Since 1996 other textbooks have been attacked by federal legislators, intellectual and professional organizations. The target of these attacks have been primarily those textbooks written with the financial assistance of George Soros's Open Society Institute: Kreder's *Contemporary History*, Dolutskii's two-volume *Fatherland History*, and I.I. Ionov's *Russian Civilization: Early 9th-20th Century* (Moscow: Prosveschenie, 1995). For more on this see Natal'ia Buniakina, "Perekhodnye' Uchebniki," Uchitel'skaia gazeta, 3 December 1996, p. 14; Aleksandr Sedunov, "Ministr Obrazovaniia -- v Sovez Bezopasnosti," Uchitel'skaia gazeta, 23 July 1996, p. 43; Irina Ovchinnikova, "Duma
see history education primarily as a tool for patriotic upbringing, and thus are willing to proffer a less-critical view of Russian and Soviet history, the content of textbooks clearly reflects the environment in which authors live and work. That is, they often reflect most-widely-held beliefs and values that are shared by the community.\footnote{This conclusion is based on numerous interviews with textbook authors and others involved in textbook writing, publishing and approval, as well as on limited surveys of historians and educators from St. Petersburg and Moscow, conducted by the author in 1996 and 1997. Also see Ministerstvo Obrazovaniia Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Reshenie kollegii, "O strategii razvitiia istoricheskogo i obshchestvovedcheskogo obrazovaniia v obshcheobrazovatel'nykh uchrezhdeniakh," No. 24/1, 28 December 1994. Also of interest is A. Golovatenko, "Istoria v skhemakh i stereotipakh," Pervoe sentiabria, 4 February 1997, p. 2, who argues that the focus on the patriotic role of history education has distorted the content of textbooks and history education in general.}

\section*{II. The Legitimacy of the Myth of 1939-40 and the Great Patriotic War}

Both the Myth of 1939-40 and the Myth of the Great Patriotic War are views that have been widely legitimated through decades of wide dissemination in Russian

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mass public history education. As noted in Chapters three and four these views
dominate the textbook history of World War II and its origins in Russia.

Though mass public history education is a powerful indicator of the popular
legitimacy of a society's historical views, these particular views of the Soviet
interventions and of the war are clearly not limited to the classroom. Russian political
elites, in public statements and official documents, and public discourse in general
continue to purvey a view of these events that mirror the textbook interpretation. Most
notably, the view continues to be vividly revealed every year on May 8, the anniversary
of the end of the war, known as "Victory Day" in Russia. Speeches by political leaders,
television documentaries, parades and public ceremonies all clearly express the same
myths found in mass education. For example, in May 1999, at the official celebration
of the 54th anniversary of the end of the war, former President Boris Yeltsin spoke with
a typical message. He told the assembled crowd, "Today, on this holiday marking the
Great Patriotic War we pay tribute to the memory of, and give enormous thanks to, all
who saved our Motherland and defended the world from fascism."\(^{19}\) Though we should
remember the "brotherly peoples" of the Commonwealth of Independent States—"allies
in the anti-Hitler coalition," Yeltsin reminded the audience, "all the same, we rightfully
speak of the decisive role in the crushing defeat of fascism that was played by our great
people—our Soviet Army." He continued:

\(^{19}\) Tekst vystupleniia Prezidenta RF B.N. El'tsina na parade, posviashchennom
This war was truly a Great one. By the selfless efficiency of our efforts, all the people stood in defense of the Motherland. The heroism of the soldiers and officers, the wisdom of the military leaders, the self-sacrifice of the toilers in the rear, the patriotism and cohesion of all the people—those are the very components of the Great Victory.

All humanity is eternally grateful for the great exploits of the soldier-liberator. It is you, our dear front-line soldiers, who achieved final victory in the Second World War.

Recently, when chiding the West over NATO expansion, the new Russian president, Vladimir Putin, also expressed one of the key features of the Russian Myth of the Great Patriotic War—that Russia alone liberated Europe: "Our fathers and grandfathers did not liberate Europe from fascism for the NATO military alliance to make seven-league steps to the East and pose a threat to Russia's national security."\(^{20}\)

Even the permanent exhibit at Moscow's opulent museum of the Great Patriotic War reads like a Russian textbook.\(^{21}\) The interventions in Poland and the Baltic States

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\(^{20}\) Quoted in Dominic Evans, "Russia Could Join NATO is Terms Equal—Putin," Reuters, 5 March 2000.

\(^{21}\) Following are the personal observations of the author who visited the museum in 1997. While some research has been done on the museum, the focus has not been on the content of the permanent exhibit, but rather on the debate that raged for several years over the museum's construction. See, for example, Nina Tumarkin, "Story of a War Memorial," in World War 2 and the Soviet People, eds. John Garrard and Carol Garrard (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993). More recently Kathleen Smith has looked at the museum's architecture, design and "politics of space." Kathleen E. Smith "The Topography of Power: Cityscapes as Political Texts" (unpublished ms, 1999), pp. 21-32. For an interesting look at several other Moscow museums and their changes since 1991, see Marien van der Heijden, ed., Museums in Revolution: Four Historical Museums in Moscow (Amsterdam: Stichting beheer IISG, 1998).
in 1939-40 are glaringly absent, while the Finnish war is briefly presented without any mention of its causes. Indeed, there is little if any discussion of the causes of the Soviet-German war or the Soviet military failures that led to the unnecessary deaths of hundreds of thousands of Russians. Instead the emphasis is on the enormity of the Russian sacrifice at the hands of the Germans, and on the heroic military victories. The contribution and suffering of others are minimized. A photographic display of Soviet prisoner of war camps in Germany and Poland, for example, makes no mention of Jewish concentration camps or the Holocaust. And as both a video and photographic display strongly imply, even the allied victory in the Pacific is credited to the Soviet Union.

The Myth of 1939-40 has not only been articulated by political elites and in the popular press, but has seen expression in actual Russian policy. In January 1998 a simple off-the-cuff statement allegedly made by the Russian ambassador to an Estonian journalist about the 1939-40 Soviet occupation and annexation of Estonia led the Deputy Speaker of the Russian State Duma to seek clarification of the Russian government's position on the matter. In response, the deputy foreign minister of Russia penned a letter to the Deputy Speaker, articulating the official Russian position. The minister stated that, despite Baltic claims to the contrary, the Soviet Union had neither "occupied" the Baltic states in 1939, nor "annexed" them the following year.22 His

position was clear: The Russian government should neither acknowledge any wrong
doing on the part of the Soviet government, nor apologize to the Baltic states for Soviet
actions. The result was a heated diplomatic row between Estonia and Russia; a row
that further intensified Russo-Baltic tensions that had been brewing for more than eight
years. As the following section demonstrates, this particular Russian view of history,
widely-legitimated in Russian society and among the highest echelons of the Russian
foreign policymaking elite, has had very real consequences for Russian and Baltic
foreign policy behavior.

III. The Malevolent Effects of the Myth of 1939-40 and the Great Patriotic War

The deeply-embedded pernicious myths about Soviet interventions in 1939 and
about the war have both exacerbated pre-existing tensions between Russia and the
Baltic States, and precipitated potentially serious conflict. We can identify both
emotional and cognitive causes of conflict that follow directly from Russia's particular
historical views.

February 1998, p. 6. The Russian Foreign Ministry considers the letter, written by
Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Avdeev to Deputy Duma Speaker Sergei Baburin,
to be "confidential," and has therefore not publicly released the letter, even though its
contents have been widely quoted in independent Baltic news sources. Interfax,
"Russian Foreign Ministry Says Baltics Annexation Issue 'Closed'," BBC Worldwide
Monitoring, 21 January 1998. It is telling that the Foreign Ministry, while neither
confirming nor denying the existence of the letter, has essentially defended its general
interpretation in subsequent public statements. See Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del RF,
Brifing No. 6, 22 January 1998, Zapis' brifinga, Zam. Direktora Departamenta
Informatsii i Pechati RF V.M. Nesterushkina [hereafter MID, Brifing No. 6].

23 MID, Brifing No. 6.
A. Emotional Mechanisms

Demands for Apologies and Other Symbolic Gestures. The Soviet occupation remains an issue of central importance to the Baltic peoples, their own sense of history and national identity. This is demonstrated in a number of ways, most vividly through Baltic official commemorations. All three Baltic states, for example, continue to mark June 14—the anniversary of the single largest deportations from the Baltic States to the Soviet Union in 1941—as a day of national mourning. 24 Most recently in all three countries individuals accused of participation in the deportations, torture or executions during the Soviet occupation have begun to be put on trial. 25 In preparation for future prosecutions, all three Baltic governments have agreed to set up commissions to investigate crimes against humanity committed during the Nazi and Soviet occupations. 26 Recently, Lithuanian Parliamentary Chairman Vytautas Landsbergis


26 The commissions were set up as much to satisfy Jewish critics of Baltic whitewashing of their wartime collaboration with the Nazis and their role in the murder and deportations of Baltic Jews, as it was to investigate Soviet atrocities in 1939-40 and
proposed a special parliamentary resolution that would treat the mass deportations of Lithuanians in 1941 and 1949 as a war crime.\textsuperscript{27}

Given the continuing importance of these events the Myth of 1939-40 has clearly increased the Baltic sense of grievance and injustice. The lack of Russian honest and critical self-evaluation, discussion of historical responsibility, and sensitivity to Baltic sensibilities on this issue has led many in the Baltic states to see Russian historical views as particularly unjust. One Baltic parliamentarian, for example, speaking in 1994 argued that Russia should acknowledge Soviet actions in 1939-40,

\textsuperscript{27} The resolution entitled, "On Declaring the Mass Exile of Lithuanians to the USSR a War Crime," reads, "The mass repressions, which were carried out against Lithuanian residents by the government of the USSR, the exile from their homeland of numerous families with mothers, children and the elderly, are especially severe war crimes, with the characteristics of genocide." "Landsbergis Proposes Evaluating Genocide by Soviets as War Crime," \textit{Baltic News Service}, 22 May 1998.
because it would be "an act of moral courage and foresight" consistent with "the principles of justice and equality."

This sense of injustice has in fact led each of the Baltic states to demand an official apology from Russia. Yet, despite repeated demands, the Russians have consistently refused to do so. Instead of apologizing, or expressing any symbolic gesture of contrition, Russian officials have issued statements of denial. These denials of Soviet action have only further enraged the Balts. For example, the Russian Foreign Ministry's January 1998 statement on the Russian government's official position on the events of 1939-40 read: "Soviet troops were sent to the territories of the Baltic states in 1939 under intergovernmental agreements. At the very last moment an agreement was received from the top leaders of these countries to bring in additional troops in 1940." And later on it stated, "the legislatures of all three Baltic states officially applied in 1940 for the countries to be admitted into the Soviet Union." When the Baltic leaders challenged this view and demanded not only a retraction, but an apology for Soviet actions, the Russian Foreign Ministry accused them of provocatively "digging up the past" and said that for Russia to take responsibility for Soviet actions would be "naive."


29 BNS, "Russia Claims. . . ."

30 MID Briefing No. 6.
Because of the centrality of the experience of 1939-40, and the Soviet period in general, in modern Baltic consciousness, the Baltic states have repeatedly called on Russia to acknowledge past Soviet crimes against them. In many respects the Baltic states view Russia's recognition of its past behavior as fundamental to ensuring their sovereignty and independence. In the words of the Estonian foreign ministry,

The whole basis of the legal existence of the Republic of Estonia, which the Russian President Boris Yeltsin accepted when he recognized the restoration of Estonian independence in 1991, is the restoration of its independence and the non-recognition of the Soviet Union's illegal annexation of Estonia.\(^{31}\)

At a minimum they consider acknowledgment of Soviet conduct a necessary prerequisite for normalized relations not only with the Baltic states, but also for Russia's relations with other countries and involvement in international organizations. In 1994, for example, Estonia demanded that Russian membership in the Council of Europe be tied to a provision of "a clear assessment of what happened in Estonia in 1940."\(^{32}\) More recently, at the first meeting of the Estonian-Russian intergovernmental commission in December 1998, Estonian President Lennart Meri told the Russian representative that "the development of Estonian-Russian relations depended on Russia's [sic] revising its 

\(^{31}\)"Russia Does not Intend to Turn to International Court Over Border Dispute," Eesti Ringvaade 4, no. 33.2 (18-21 August 1994). Emphasis added.

stance on the 1940 occupation."33 Further, political parties throughout the Baltic states, especially in Estonia, explicitly include as part of their platforms the demand for Russian recognition of the events of 1939-40 as a basis for normalized relations.

Because the Soviet occupation is so salient to the Balts, Russian denial of Soviet actions is especially infuriating. As a result, symbolic gestures such as an apology become disproportionately important. So, for example, Baltic leaders have explicitly called for a Russian apology for the "consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact," much like the one Germany issued in 1994.34 In June of 1998, for example, the Estonian delegation to the Council of Europe demanded that "Russia, as the successor of the Soviet Union, . . . complete the normalization of relations with the Baltic states by issuing an apology to the Baltic states for the fact that the Soviet Union deprived these countries of independence in 1940 and committed major crimes against humanity over the following 50 years."35

Linkage. Furthermore, symbolic gestures related to Russian acknowledgment of the events of 1939-40 have become linked to other issues, fostering further animosity and resentment. The most vivid illustration of this linkage is the Russian-Estonian

33 "Tallinn Meeting Hailed as 'Breakthrough' in Estonian-Russian Ties," RFE/RL Newsline 2, no. 234 (7 December 1997).

34 See "Celebrations and Ceremonies Mark the Symbolic End of World War II," Eesti Ringvaade 4, no. 35.1 (29-31 August 1994).

border issue, which remains one of the most volatile and potential explosive issues in Russo-Estonian relations.

The fact that Russia and Estonia have still not officially settled on the demarcation of their mutual border is rooted directly in Russia's interpretation of the Estonian incorporation in 1940 and in particular on its failure to offer any statement or symbolic gesture to Estonia condemning Soviet conduct in 1940. The conflict centers around the 1920 Tartu Peace Treaty, in which the new Soviet government recognized the sovereignty of the newly-independent Estonia and both sides established their mutual border. The Russians have consistently refused to acknowledge the relevance of the Tartu Treaty.\(^{36}\) Estonia's incorporation into the USSR in 1940 essentially abrogated the treaty. At that time the borders between the newly-created Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR) and the Russian Republic (RSFSR) were revised in Russia's favor. In 1991 post-Soviet states were formed from the existing territories of the Soviet Republics. However, as a result of Soviet-era border adjustments, the territory of the post-1940 ESSR was slightly smaller than those of the pre-1940 independent Estonian state. As a result the border question immediately became a central Estonian national issue and hence a point of diplomatic contention with Russia. Specifically, since Estonia continues to see the 1940 incorporation as an illegal annexation of a sovereign

\(^{36}\) This position was most recently reiterated by the Russian ambassador to Estonia. See Estonian Radio, 3 February 1999, "Russian Ambassador Says 1920 Border Treaty With Estonia Obsolete and Void," \textit{BBC Worldwide Monitoring}, 3 February 1999.
state, it still recognizes the validity of the Tartu treaty. Thus, Estonia believes the treaty should serve as the basis for negotiations on a border agreement with Russia. The Russians, however, see the 1940 incorporation not as an annexation, but rather the result of a legal, voluntary decision made by the Estonian people. As a result, they do not acknowledge the continuity of the pre-war and post-1991 Estonian state and hence do not recognize the validity of the Tartu treaty.

While both sides initialed a draft border agreement in 1997 in which the Estonians gave up any territorial claims on Russia, the Estonians still demand Russian acknowledgment of the Tartu Treaty.37 The Estonian demand is fundamentally symbolic: Article two of the treaty explicitly documents "Russia's unconditional recognition of Estonia's independence, as well as its voluntary pledge not to lay any claims on the Estonian people or their land in the future."38 To the Estonians, Russian affirmation of the Tartu treaty would be a powerful symbolic gesture. Doing so would serve as an official acknowledgement of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Estonia. For example, as the deputy speaker of the Estonian parliament stated, it would


38 See Interfax, "75th Anniversary of Tartu Treaty Observed," FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-95-023 (2 February 1995). In the words of the Estonian Foreign minister, while many of the treaty's clauses are no longer valid, the treaty nonetheless has "moral importance."
be a way of demonstrating "mutual respect for the sovereignty of each state." The
gesture would also serve as important official recognition of the continuity of the
Estonian state, which was broken in 1940. By failing to do so, they believe that the
"Russian Federation still supports the illegal actions of the Soviet Union's occupation of
Estonia." Yet, because the Russian Myth of 1939-40 says that the incorporation of the
Baltic states was legal and voluntary, the Russians reject the continuity argument and
refuse to affirm the Tartu treaty, even in exchange for a border agreement that is
favorable to them. The failure of Russia to acknowledge the illegality of the
occupations and annexations, and hence the validity of the Tartu Treaty, has created the
biggest obstacle to the signing of a border agreement. As the Estonian Foreign Ministry
has stated, "Russia has not so far given an adequate assessment of the events that took

39 Quoted in "Estonian Deputy Speaker Says Relations With Moscow Can
Improve, Taking Into Account the Tartu Peace Treaty," Eesti Ringvaade 4, no. 37.1 (15-
18 September 1994). The Estonia parliamentary deputy speaker called on the Russians
to abandon their claim that "the Baltic states were not annexed, but instead . . .
[willingly chose] to walk in between the claws of the Soviet bear." He stressed that
"agreeing with the position of the rest of the world that the Baltic states were occupied
by the Soviet Union would not mean sharing the guilt of the Stalinist regime, nor would
it mean financial obligations, 'but would certainly be an act of moral courage and
foresight to agree with the principles of justice and equality."

40 "Russia Does not Intend . . . ." The dilemma of the Estonian position,
however, is that while they claim only to want Russian recognition of the Tartu Treaty
for its symbolic value, and have in fact rejected any territorial claims on Russia, Russian
recognition would be a de facto acknowledgment of the pre-war border. See Interfax,
"Official Declares Tartu Treaty With Estonia 'Invalid'," FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-
95-023 (2 February 1995). Further, some Russians argue that if Russia acknowledges
the illegal annexation of Estonia, then the Russian-speaking population that moved
there before 1991 would be reclassified as "occupiers," and immediately deported. See
Nikiforov, "'V Estonii nedovol'ny mnenem MID RF."
place in 1940 in Estonia, making it very difficult to resolve this issue in the border
treaty."  

Mythmaking/Conflict Spiral. One of the greatest dangers of pernicious
mythmaking—which results from the volatile emotional reactions that it evokes—is its
propensity to be self-reinforcing, exacerbating a mythmaking/conflict spiral. This
phenomenon, has been especially vivid in the Baltic case. The Russian distortion of the
events of 1939-40 has clearly exacerbated traditional Baltic enmity towards Russia and
increased Baltic resentment. This, in turn, has likely contributed to increasing Baltic
whitewashing of its own past, which, in turn, has exacerbated Russian mythmaking, or

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41 Estonian Foreign Ministry, Press Spokesman's Office, Release no. 2-1, 26
960126%5F2i.html]. On the 80th anniversary of the Tartu treaty, the Russians
condemned Estonian celebrations and the Russian ambassador, reflecting the view of
the Russian foreign ministry, again argued that the incorporation of the Baltics in 1940
was legal and voluntary [Text of report on Estonian Radio, 3 February 2000, in
"Russian Foreign Ministry Insists on Legitimacy of Estonia Joining USSR in 1940,"
BBC Monitoring, 3 February 2000]. In response to his remarks, one Estonian paper
wrote, "Thanks to the Russian ambassador's statement, every speaker [at events marking
the 80th anniversary] has a fresh example at hand of how the Tartu peace treaty ... is to
today, vital for maintaining the continuity of independence and as proof that Estonia
did not join the Soviet Union of its own free will in 1940" [Summary of editorial in
Eesti Päevaleht, 2 February 2000, in BNS, "Estonian Papers Say Russian Reaction
Shows Importance of Tartu Peace Accord," 2 February 2000]. Interestingly, the
Russian ambassador complained that Estonian history textbooks still used the old Tartu
Treaty map. To which, the Estonian prime minister, himself an historian and author of
a textbook used in Estonian schools, replied that the ambassador could learn something
about Estonian history if he read actually read an Estonian textbook [BNS, "Russian
Ambassador Against Commemorating Tartu Peace With Estonia on Political Level,"
1 February 2000].
at least has hardened Russian resistance to demands for apologies or expressions of contrition.

In fact, Baltic history is already prone toward interpretation that is heavily infused with a sense of self-righteous victimization, a view of history that is a breeding ground for pernicious historical mythmaking. Much like the Russians, the Balts have been reluctant to confront their own past misdeeds. This is especially true of issues of Soviet and Nazi collaboration in 1939-40 and complicity in deportations, executions and other crimes, especially against Baltic Jews. For example, Baltic leaders originally envisioned the recently-formed Baltic commissions for investigation of crimes committed during the Soviet and Nazi periods as bodies that would examine the Soviet period exclusively. It took intensive lobbying by the international Jewish community for the Baltic presidents not only to agree to include an investigation of

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43 This issue has come to the fore in Latvia over the "March 16" controversy: Latvia has made March 16 a national holiday in honor of Latvian soldiers who fought in World War II, the same day that veterans of Latvian Waffen-SS Legions commemorate their first battle against the Red Army in 1943. "Latvian Lawmakers Vote to Keep Soldiers Day," RFE/RL Newsline 3, no. 45 (5 March 1999); Latvian Radio, 7 April 1998, "Latvian President Says Recent Events Show Vigilance and Mutual Tolerance Needed," BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 7 April 1998; "Raining on Latvia's SS Parade," Transitions, Internet Edition, May 1998. A similar event is also held in Estonia.
crimes committed during the Nazi occupation as part of the mandate of the
commissions, but also to ensure that they did not conflate the investigations of the two
periods.\footnote{See note 26 above, also "Baltic Presidents to Look Into Nazi and Soviet
Crimes," \textit{ETA Estonian News Agency}, 12 May 1998; "AJCommittee Works With
Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Governments to Establish Commissions to Investigate
The Holocaust and Post-War Periods," \textit{PR Newswire}, 14 May 1998; "U.S. Politicians
1998.}

Even in their own treatment of the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the secret protocols, the
Balts have tended to view events selectively. For example, while the main goal of the
Lithuanian independence movement in the late 1980s was to gain recognition of the
illegality of the Pact, few if any Lithuanians at the time, or since, have called for the
return of Vilnius to Poland. Recall that the Soviet Union acquired control of the Vilnius
region in its invasion of Poland in September 1939. Under the terms of the second
secret protocol signed in September 1939 Lithuania was transferred to the Soviet sphere
of influence. The Soviet Union then offered the Vilnius region to Lithuania primarily
as a bribe to accept a Soviet military presence.

While such mythmaking would likely exist in the absence of Russia's
whitewashing of its past misdeeds in the region, Russia's continual support of the Myth
of 1939-40 in fact makes legitimate challenges to Baltic mythmaking from Russians and
others, such as Jews, much more difficult. Indeed, the Balts are quick to point out in
response to such criticism that the Russians have been far from candid about their own
past behavior. In turn, when Russians are criticized, they are quick to point out that the Balts consistently downplay their affinity for fascism in the 1930's. So, the more Russia denies Soviet actions against the Balts in 1940, the more difficult it becomes to make legitimate challenges to Baltic mythmaking—exacerbating a mythmaking spiral.

Further, while the experience of 1939-40, the mass deportations of 1941 and 1949, and the legacy of 50 years of Soviet occupation have made Russia few friends in the Baltic states, Russia's failure to confront Soviet crimes only intensifies existing anti-Russian feeling and nationalist extremism. Again, while extreme Baltic nationalists would likely exist in any case, continued Russian historical amnesia very likely increases popular tolerance for such groups and their beliefs. Baltic nationalists have long purveyed their own whitewashed and mythologized views of Baltic history, particularly of the Nazi-occupation period. The backlash against Russian historical amnesia can only increase the legitimacy of such historical views. One example may be found in the recent publication in Latvia of *Baigais Gads* (*The Fearful Year*), written by a pro-Nazi publicist and originally published in 1942. The book, which documents crimes committed during the Soviet occupation in 1940-41, is a well-documented work of anti-Soviet, and particularly anti-Semitic, Nazi propaganda. Nonetheless, it is has achieved some legitimacy in Latvia.\(^{45}\) Russian attacks on the book ring hollow,

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however, since Russia's own whitewashing of the period elicits little sympathy for arguments that the Latvians need to be more truthful about their past.46

In the end a spiral of grievances and resentment results whereby Russian denial of Soviet misdeeds exacerbates the Baltic peoples' sense of historical grievance and victimization, encouraging their own defensive and biased interpretation of the past, and increasing tolerance for more extreme anti-Russian views. In turn, Baltic whitewashing of the war period increases Russian ire, especially given the centrality of the "Myth of the Great Fatherland War" in Russian historical consciousness. This only hardens Russia's resistance to honestly confronting its past, breeding further tension, mistrust, and resentment, and leading to increased political conflict.47

Other emotional mechanisms. We see other emotional mechanisms operating here as well. For example, since Russian mythmaking has clearly exacerbated existing antipathy toward Russians, it has in turn manifested itself in discriminatory policies against ethnic Russians in the Baltic states, and has lent popular support for such policies. Balts repeatedly refer to ethnic-Russians as "colonizers" who "trampled on

46 See, for example, BNS, "Moscow Denounces Republication of Book on War in Latvia," BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 14 January 1999.

47 That views found in the latest generation of Russian history textbooks themselves could influence relations between Balts and ethnic Russians within the Baltic states is easier to understand in light of the fact that these textbooks are the same ones that are widely used in Russian-language schools in the Baltic states. This conclusion is based on interviews with both Russian and Estonian education ministry officials, textbook publishers and ethnic Russian educators in Estonia conducted in June 1996.
[democratic] rights and values for 50 years." At a minimum, the Baltic sense of grievance that comes from Russian mythmaking has certainly helped political elites in those states rationalize those discriminatory policies. Such policies, real or imagined, frequently evoke Russian condemnation, which in turn triggers Baltic outrage: From the Baltic perspective, the frequent Russian charges of Baltic human rights violations, given its own behavior in 1940-41, are fundamentally hypocritical.

**B. Cognitive mechanisms**

The Russian Myth of 1939-40 has also led to conflict through cognitive mechanisms. Most obviously, Russian mythmaking has shaped Baltic perceptions of Russia that have directly influenced Baltic policy on regional security, and have laid the groundwork for potentially violent conflict. Time and again Baltic officials have made statements explicitly linking their suspicion, mistrust and fear of Russia to Russian views on history and Russia's lack of contrition. Take the example of the Russian-Estonian border dispute. As mentioned above, for Estonians recognition of the Tartu treaty is symbolic since it reaffirms Baltic continuity in the eyes of the Russians and explicitly undermines the Russian Myth of 1939-40. But Russian recognition of the

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treaty—and general contrition on the issue of the occupations—has a direct impact on Baltic perceptions. Estonian officials have explicitly stated that Russian recognition of the Tartu Treaty and rejection of the Myth of 1939-40 sends a valuable signal. For example, the Estonian Foreign Ministry has stated, "As Russia moves towards securing its democracy and economic reforms after 70 years of communist dictatorship, Article 2 of the [Tartu] Treaty will be meaningful and reassure Estonia of the Russian Federation's goodwill."49

Thus, by denying past Soviet actions that are widely known to be true, the Russians have hardened long-standing Baltic assumptions about Russian interests and intentions, intensifying a perception of Russia as untrustworthy, menacing, and fundamentally revanchist. It is such assumptions and perceptions of Russia that have driven the Baltic desire for NATO membership—a policy that is openly antagonistic and confrontational. Why are the Baltic officials clamoring for NATO expansion given the obvious weakness of Russia and the Russian military, so vividly revealed by the Russian military's debacle in Chechnia? Clearly they desire the European legitimacy that NATO membership will provide. But, their interest in NATO is driven as much, or more, by insecurity, and fear of Russia, borne of fundamental suspicion and mistrust.50

Again, Baltic leaders clearly take Russian mythmaking as a signal of its real intentions.


50 See Kuorsalo, "Estonia Yielding. . . ."
Recently, for example, the Estonian prime minister has directly linked Russia's lack of contrition over the events of 1940 to its support for NATO expansion. He argued that active NATO membership is the "only guarantee of Estonian security" and that "neutral at any cost" is not an option. This view, he said, led directly to "the annexation of Estonia in 1940, and major losses during the years of the ensuing occupation. However, in some places this historical fact is not recognized for some reason, to say nothing of apologies for what was done."\(^{51}\)

Such a view of Russia may in fact be a misperception. There is a strong case to be made that the threat of Russian revanchism is in fact quite low, that Russia and its military are quite weak, and for years to come will largely be preoccupied with maintaining its current territorial cohesion, rather than expanding. But the Russians fail to see the connection between their lack of candor about the Soviet period and Baltic perceptions of Russian intentions and their desire for NATO membership. Recently the Russian ambassador to Lithuania commented, "We are against NATO membership for Lithuania because we think that there is no threat to Lithuania's security whatsoever."\(^{52}\)

But, as the Baltic case shows, Russian mythmaking has been a powerful source of perception. In this case, words actually do speak louder than actions.


\(^{52}\) BNS, "Russian Ambassador: NATO Membership is Lithuania's Internal [sic]," in FBIS Daily Report, FBIS-SOV-2000-0204 (4 February 2000).
So, while the Russians may talk of their desire for peaceful relations with the Baltics, the desire for an equal relationship governed by the rule of law and accepted international norms—all of which may in fact be sincere—the failure to acknowledge past Soviet crimes against the Baltic states detracts from the weight of those words. At the heart of the issue, therefore, is not just the reality of Russia's past behavior, but its failure to confront it.\textsuperscript{53}

The obvious danger, then, of Russian mythmaking is that it has laid the groundwork for a classic security dilemma in the region: the Balts will try to increase their security through NATO membership; Russia will clearly perceive this as a hostile act, likely prompting some form of Russian retaliation.

\textbf{IV. Competing Explanations and Counter-Arguments}

Some may argue that the Russo-Baltic conflict is simply the result of realist power politics. That is, Russian and Baltic behavior is entirely rational, driven by strategic interests that are shaped by the distribution of power between Russia and the Baltic States. Russia is a large state that seeks to maximize its power and control over the region, while the Baltic states in response seek to balance externally against the

\textsuperscript{53} This dynamic is also seen in East Asia. Japan's failure to confront its wartime past has led to a great deal of mistrust of Japan among its East Asian neighbors. See, for example, "Let Japan Sail Forth: The Restraints on Japan's Armed Forces Are No Longer Appropriate to Asia's Circumstances," \textit{The Economist}, 27 February 1999, p. 17. On Japan's continued historical amnesia and whitewashing of the war years see Ian Buruma, \textit{Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan} (New York: Meridian, 1994); John Lie, "War, Absolution, and Amnesia: The Decline of War Responsibility in Postwar Japan," \textit{Peace and Change} 16, no. 3 (July 1991).
Russian threat by joining a more powerful alliance—NATO. There are two responses to this competing explanation. First, though the "power" argument and the "ideas" argument may predict the same outcome, there are in fact other important features of the Russo-Baltic conflict that are not explained by power politics or rational self-interest. Both Baltic and Russian behavior over the past decade has in fact been quite irrational and inconsistent with their own strategic interests.

Take, for example, the Russia-Estonia border dispute. Russian foreign policy decision makers have clearly undermined their strategic interests by refusing to make a symbolic gesture—to acknowledge and condemn Soviet past misdeeds in the Baltic states. The proposed border agreement currently under discussion locks in the territorial changes made by the Soviet Union in favor of Russia after 1940. But Russian leaders refuse to satisfy the single condition for Estonian consent to the treaty: acknowledgement that the Soviet Union annexed Estonia in 1940 and by doing so violated the terms of the Tartu treaty. Russian leaders have everything to gain strategically by making the symbolic gesture. It would mean preserving the existing border of Russia, thereby making relations with Estonia more secure, and possibly dampening the Baltic drive for NATO membership, which Russians see as a major threat. Similarly, Estonian officials have undermined their state's strategic interests by demanding Russian apologies and linking this to a border agreement. They want Estonia to be part of NATO, which is entirely rational given their perception of the Russian threat. But Estonia cannot gain access to NATO until it has settled its border
with Russia. Yet it has held up a resolution of that problem for a purely symbolic
demand of Russian acknowledgement of past Soviet wrong-doing.

Second, there are no intrinsic material interests in the Baltics that the Russians
stand to gain from its position. Indeed, conflict with the Baltic states only elicits
international scorn and criticism. And there is little if any popular support in Russia for
forcibly reconstituting the former Soviet Union. Similarly, if Estonian officials were
really concerned merely about Russian capabilities—rather than what it says,
particularly about history—then it would have been far more rational to placate Russia
(much like Finland has done). In fact, there was a time in 1991 when external balancing
through NATO membership was not a serious option for the Baltic states. In that
situation we would have expected Estonian and Baltic leaders to be very cautious about
antagonizing Russia. Instead the Estonians immediately antagonized Russia—and
continue to do so—by raising the issue of Russia’s interpretation of history and linking
it to issues areas that are important to Russia.

**Conclusion**

The Baltic case shows quite clearly that pernicious historical ideas that have
been widely legitimated among society and elites can indeed exacerbate or precipitate
conflict among states. In addition, it has shown how historical mythmaking can
precipitate and exacerbate conflictual relations through both emotional and cognitive
mechanisms. This chapter has also explained how the Myth of 1939-40 has been so
persistent and resistant to revision, despite overwhelming contradictory evidence and
despite the obvious irritation and mistrust it instills in the Baltic States. This is important for understanding how Russian Mythmaking about the Soviet interventions and the war years has become self-reinforcing, feeding a spiral of mythmaking and conflict.

Further, the case is illustrative of a particular way in which historical ideas affect political behavior: The main emphasis has been on the effects of Russian mythmaking on Baltic perceptions and policy decisions. In the following chapter we show how Russian mythmaking has directly affected Russian perceptions and policy decisions that have precipitated and exacerbated interstate conflict.
CHAPTER 7
THE MYTH OF SLAVIC BROTHERHOOD
AND THE RUSSIAN RESPONSE TO THE KOSOVO WAR

A Slav, Orthodox country is being destroyed. It was Russia that helped Serbia attain its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. In all the European wars of the past 300 years, Serbia has been Russia's ally. It was because of Serbia that Russia went to war against Austria-Hungary in 1914. Serbia has never opposed Russia, and it remains our ally outside the former Soviet Union. All Russians know this from their history lessons at school.

--- Russian Historian Roy Medvedev¹

It was one of the tensest moments in Western-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War. In the spring of 1999, NATO warplanes began bombing the Yugoslav capital of Belgrade. While tensions increased two years earlier when NATO undertook a peacekeeping operation and carried out limited air strikes in neighboring Bosnia, the reaction of mass Russian society—not just cranks and extremists—to the bombing of Belgrade was markedly more intense. In response to NATO bombing of Serbia in the spring of 1999, the Russian public and elites (political, military and opinion elites) nearly unanimously responded with extreme outrage at the West and unyielding support for Serbia.² Western claims of Serb "ethnic cleansing" against Kosovar Albanians were


² The highly unusual unanimity of opinion across the political spectrum—among elites and the public—was a unique feature of the crisis, and one that further justifies closer examination. On this unanimity of opinion, see the comments by Sergei Karaganov, head of the Foreign and Defense Policy Council, in a press conference, along
dismissed out of hand, while the West was labeled as an unprincipled "aggressor" bent on the destruction of Yugoslavia, and even Russia itself. Russia sent humanitarian aid to Serbia and intelligence ships to the Adriatic. The military, among others, urged Russian decision makers to ignore the UN arms embargo on Yugoslavia and supply Serbia with military aid. Even the most liberal politicians encouraged Russian volunteers to fight alongside Serbia. Cooperation with NATO ceased, while some political and military elites spoke of retargeting nuclear missiles and warned of the possibility of global thermonuclear war.

The Russian response can hardly be deemed rational or consistent with Russia's strategic interests. Russia's purely strategic interest in Serbia is negligible: Serbia does not border Russia, nor does it provide Russia with any strategic resources. Trade between the two countries is negligible, and is in fact more of a drain on Russia than an asset. As a potential military ally, Serbia has little to offer Russia; Serbia's armed forces are relatively tiny, and are incapable of bolstering Russia's global strategic position, or the credibility of its military. In fact, the Russian reaction to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was strategically counter-productive. Russian support for Milosevic jeopardized potentially greater and much more valuable economic relationships with the West that could ultimately enhance Russian security. Instead, by supporting Serbia, Russia risked international scorn and isolation, and damage to already strained relations with important international financial institutions.

with Duma deputies Alexei Arbatov and Alexei Podberezkin, sponsored by RIA Vesti and the Foreign and Defense Policy Council, Moscow, 28 April 1999 [hereafter "FPDC press conference"].
Why, then did Russians support Serbia, and oppose NATO, during the Kosovo crisis? There is, in fact, no inherently logical reason why Russian sympathies should lie with Milosevic and Serbia. Indeed, it is just as likely that Russians would have had the opposite reaction to the crisis. Russia has no formal defensive treaty obligations with Yugoslavia. Russia's relations with the former-Communist country have been quite cool since World War II, and have not warmed since the break-up of Yugoslavia in the late 1980's. Further, Russia's historical involvement in the Balkans, ostensibly on behalf of the Serbs and other Orthodox Slavs, drew Russia into numerous costly wars, including the disastrous defeats in the Crimean War and World War I, which not only saw staggering numbers of Russian deaths, but also led directly to the collapse and dismemberment of the Russian empire, the Bolshevick revolution, and the bloody Russian Civil War.\(^3\) Second, given Russia's own history of political oppression and violence during the Stalin years and under Nazi occupation (as well as its recent embrace of democratic values), a more likely—and rational—response to "ethnic cleansing" and mass killings should have been extreme outrage and open support for NATO's actions.

This chapter argues that the Russians supported Serbia because of critical misperceptions about Balkan realities and Western motives in 1999. Specifically,

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\(^3\) Former Russian prime minister, and Yeltsin's special envoy to Yugoslavia during the crisis, Viktor Chernomyrdin—who was widely excoriated for his role in brokering an end to the war—was one of the few Russian elites who recognized this. He was quoted as saying during the negotiations: "'I thought about Russia, about the country's security in a way to prevent joining war in the Balkans. We have already experienced it once.' In World War I we stood just for Serbia, lost 7 million compatriots and eventually found ourselves alone against everyone else.'" "Chernomyrdin on Russia's Role in Kosovo Peace Talks: Comment," Bloomberg, 7 June 1999.
Russians failed to see the full barbarity of Serb behavior in Kosovo (and earlier in Bosnia), and greatly overestimated the capacity for Serb resistance to NATO. They clearly exaggerated the direct threat to Russia posed by NATO action and the degree to which predatory motives drove Western intervention. And they exaggerated the security benefit of its defense of Serbia.

How then do we explain Russian's particular misperceptions— their obvious underestimation of Serb crimes in Kosovo and its exaggeration of Western predatory policies? As argued here, those misperceptions were shaped primarily by Russian historical beliefs, in particular the Russian Myth of Slavic Brotherhood. That is, Russians inferred these mistaken beliefs from their particular mythical vision of Russia's past wars and interventions in the Balkans. It is a process that is explained clearly by the model of mythmaking dynamics. In particular, the model explains how pernicious historical ideas, through cognitive mechanisms, shape perceptions and misperceptions that may lead to conflictual policy choices. The Balkan case also provides an excellent illustration the way in which more or less accurate and truthful historical ideas can also lead to conflict-causing misperceptions. Specifically, the Russian reaction to the Balkan crisis also resulted from Russian misperceptions, which resulted when Russians misapplied legitimate historical truths and "lessons" to Balkan realities in 1999 that bore little resemblance to the Balkan past. Thus, Russians both "misremembered" and misapplied history; both "false" or grossly distorted history and "true" history led to Russian misperceptions.
This chapter is divided into three main sections. Section one reviews the main features of the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood and shows the extent to which this view has been legitimated in Russian society. The second section then explores in detail the Russian reaction to the Kosovo crisis. It documents several key historical beliefs, some legitimate, but many pernicious, that shaped Russian perceptions and misperceptions of the Balkan crisis in 1999. Section three addresses competing explanations and counter-arguments. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the evidence presented and its implications for our understanding of the relationship between pernicious history and interstate conflict.

I. The Nature and Pervasiveness of the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood

A. The Myth of Slavic Brotherhood: The Essential Elements

Recall that Soviet and Russian history textbooks on this period are effusively sympathetic toward the Serbs and the other Balkan peoples. In short the Russian popular view is marked by a romantic and self-serving "Myth of Slavic Brotherhood": the view of Russia's Balkan wars and interventions that portrays Russians as heroic, self-sacrificing "liberators" of "Slavic brothers," who are motivated solely by a "special relationship" between Orthodox Balkan Slavs and Russians. Russian foreign policy in the Balkans is characterized as altruistic, honorable and defensive, while Turkey and the Western powers are portrayed exclusively as ruthless oppressors of Orthodox Slavs. It is a romantic and self-serving view that serves to justify Russian intervention in the Balkans.
The Russian popular view, as seen throughout the textbook treatment of Russia's wars and interventions generally—not just in the Balkans—conveys an image of the West as antagonistic, deceitful, untrustworthy, and motivated largely by its fear of Russia and hatred of the Slavs. The tone of the Russian view is markedly defensive and insecure, constantly emphasizing Russia's inherent uniqueness and contributions to world civilization, and its superiority—particularly moral superiority—to the West.

B. The Legitimacy of the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood

That these views have been dominant in mass public history education for decades is a strong indication that they are in fact deeply-held and persistent. As the Russian response to the Kosovo crisis reveals, these views certainly have wide legitimacy among Russian society and elites. During the Kosovo crisis the Russian public and elites spoke often of this "special" cultural, historical and religious relationship to the Serbs. While not uncommon among nationalist and communist elites and their supporters, during the war even the most liberal newspapers declared that "Russians and Serbs are brothers in blood and Orthodox belief."4 Opinion polls found that "the most highly educated citizens of the Russian capital support the Serbs" and referred "to things like 'Orthodox unity,' 'Slavic brotherhood', and other similar

4 Aleksandr Khokhlov, "NATO Declares War on Milosevic, What is Russia to Do?" Novee Izvestia, March 25, 1999, pp. 1, 2. While on a trip to Russia in June, Marshall Goldman noted, "I expressed my disapproval of the Serbs to a Russian friend, she defended them fiercely and noted with anger, 'You can't understand, it is a genetic problem. You are not a Slav.'" Marshall I. Goldman, "Power Plays: Russia's Mixed-Up Moves Reveal Its Dangerous Divide..." Washington Post, 20 June 1999.
constructs most often."5 Celebrated poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko noted, "Still for many Russians, beyond the two peoples' similar languages and Orthodox religions, and beyond the many Serbian-Russian mixed marriages, true solidarity with the people of Serbia runs deep."6 The news director of independent NTV noted that Russians are "more interested in the fate of the Serbs, in part because of the psychological closeness of the people."7

The near unanimous Duma vote to include Yugoslavia in the Russia-Belarus Union is an obvious expression of the belief in a "special relationship." At the time, commentators spoke of the necessity for "the merging of the brotherly Slavic peoples," and noted that "If we do not vote [for the Duma resolution to include Yugoslavia in the Russia-Belarus Union] we will betray Yugoslavia."8 Indeed the refrain of "betrayal" was also widely heard in response to the Russian-brokered agreement to end the conflict. Viktor Chernomyrdin, who helped negotiate the deal, was widely excoriated for "selling out" Serbia, which was compared to the British betrayal of the Czechs at


6 Yevgeny Yevtushenko, "History Returns to the Scene of Its Crime," New York Times, 1 May 1999, p.. For Yevtushenko the ties have immediate historical origins in the Yugoslav partisan fight against Hitler. For others though, expressions of solidarity with the Serbs were less clearly defined.

7 Quoted in Celestine Bohlen, "Russians See and Read Another Slant to the War, With Milosevic as a Patriot," New York Times, 4 April 1999, p. 9.

Munich.⁹ The majority of the Russian Duma and its Communist Party leadership accused Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin of "silently betraying and selling Yugoslavia the way they sold and betrayed the united country, the Russian economy, friends, history, culture and traditions."¹⁰ The head of the Defense Ministry's department for international military cooperation, Col.-Gen. Leonid Ivashov, who accompanied Chernomyrdin during negotiations, lamented afterwards: "Each of us should answer this question in his own soul—have we betrayed Yugoslavia or not?"¹¹

Belief in a special bond between Russia and Serbia was also expressed through the Russian provision of humanitarian aid to Belgrade, and unofficially, through efforts to register Russian "volunteers" to fight in the defense of the Serbs.¹² After the

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¹¹ Quoted in Vladimir Isachenkov, "Russia Army Opposes Kosovo Deal," AP, 9 June 1999. According to military analyst Pavel Felgengauer, this view "expresses a broad opinion of the military elite." Similar cries were heard from a broad swath of Russian elite and popular opinion. Political analyst Viacheslav Nikonov of the Politika foundation, for example, lamented that "Chernomyrdin has helped NATO win the war..." Russian NTV, 8 June 1999.

¹² Quoted in "Russian Politicians Unite in Condemnation of NATO," The Russia Journal, March 29, 1999. Small numbers of Russian volunteers did go to Kosovo, though under the aegis of Russian nationalist organizations thousands signed-up. Russia also sent Naval Intelligence ships to the Adriatic to "monitor" NATO activities. It was widely rumored that the Russians intended to provide intelligence data to Belgrade,
bombing ceased, the "dash" of Russian paratroopers into Pristina was marked by
Russian soldiers flashing the Serb three-finger victory salute—a clear gesture of
solidarity with the Serbs. As one Russian peacekeeper in Kosovo said, "Well, really we
are not for the Serbs or the Albanians, if you want to look at it that way. In spirit we
are for the Serbs of course. . ."\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{II. Russian Historical Beliefs and the Sources of Misperception in the
Kosovo Crisis}

As is clear above, the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood had a very real impact on
Russian perceptions and behavior during the crisis. However, as the following section
demonstrates, it was more than simply an abstract belief in the "special bond" between
Serbs and Russians that shaped Russian perceptions. Indeed, a number of distinct
Russian historical beliefs about Russia's relations with Serbia, and the dominant images
of Serbia, the West and Russia found in the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood, shaped
Russian perceptions of the recent Balkan crisis. The result of those perceptions were
Russian policies toward the Balkan crisis in the spring and summer of 1999 that were
provocatively pro-Serb and anti-Western.

In particular, there are three key historical beliefs found in Russian popular
views of history, occasionally legitimate, but mostly distorted and pernicious, that have
shaped Russian perceptions of Balkan realities in 1999. First is an exaggerated sense of

\textsuperscript{13} NTV, 7 July 1999 in \textit{CDI Russia Weekly} 56, 9 July 1999.
past Serb righteousness and past oppression against the Serbs—a romantic image of the Serbs as noble, heroic, innocent victims of aggression. Second is an exaggerated sense of past Russian benevolence—an image of Russia as the savior and defender of the Serbs and more broadly as a righteous defender of world peace and stability. Third is an exaggerated perception of past Western predation towards Serbia and Russia—a Russian self-image of profound insecurity and victimization from the West.

A. Exaggerated Serb Righteousness and Serb Oppression

The first major Russian historical belief that shaped Russian perceptions in 1999 in fact consists of two distinct beliefs: an exaggerated sense of past Serb righteousness and an exaggerated perception of the historical oppression of Serbs. With regard to Serb righteousness, that is the sense that Serb (and other Balkan Slav) conduct in their drive for national liberation has always been noble and virtuous, it is clearly an uncritical and exaggerated view. As the origins of the World War I, for example, make clear, their nationalist cause was at times a source of great bloodshed and serious instability in the region. And while true that Serbs and other Balkan Slavs were treated poorly under Turkish rule, there is tendency in the Russian view to portray Serb suffering as exceptional and unique. It is a view that feeds directly into a clearly exaggerated sense of Serb entitlement.

The Russian reaction to the Kosovo crisis in fact revealed a largely romantic image of the Serbs as noble and heroic. For example, as historian Roy Medvedev opined, "In order to win a war, it is necessary to smash the will not only of the leaders,
but of the whole people. Russian and Belorussian support will give the Serbs a great deal of hope. The Serbian nation has lost more people in the wars of the 20th century than any other nation in Europe. Serbia has lived in bondage for longer than it has been free. This small nation in the Balkans cannot be defeated."14 This claim of the Serbs' greater comparative suffering is especially odd. Not only does it glorify Serb victimization, but seems grossly exaggerated when compared to the Russians' own losses from war, famine, and political repression in the 20th century.

This romantic image of the Serbs, and Russia's relationship to them, has also shaped certain Russian assumptions about Serbian behavior in the crisis: Serbia was seen as an innocent victim, rather than a perpetrator, of aggression. From the beginning, Russians quickly—and not always factually or logically—dismissed Western criticism of Serbia and the Milosevic regime. Russian loyalty to the Serbs during the crisis was unyielding; the view of Milosevic and the Serbs was wholly forgiving and uncritical. Claims of wrong-doing were dismissed out of hand, rationalized away, or ignored altogether. Three examples serve to illustrate.

1. First, the Russian public and elites almost universally refused to condemn Serb "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo. Russia, for example, was the only nation to vote against an April 1999 UN resolution condemning Yugoslav army and Serb paramilitary violence against Albanians in Kosovo.15 Generally, Russian elites ignored or belittled

14 Medvedev, "Brothers in the Balkans."
Western claims of Serb atrocities. "The ethnic tension in Kosovo," went one typical comment "started as a rather ordinary local conflict." One commonly heard refrain was that Serbia has simply "failed to manage its ethnic problems but has not actually carried out any aggression." The liberal daily Izvestia, noted that NATO's attack was carried out "for no serious reason." Foreign Minister Ivanov remarked, "there can be no justification for this," repeatedly calling charges of Serb atrocities "myths" and "rumors" spread "in order to justify the NATO aggression." Public opinion also conformed to this view. During the conflict a mere six to seven percent of Russians believed that "cruelty of the Yugoslav authorities" was responsible for the conflict with NATO.

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19 See I. S. Ivanov, Zapis' stenogrammy sovmestnoi press-konferentsii, posviashchennoi sobytiam Iugoslavii [hereafter, Stenogramma], 25 March 1999 [www.ln.mid.ru/website/brp_4.nsf]. Ivanov has continued to deny that there were any actions that warranted NATO intervention. See his recent interview in Komsomolskaia pravda, 20 July 1999 [www.kp.ru/]. Sergei Karaganov also stressed that Western reports were simply lies and propaganda. See "FDPC press conference," 28 April 1999.

20 Vserossiiskii Tsentr Issledovaniia Obshchestvennogo Mneniia [hereafter VTsIOM], 27-30 March 1999, poll of 1,600 individuals from throughout Russia
Even after thousands of refugees began fleeing Kosovo with tales of forced
expulsion, mass executions and the burning of Albanian homes and villages, Russians
refused to place any blame on the Serbs. Foreign Minister Ivanov and others dismissed
as NATO propaganda claims that refugees were fleeing Serbs. "They are trying to
present matters in such a way that the flood of refugees appeared as a result of
repressive actions by the Yugoslav security forces against the local population in
Kosovo. This is more than strange logic! . . . NATO bears full responsibility for this
and nobody will succeed in covering it up. . . . The flood of refugees has increased
because nobody wants bombs falling on his head. . . ."  

[ns.wcom.ru/EDITION/kosovo.htm]. In response to the same question In June, the
figure increased to 15 percent. VTsIOM, 5-6 June 1999, poll of 1,836 individuals over
age 18 in large cities (Oblast centers) [ns.wcom.ru/EDITION/opros_56.htm]. However,
polls conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) in April and June found
consistently low numbers critical of Yugoslavia. Fond 'Obshchestvennoe Mnenie',
Tematicheskie veprosy [hereafter FOM TV] no. 42, "Vokrug sobytii v Jugoslavii," 3-4
April 1999 [www.fom.ru/week/t1042_1.htm]; FOM TV no. 51, "Vokrug konfliktka na
Balkanakh," 5-6 June 1999 [www.fom.ru/week/t1051_1.htm]. This and the other
weekly polls by FOM cited here were conducted among 1,500 respondents in 56
population centers in 29 Russian oblasts, krais and republics throughout the entire
country.

21 Stenogramma press-konferentsii Ministra Inostrannykh Del RF I. S. Ivanova,
Nachal'nika Glavnogo Operativnogo Upravleniia General'nogo Shtaba VS RF, Pervogo
Zamestitelia Nachal'nika General'nogo Shtaba General-Polkovnika Iu. N. Baluevskogo, i
Nachal'nika Glavnogo Upravleniia Mezdunarodnogo Voennego Sotrudnichestva
Ministerstva Oborony RF L. G. Ivashova [hereafter, Stenogramma], 29 March 1999
[www.1n.mid.ru/website/ brp_4.nsf/]. Such statements were repeated numerous times
during the conflict by Russian political and military elites. For example, when asked in
an interview if he believed that there was ethnic cleansing in Kosovo Col.-Gen. Ivashov
replied: "Refugees fled Kosovo en masse only after these barbaric bombings, which
killed hundreds of innocent people, began." The Russia Journal
Popular opinion also conformed to this view. Between 51 and 56 per cent of Russians polled during the war believed that the most likely reason for the "massive movement of Albanian refugees from Kosovo" was that "Kosovo Albanians are escaping NATO bombing." Only 11 to 13 percent believed that they were fleeing Serb "ethnic cleansing."  

2. The Russian public and elites have been overwhelming uncritical of Milosevic and his regime. For example, the vast majority has condemned the Hague war crimes tribunal's indictment of Milosevic and other Serb civilian and military leaders, dismissing the charges as "politically motivated," and ignoring the factual basis behind them: "As Arbour states, the matter concerns 'crimes' committed in Kosovo since the beginning of 1999. There are absolutely no doubts that the decision was not judicial but purely political." More recently, the Russians refused to support a resolution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly calling for all member states to extradite accused Serb war criminals to the Hague—this in light of the growing evidence corroborating some of the worst descriptions of forced expulsions and mass executions conveyed by Kosovo Albanian refugees during the war.

22 The 56 percent and 13 percent figures are from a 10-11 April poll; the 51 percent and 11 percent figures are from the 8-9 May poll. Totals for both polls are reported in FOM TV no. 47, "Vokrug situatsii v Iugoslavii," 8-9 May 1999 [www.fom.ru/week/1047_4.htm].

Public opinion polls also reflected this view. A June 1999 poll found that 43 percent of Russians disapproved of the Milosevic indictment.\(^2^5\) In addition, when asked their general opinion of Milosevic, equal numbers (about 20 percent each) held a positive or negative view, respectively, while more than 40 percent held a neutral view of the Yugoslav leader—an astonishing number in light of Milosevic’s well-known role over the past eight years in instigating war in Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia, as well as his poor treatment of the Serbian refugees of those wars.

When it came to the present war, Russians were also overwhelmingly uncritical of Milosevic. When asked in May 1999 who was more "fundamentally guilty" for the conflict between Yugoslavia and NATO—Milosevic or the member states of NATO—a mere 16 percent cited Milosevic, while the overwhelming majority blamed the NATO countries.\(^2^6\) Most simply refused to see Milosevic as a "serious" autocrat capable of war crimes. As historian Roy Medvedev argued, "Russian citizens are not impressed by NATO talk about the despotism of Yugoslav President Slobodon Milosevic. Russia

\(^{2^4}\) "Russian Legislators Abstain From OSCE Vote on War Crime Suspects," RFE/RL Newsline 3, no. 133, 12 July 1999. The nearly universal Russian condemnation of the Hague tribunal's indictment is neither factually grounded nor consistent with other Russian claims regarding the bombing. First, to claim that the court is politically biased—particularly against Serbs—ignores the fact that this is the same court that has handed down indictments against Croats for war crimes committed against Bosnian Serbs. Second, the tribunal is an arm of the UN, which the Russians proclaimed to have ultimate authority in addressing solutions to international conflicts. They condemned NATO for eschewing the UN's authority, yet at the same time rejected the Hague tribunal's decisions.

\(^{2^5}\) FOM TV no. 51, 5-6 June 1999.

\(^{2^6}\) FOM TV no. 47, "Vokrug situatsii v Iugoslavii," 8-9 May 1999 [www.fom.ru/week/ t1047_4.htm].
lived for centuries under conditions of despotism and political terror. Compared with our dictators, Milosevic seems a pragmatist. He was elected by the Serbian people; Serbia has a multiparty system and practically no political prisoners."27 Such claims, however, are striking given Russians' first-hand knowledge of the capacity for human violence in the region and its own experience under brutal dictatorship—facts that should only increase Russian disdain for Milosevic.

3. Finally, Russians frequently rationalized away Serb behavior. This was frequently done in two ways: either by demonizing the Kosovar Albanians, or by focusing—often through hyperbole—on the victimization of the Serbs by the West. Even when conceding that Serbian forces in Kosovo may have "used unacceptable measures," as Ivanov did shortly after the war, many were quick to point out that Albanians were simply terrorists, drug-runners and Islamic extremists. As one commentator noted, "I wonder how many people NATO is going to kill in Yugoslavia to defend the right of the Kosovo Albanians to engage in terrorism?"28

More importantly, though, elite and popular rhetoric during the war rationalized Serb behavior by focusing almost exclusively on the victimization of the Serbs. For example, Roy Medvedev charged that "from the point of view of Russian people," the

27 Medvedev, "Brothers in the Balkans." My emphasis.

Serbs were being "massacred." Indeed, elites frequently claimed that it was actually the Serbs in Yugoslavia who were the victims of "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing." Russian Nobel laureate Alexandr Solzhenitsyn saw "no difference in the behavior of NATO and Hitler." Foreign Minister Ivanov, for example, decried NATO's "undisguised genocide against the peoples of Yugoslavia," repeatedly demanding that all those responsible for the "slaughter" be tried by the Hague International Tribunal. NATO's actions, he argued "can be qualified as criminal in accordance with international humanitarian law. And these actions fully fall within the competence of the

29 Medvedev, "Why They Say Nyet." Yegor Stroev, Speaker of the Federation Council, also referred to NATO bombing as a "massacre." *Parlamentskaia gazeta*, 31 March 1999, p. 3.

30 Pavel Felgengauer, a widely respected military analyst stated, "While parading peace NATO is prepared to cleanse Kosovo of Serb and other non-Albanian civilians... [The U.S. Defense Department stated] that 'if people want to leave, they'll be allowed, they will not be forced out.' But ethnic cleansers always use that phrase. Any Russian 'cooperating' with NATO in Kosovo will be seen as an ally of ethnic cleansers by many back home." Felgengauer, "Serbs Sold Down the River," *Moscow Times*, 10 June 1999. See also comments by Iurii Luzhkov, the mayor of Moscow, in AFP, "Thousands of Russians Rally for May Day, solidarity with Yugoslavia," Johnson's Russia List [hereafter JRL] 3627, 1 May 1999.

31 Reuters, "Solzhenitsyn says NATO 'like Hitler' in Yugoslavia," in JRL 3321, 3 June 1999. Solzhenitsyn also condemned the UN war crimes tribunal indictment of Milosevic, claiming that the court was "biased" and "did what it was told by the politicians."

International Tribunal on the former Yugoslavia."\textsuperscript{33} Ivanov, however, like most Russians during the conflict, dismissed Western claims that the imperative of that same "international humanitarian law" required action against Serbia.

Such charges were often supported by exaggerated descriptions of the level of human and material destruction from the bombing: "With the help of topographical maps one of the most picturesque countries in Europe is being systematically destroyed, hundreds and thousands of civilians are dying, and enterprises, hospitals, and historical and cultural monuments are being demolished. Europe has not experienced such barbarity since the times of World War II."\textsuperscript{34} Early in the conflict the Russian foreign ministry and popular commentators accused NATO of killing "thousands of completely innocent people" in Yugoslavia; A group of prominent Russian veterans charged NATO with "using munitions with radioactive elements," causing "enormous ecological destruction of the country"—numbers and claims which have never been independently verified.\textsuperscript{35} Even after the bombing ended, and despite independent confirmation to the contrary, the Russian foreign ministry claimed that "Yugoslavia has


\textsuperscript{34} Vladimir Lapskii, "NATO is Playing, Everyone is Losing," Rossiiskaia gazeta, 26 May 1999.

been completely devastated, the damage to its national economy and infrastructure exceeds all the destruction seen during World War II."36

C. Exaggerated Russian Benevolence

The second major Russian historical belief that shaped Russian perceptions is an exaggerated sense of past Russian benevolence and self-sacrifice on behalf of the Balkan Slavs. The popular Russian history view constantly portrays Russia as the savior of the Slavs, even when they repeatedly worked against Serb interests. The Russian response to the crisis in fact often expressed a view of Russia as the savior and defender of the Serbs. As Medvedev argued,

It was Russia that helped Serbia attain its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. In all the European wars of the past 300 years, Serbia has been Russia's ally. It was because of Serbia that Russia went to war against Austria-Hungary in 1914. Serbia has never opposed Russia, and it remains our ally outside the former Soviet Union. All Russians know this from their history lessons at school.37

36 Soobshchenie: "20 iunia NATO ofitsial'no ob'явila o prekrashchenii svoei voennoi operatsii protiv Jugoslavii," 21 June 1999 [www.ln.mid.ru/website/brp_4.nsf/]. One journalist reported soon after the war, "Most visitors to Yugoslavia say that although industrial infrastructure, power stations and bridges were wrecked by NATO, most areas where civilians live and circulate looked untouched. No widespread devastation was seen, they say." Reuters, 21 June 1999, as reported in JRL 3354, 21 June 1999. Even in Kosovo itself, NATO commander Gen. Mike Jackson "was surprised by the lack of damage encountered by his KFOR troops." See Andrew Gilligan, "Russia, not bombs, brought end to war in Kosovo, says Jackson," The Electronic Telegraph (UK), 1 August 1999.

37 Medvedev, "Brothers in the Balkans."
This view helps explain in part why Russia reacted with such outrage at the NATO intervention. From this particular historical view Russians see themselves as solely responsible for the Balkans—for their little brothers in their own "backyard." Thus, they saw Western intervention as great affront to their "historical role." The West had no right to interfere there.

More broadly, though, the Russian response to the crisis revealed a view of Russia as a noble, selfless defender of world peace. Russians repeatedly attacked the West's reckless and callous disregard for international institutions, which jeopardized peace and stability. "In protecting today the right of Yugoslavia to sovereignty," argued Ivanov, "we are protecting the future of the world and of Europe against the latest form of neo-colonialism, the so-called NATO-colonialism."38

Explicit comparisons with the West also revealed Russian righteousness. As former President Yeltsin commented, "Morally, we are above the Americans."39 Of course, this self-image—much like a similar American self-image—reveals a great lack of self-awareness. As Yeltsin continued: "Of course, it is an unprecedented case in international practice since World War II that such an aggression be unleashed in such a fashion . . . . This is the gravest mistake and they will be made to answer for it later."

Similarly, Ivanov repeatedly referred to the crisis as the first "act of aggression against a


sovereign state" in Europe "since World War II." "Never before over the past decades has Europe been so close to such serious trials." Yet, both men overlooked the Soviet armed interventions in Europe in 1956 (against Hungary) and 1968 (against Czechoslovakia), and the serious Cold War crises over Berlin in 1948-49 and again in 1961.

The much larger sense of Russian self-righteousness found in its interpretation of Russian and Soviet wars and interventions generally, has clearly helped shape the view that Russian foreign policies in the world as largely virtuous. Thus, because the Russians supported the Serbs in 1999, Western claims that the Serbs were behaving badly, in the Russian view, could not possibly be right. In conjunction with other historical views, such as the exaggerated sense of predatory Western policies, discussed below, the Russian reaction becomes much easier to understand.

**D. Exaggerated Western Predation**

The final Russian historical view that shaped Russian perceptions in the Balkans is the exaggerated perception of past Western predation towards Serbia and Russia. This is a view that is found not just in Russia's view of its Balkan wars and interventions, but throughout Russia's treatment of its past wars and interventions more generally. The Western powers, and particularly the US, are assumed to have only the

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most nefarious aims and interests in the Balkans and toward Russia itself. The Russians assumed that the Serbs had done nothing to warrant NATO's response, and were innocent victims of Western "aggression." As noted above, Russia saw itself as Serbia's defender and savior, and—unlike the West—the true upholder of international law, cooperative norms, and global peace.

Indeed, the Russian response to the crisis revealed a sense of profound, almost paranoid insecurity. Russian observers saw Russia as perpetually under attack from the West. Many argued that the attack on Yugoslavia was motivated primarily to intimidate, threaten or attack Russia itself. According to historian Roy Medvedev, "Many Russians believe that the destruction of Serbia was . . . intended to break Russia's will, to put a stop to the integration process of Slav peoples." The belief that the West was using the NATO action to directly threaten and perhaps even destroy Russia itself was not limited to the extreme right or left. Liberal Duma deputy Alexei Arbatov, for example, noted that "the slogan 'Serbia today, Russia tomorrow' has now become the main one for Russia. The great mass of the population of Russia is convinced that Russia cannot tolerate Serbia being suppressed, for in this case Russia will indeed be next." Nezavisimaja gazeta declared that "Washington knowingly decided on this open provocation as regards Russia. Russia's position was absolutely crystal-clear. Now it will be child's play to finish Russia off—it will be enough to find a flaw in

41 Medvedev, "Why They Say Nyet."
Moscow's irritated behavior and, based on this, restore and inflame anti-Russian moods."

Many Russians drew parallels between Kosovo and Russia's own hot-bed of ethnic separatism, Chechnya: "What Americans are doing in Yugoslavia is a universal pattern the United States will use in all other domestic conflicts in weak or weakening countries. Is the Kosovo conflict any different from Chechnya? It is not." Yet, such claims run in the face of the fact that during the bloody three-year Chechen war, the US and other Western countries expressed little interest in the conflict and, in fact, openly supported Yeltsin through the course of Russian's disastrous military campaign.

Such views embodied a profound insecurity almost bordering on a paranoid "fear of encirclement." Indeed, newspaper headlines proclaimed, "Russia is Surrounded" by foreign enemies, while they reported that "foreign military intelligence services are increasing their presence near Russia's borders, which suggests that Russia may become another Yugoslavia in the near future." Many specifically saw NATO's primary aim

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42 Vladimir Katin, "Evropa utratila nezavisimost' mneniiia," Nezavisimaja gazeta, 1 April 1999, p. 6. The Russian image of the West as anti-Slav is also revealed in the often-heard (and valid) argument that NATO ignored the "ethnic cleansing" of Serbs from Kraina. The implication of this argument is that NATO bombing was motivated not out of an inherent interest in averting humanitarian disasters, but out of a desire to victimize Serbs. Of course such arguments always neglect the callous and contemptuous treatment of those refugees by the Milosevic regime itself. See "700,000 Serbs Without Basic Rights," RFE/RL Newsline 3, no. 132, 9 June 1999.


in the conflict as establishing a beach-head in the Balkans for future attack on Russia.\textsuperscript{45} Indeed, such a view is consistent with public opinion polls. One such poll found that 71 percent of Russians saw the establishment of US and NATO military bases as the ultimate goal of the bombing campaign.\textsuperscript{46} A roughly similar number believed that NATO military action in Yugoslavia was a direct threat to Russia's security.\textsuperscript{47} When asked if Russia "has any foreign enemies who want to unleash war on our country," nearly half of all Russians agreed.\textsuperscript{48}

Claiming that the West's "hidden aim" was to destroy Russia also reflects a highly narcissistic worldview, a Russian image of itself as an exceptional great power who is the object of envy and disdain by others. A military conflict near its borders, therefore, could only logically be directed at Russia itself. It is not surprising then that Russians widely dismissed the stated Western motives for the bombing campaign: i.e., that NATO action was carried out in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, and

\textsuperscript{45} Lapskii, "NATO is Playing."

\textsuperscript{46} VTsIOM, 5-6 June 1999.

\textsuperscript{47} The same question was asked twice in April and once in June, at the very end of the conflict. In April, 70-73 percent of Russians viewed the NATO actions as a direct threat to Russia, while 19 percent did not. In June the figures had adjusted slightly to 64 percent and 24 percent, respectively. FOM TV no. 51, 5-6 June 1999.

\textsuperscript{48} FOM TV no. 43, "Est' li u Rossii soiuzniki i vragi," 10-11 April 1999 [www.fom.ru/week/t1043_2.htm].
then to limit the extent of such a catastrophe once NATO bombing began. For many, atrocities against Kosovar Albanians were simply a "pretext" for the Americans to carry out their nefarious designs against Serbia and Russia.\textsuperscript{49} Polls showed that only 14 percent of Russians believed that NATO action was motivated "to end the bloodletting and persecution of Albanians in Kosovo."\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{III. Competing Explanations and Counter-Arguments}

The most common explanation for Russia's reaction to the crisis is that it was simply a backlash against years of failed market reforms and the expansion of NATO to include former East Bloc states. It was these events in post-Soviet Russia, the argument goes, that caused such vitriolic antipathy toward the West. When NATO bombing began, these feelings simply came to the surface.\textsuperscript{51}

While these events certainly helped consolidate anti-Western feelings, the explanation is incomplete and unsatisfying. First, the argument assumes that anti-Western feelings would naturally follow from failed market reforms and NATO expansion. However, it is just as likely that the opposite reaction would have occurred. The Russians could have reacted to economic collapse with a high degree of self-

\textsuperscript{49} Lapskii, "NATO is Playing."

\textsuperscript{50} VTsIOM, 5-6 June 1999, 1,836 respondents over age 18 in large cities (Oblast centers), [ns.wciom.ru/EDITION/opros_56.htm].

criticism, rather than seeking a scapegoat in the West. NATO expansion could have
been viewed by Russians as relatively benign, given the low probability of NATO
invading Russia. Therefore, it could just as easily have elicited resigned indifference
rather than heightened insecurity.

Second, the argument fails to explain the unyielding, often illogical and irrational
sympathy for Milosevic and the Serbs during the crisis. While some would argue that it
was simply a manifestation of anti-Westernism rather than any love for Serbia, it still
fails to explain why other recent military forays elsewhere by Western countries elicited
much less vociferous reaction on the part of the Russian public and elites.

Another popular argument recognizes the "irrationality" of the Russian response
to the crisis, but places the source of the Russian reaction in its sense of obligation to its
"Slavic brothers." Thus, the Russians really did see the true nature of the Milosevic
regime, they did know that Serbs were carrying out ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and they
did realize that support for Milosevic was unpopular in the West and therefore
particularly provocative. However, the argument goes, they simply didn't care about
criminal Serb conduct because their "Slavic brothers" needed their help. This argument,
however, is unsupported by the available evidence. Russians and Serbs were not
particularly close during the Cold War and relations have not warmed consider ance since
its end. Before 1999, one would have been hard-pressed to find any sort of sympathy
for Serbs, either among the Russian public or elites. That Russians would choose to
ignore Serb crimes and defend Serbia, who was neither a particularly close friend or an
ally, given the consequences of that decision, simply defies credibility. In fact, as
shown above it is clear that the Russians really did believe claims of Serb innocence—a perception that was shaped to a large degree by interpretations of history. It was those perceptions of Serb innocence that clearly shaped Russia’s response to the crisis.

IV. Conclusion

The Russian response to the 1999 Balkan crisis provides another important illustration of the malevolent effects of pernicious historical ideas. As shown here, Russian sympathies and antipathies expressed in the Kosovo crisis existed well before market reforms failed and NATO accepted new members. The response was primarily the result of false or distorted beliefs, assumptions and images found in popular Russian views of history. Those historical views—pursued for decades through Russian mass public education—shaped Russian public and elite perceptions, and misperceptions, of the foreign policy motives and interests of Russia, Serbia and the West.

The evidence strongly supports the explanation offered here. It is well documented that the Russian response to the crisis—both rhetorically and in terms of actual Russian policy choices—was characterized and motivated by significant misperceptions of Balkan realities and Western interests and motives. Both empirical and deductive evidence also supports the claim made here that Russian historical ideas were the main source of Russian misperceptions in 1999. First, there is an obvious
symmetry between the Russian images of Serbia, Russia and the West expressed in its popular view of Russia's past involvement in the Balkans—and in wars and interventions more generally—and the ideas and images expressed in response to the Kosovo crisis. In other words, Russians reacted to the conflict in Yugoslavia in a way that was highly consistent with their view of history. The often false and distorted beliefs, assumptions and images found in the popular portrayal of Russia's past in the Balkans clearly mirror the same beliefs, assumptions and images found in the Russian response to the Kosovo crisis.

Second, there is strong deductive evidence that points to historical beliefs as the main source of Russian misperceptions. Recall that a state's particular dominant, consensus view on historical events—especially those that are codified and formally disseminated through mass education—clearly influences how a state sees itself and the world, whom it views as its friends and enemies, and what their motives and interests are. In other words, historical ideas influence foreign policy by shaping the perceptions of policymakers and publics. Recall also that social psychological research has shown that individuals are "cognitive misers" who fit new evidence into existing frameworks instead of updating their general beliefs as new evidence arrives. Historical beliefs often act as lenses that shape views of current events. A distorted "lens"—i.e., a false understanding of the past—will distort one's understanding of the present. In the Balkan case, Russians often tailored facts about Serb and Western conduct to fit into their existing historical framework: a highly legitimated, widely purveyed historical view of past Serb and Western conduct. As shown here and in chapter 5, this view is
dominated by highly distorted and pernicious facts and images. It is no surprise then that Russian perceptions of events in the Balkans in 1999 were equally distorted. For example, the assumption that the West could never use military force for humanitarian purposes follows logically from the Russian historical view of the West. As a result, Russians never critically examined the West's motives and claims about Serbian atrocities.

In addition, Russians occasionally took correct lessons from the past (for example, that Serbs have historically been poorly treated and therefore deserved to be defended by Russia) but applied those lessons to a current Balkan reality that was quite different from the past. Thus, as the literature on the political uses of historical analogies has well documented, even a correct grasp of the past can cause distortion in one's grasp of the present if the present does not resemble the past in important respects. Just as distorted history that is remembered creates distorted lenses through which society and elites view contemporary events, so too can correct historical lessons distort contemporary reality when misapplied. History provides valuable and useful lessons when it is correctly understood, and if the present resembles the past in ways that are salient. For example, sympathy for the Serbs follows logically from the Russian portrayal of the historical persecution of the Serbs and other Slavs (perfectly accurate) and Russia's glorious role in defending them throughout history (not particularly accurate). As a result of both beliefs, the Russians constantly afforded Milosevic and the Serbs the benefit of the doubt throughout the Kosovo crisis.
The particular construction of history, therefore, shapes perceptions that influence behavior. Misperceptions may lead to behavior that seems irrational or inconsistent with strategic interests and structural realities. Why, for example, should Russia be so loyal to Serbia? Strategically, there is little reason. The only feasible explanation lies in how it has traditionally viewed its relationship to Serbia. Similarly, the vitriolic anti-Western response cannot be explained solely by reference to recent events such as economic collapse or NATO expansion. Rather, given how Russia views its history, it is clear that the public and elites have long harbored suspicion and resentment of the West. Russia’s view of history has led it to see the West as aggressive and ill-intentioned, to see itself as perpetually insecure, and its friends, such as Serbia, as frequently victimized and unfairly attacked. This explains the hostile reaction not only to Kosovo, but to NATO expansion as well.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION:
THEORETICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation has argued that pernicious historical ideas, widely purveyed through mass public education, can be a real source of international conflict. Grossly distorted popular historical views of Russia's past involvement in wars, conflicts and military interventions—and the ideas, images and beliefs that they embody and reflect—have instilled resentments and shaped perceptions that have precipitated and exacerbated foreign policy conflicts. Far from serving simply as excuses for policy choices made in response to material interests and structural constraints of the international system, ideas—in this case, ideas about the past—can independently affect state behavior. The study also helps us better understand how historical ideas lead to conflict, and, more specifically, clarifies the relationship between historical ideas and conflict-causing misperceptions. It has also offered a method for evaluating historical ideas and discerning and measuring the intensity of their perniciousness.

In addition, there are a number of broader theoretical implications and policy prescriptions that follow from this study. In particular, this chapter discusses this study's insights into constructivist theories of international conflict, the sources and dynamics of misperceptions, and debates about the future of Russian political development. It also presents a range of policy prescriptions for addressing the problem
of pernicious history—suggesting ways that Russian, US and Western policies might prevent pernicious ideas from emerging or dampen their more virulent effects.

I. Theoretical Implications

A. Constructivist International Relations Theory and International Conflict

Each of the case studies in chapters 6-8 demonstrates a real and perceptible relationship between ideas and international behavior. This is a major proposition of constructivist approaches to international relations, which focus on the powerful role of norms, ideas, beliefs and values in the international system. Constructivists argue convincingly that such ideas are an important determinant of a state's interests and preferences, and hence of its foreign policy behavior, independent of structural constraints of the international system.\(^1\) However, one shortcoming of that literature is that it does not seek to explain where these ideas might come from, nor has constructivist international relations theory seriously considered the explanatory power of historical ideas themselves. In that respect, this study moves beyond constructivist approaches to international relations. Specifically, the study's findings shed light on at least one significant source of those ideas. It has pointed to history and historical

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interpretation as a major determinant of those beliefs, values, and assumptions that help influence state interests, and thus affect policy behavior.

Further, by examining case studies of foreign policy conflict, this dissertation makes constructivist arguments more relevant to the study of international security, which seeks to understand the causes and dynamics of conflict and war. One weakness of constructivist international relations theory is that it has ignored the explanatory power of pernicious ideas that may increase conflict and war. Instead, the literature has focused primarily on "good" ideas—positive international norms or values—for example, the international consensus against Apartheid, the ideas which led to the collapse of communism, etc. Yet, it is precisely the potentially pernicious ideas, most closely associated with conflict and war, that should be our greatest concern. Focusing on "false" or "bad" ideas makes the constructivist literature more relevant to questions of international security.

B. Sources of Misperceptions

The case studies examined here offer important theoretical insight into our current understanding of the relationship between national misperceptions and international

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conflict and violence. First, each of the conflicts explored in Part three of the
dissertation exhibits some form of misperception associated with interpretations of
history. Existing work on the sources of misperceptions has almost exclusively focused
on psychological or bureaucratic/organizational causes. Few have looked at the nature
of ideas, beliefs and values of a society—particularly as they are purveyed through the
educational system—as a determinant of misperceptions. This study identifies a third
source of misperceptions, namely ideational influences, and historical ideas in
particular.

At the same time it extends and refines traditional psychological explanations
for the roots of misperceptions. To the degree the misperceptions literature has focused
on historical beliefs, it has looked almost exclusively at the abuse by decision-makers of
historical analogies, and has focused primarily on personal experiential history. The

3 Psychological approaches to national misperception include Robert Jervis,
Perception and Misperception in International Politics; Deborah Welch Larson, Origins
of Containment: A Psychological Explanation (Princeton: Princeton University Press,
1985); Yuen Foong Khong, Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the
examine bureaucratic and organizational sources of misperceptions include Jack
Snyder, The Cult of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914
(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984) and idem., Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics
and International Ambition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). Work that seeks to
test various theories of misperception includes Jane Kellett-Cramer, "National Security
Panics: Testing Theories of National Misperceptions" (Ph.D. dissertation, MIT, in
progress).

4 For example, Jervis, Chapter 6, "How Decision-Makers Learn From History,"
in Perception and Misperception, pp. 217-87; and Khong, Analogies at War.
case studies in chapters 6-7 offer a much broader and richer picture of the way in which historical ideas—such as those that are found in textbooks—can promote, through cognitive processes, conflict-causing misperceptions. Thus, this study builds upon existing theories of misperception to create a more complete understanding of how and when they occur.

C. **Russian Nationalism and Democratic Development**

While this study has focused primarily on the relationship between Russians' pernicious historical beliefs and foreign policy conflicts, there are several important implications for our understanding of Russian politics and foreign policy, generally, and the prospects for democratic development in Russia.

Specifically, the study reveals certain conceptual weakness in many analyses of Russian politics and foreign policy. First, many recent analyses tend to see Russian policy decisions motivated primarily by crass material interests: an image of financial oligarchs and corrupt politicians. But this study shows that certain political and historical ideas and beliefs—not ideology—continue to shape interests and perceptions that influence political decision-making.

Second, while the post-Soviet period has brought about a healthy diversity of political opinion in Russia, there has been a tendency to focus on the differences between groups, rather than the similarities among them. Yet, the belief that Russian society is deeply fractured has led us to miss those persistent, commonly-held beliefs that can affect political outcomes. As the Myth of 39-40, The Myth of the Great
Patriotic War, the Myth of Slavic Brotherhood and other widely-purveyed historical ideas demonstrate, there are indeed important commonly held beliefs, assumptions and images that cut across ideological and socio-economic lines in Russia. So, rather than dismissing nationalists and communists as extremists, and the ideas they espouse as unrepresentative of all Russians, analysts should look beyond the labels and at the ideas themselves.

Indeed, as the case studies have shown, certain ideas about Russia and others that emerge from Russia's interpretation of its past wars and military interventions—a strong sense of victimization, grievance over past perceived injustices, significant self-glorification, etc.—are dangerous because they can foster conflict-promoting misperceptions. But they also provide insight into the ideas that Russian publics and elites have stewed in for decades; some of the ideas that have fertilized Russian minds. It is these pernicious ideas and the emotions they instill that are ripe for exploitation by demagogues and extremists. The popular claim of the uniqueness of the Russian experience, for example, provides a particular historical archetype that can be used by some segments of society in appeals to, say, authoritarian rule or extreme responses to crisis. To praise Russian achievements of the Red Army, for example, while minimizing the negative consequences of those actions, sends a message that these are appropriate "Russian" responses to extreme crisis. Glossing over more unsavory aspects of the past as a way of showing respect to both the heroes and the victims, or rationalizing such behavior post hoc as necessary for the greater good, is not too far off
from the Bolshevik justification for terror in the name of revolution. In general, a
Russia that sets itself apart from others and claims that its historical experience is
wholly unique and incomparable, rather than as part of a larger world history, or that it
is fundamentally incapable of being understood by others, or that others are ungrateful
for what it has sacrificed for them, is not one that inspires confidence.

Third, the study questions a popular assumption that 1991—the official end of
the Soviet state—marked a great break in Russian thinking about itself, its neighbors
and the world. Certainly there have been profound changes over the past decade in
terms of the ideas and beliefs that are considered legitimate in politics and social
discourse. But, the study of historical ideas and mythmaking in Russia suggest that
there are some dangerous ideas and beliefs that have persisted—ideas that are entirely
incongruous with a vision of Russia as a liberal, democratic, modern European state.
Yet, there's a tendency to focus only on those new ideas that have been adopted, and
those that have been abandoned, rather than those that have persisted. As this study
shows, those persistent ideas are equally as important and worthy of attention.

Specifically, Russia's lack of historical honesty, and requisite contrition, can
likely be an impediment to the development of Russian democratic and civic values,
beliefs and practices. How a state and society confronts its past—whether it does so
honestly and self-critically, or whitewashes or omits more controversial topics, can
speak directly to that state's commitment to democratic development. Critical self-
evaluation is a key element of democratic beliefs and practices. As David Aspin has
written, "What is remarkable is that, of all forms of political ideology or arrangement, the activities of clarification, criticism and correction are perhaps the chief characteristic features of 'democracy' as a form of government that we most commonly seek to identify: its constant concern for, and preoccupation with, self-examination, self-criticism, self-review and self-assessment." Therefore, the general failure to deal honestly and critically with the past is not only a source of conflict, but can be a barrier to the development of democratic and civic values.

In addition to self-criticism, the principle of accountability is also another fundamental feature of democratic values and practice that is jeopardized by historical whitewashing and pernicious mythmaking. As Aryeh Neier has written,

The important point is that accountability should not be understood or judged merely as a political tactic. Accountability means recognizing the moral responsibilities that arise from the past, even if little can be done at a given moment to enforce those responsibilities. Throughout the world, dictatorships have committed unspeakable cruelties. The ideological justification for their crimes has commonly been utilitarian—some variant on the need to serve the greater good, whether that is defined as "building socialism," as in the case of Stalin or Mao, or stopping terrorism, as in Argentina, or defeating a communist insurgency, as in Guatemala. To demand accountability, especially so far as exposing the truth is concerned, is to insist that people not be sacrificed for the greater good; that their suffering should be disclosed, and the responsibility of the state and its agents for causing that suffering be made clear.

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For those who hold such views, the respect for the rights of each person inherent in such an accounting is central to a democratic society. To the extent that a society or government dismisses the principle of accountability as unnecessary, it undermines its possibilities of becoming a true democracy, in which citizens can feel confident that their rights are firmly protected.6

The literature that explores the question of "transitional justice"—i.e., how post-authoritarian states address past human rights abuses (trials, truth commissions, apologies, restitution, etc.) in the context of fragile democracy—is still in its infancy and is fertile ground for empirical comparative research.7 Yet, there are nonetheless some persuasive empirical studies within that literature that support the contention made here: there exists a positive relationship between a post-authoritarian state and society's willingness to confront its past—particularly a painful past marked by violence and great crimes—and the strength of its nascent democratic institutions and values.8 To the degree that history education performs a political socializing role, then history education and history textbooks that uncritically glorify the nation's past or gloss over

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"unpleasant" events, can significantly inhibit the development of democratic values in future generations. Yet, even absent a significant socializing role, history education and textbooks that lack honest, self-critical, self-reflective ideas are a good indicator of the degree to which post-authoritarian states and societies have embraced—or failed to embrace—democratic principles of self-criticism and historical accountability.\(^9\)

What this study reveals, however, is not encouraging. Indeed, the lack of honest self-critical interpretations of negative events portrayed in Russian history textbooks is

\(^9\) This study, therefore, adds an ideational indicator to the many traditional institutional indicators of democratic strength—the holding of competitive elections, the development of political parties and representative legislative institutions, etc.—found in studies on democratization. It assumes that infusing societies with democratic ideas and beliefs—building a democratic culture—is as central to the consolidation of democracy as the building of democratic institutions. To the degree institutional approaches take ideas into account, they rely primarily on opinion polls that purport to measure knowledge, understanding and support for democratic institutions. Assuming history textbooks are years in the making, are assiduously reviewed and evaluated by a wide group of individuals, and then remain in use for several years before revision or replacement, they are an excellent indicator of core values and beliefs. At a minimum they can clearly complement other approaches, such as opinion polling, that seeks to identify beliefs and values that may likely influence political behavior. On the classic indicators of democracy see Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971). These indicators are commonly used in analyses of Russian democracy as well. See, for example, Jeffrey W. Hahn, ed., *Democratization in Russia: The Development of Legislative Institutions* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); Robert W. Orttung, *From Leningrad to St. Petersburg: Democratization in a Russian City* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); Michael McFaul, "Democracy Unfolds in Russia," *Current History* 96, no. 612 (October 1997), pp. 319-325; idem., "Russia: The Sky Has Not Fallen," *Washington Post*, 19 May 1995; idem., "Pessimistic Paunch Proven Wrong," *St. Petersburg Times (Russia)*, 9 July 1996, p. 10. One work that looks in part at ideas, but entirely ignores the content of education, is Nicolai Petro, *Rebirth of Russian Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).
in fact representative of a general trend in Russian popular discourse about historical events. The continued refusal of Russians to acknowledge Soviet misdeeds in Poland, the Baltic States and Finland in 1939-40 is just one example of many of the general lack of interest and concern over Soviet-era crimes. Russia remains one of the few post-communist countries that has not seriously addressed the issue of transitional justice. There has been no official public accounting of Soviet crimes; no truth commissions; no serious trials; and very few memorials to Soviet crimes. Russian elites and publics frequently dismiss such efforts as serving no purpose other than needlessly "digging up the past." For example, a UNESCO report in 1999 noted that popular interest in reappraising the Soviet past that emerged during the Gorbachev period has, over the last several years, considerably waned. Opinion polls, for example, show that more and more people think there is too much talk of Stalinist crimes.


12 Over the last several years polls have routinely showed a great deal of popular regret for dissolution of the USSR. One January 1999 Public Opinion Fund poll found this view held by 85 per cent of respondents. See Interfax, "About 85 Percent of Russians Regret USSR Dissolution," 28 January 1999. See also, Interfax, "Poll: Stalin Takes First Place Among Outstanding Statesmen," 20 April 2000; Richard Beeston, "Golden Age of Brezhnev," The Times, 2 August 1999.
the future" instead of "dwelling on the past." Yet, if the literature on transitional justice is any indication, such an attitude could seriously inhibit the emergence of democratic and civic values in Russia.

II. Policy Implications: Truth-Telling in History

Given the potential dangers of pernicious historical mythmaking, what can be done to limit such ideas from emerging or to ameliorate its more malevolent effects, both generally and in Russia? One of the important implications that follows from this study’s findings is that truth-telling in history can inhibit the kinds of emotional resentment and misperceptions that lead to interstate conflict. It has thus revealed a highly manipulable cause of interstate conflict. We know that historical beliefs are not necessarily immutable, but can be changed over time. Examining the full range of efforts required to bring about that change is beyond the scope of this study, but it is worth mentioning one of the most important: To the degree that history education and history textbooks are a major repository and a source of popular historical beliefs, efforts to de-chauvinize, de-mythologize and commmonize history education are a

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necessary part of any effort to prevent the emergence of pernicious beliefs and the conflict-causing misperceptions that follow from them.\textsuperscript{14}

While historical ideas are not immutable, de-chauvinizing history, particularly in education, requires conscious effort and commitment on the part of the state, its neighbors and the international community as a whole. National history is a unique national prerogative that is extremely resistant to intervention and manipulation, particularly from abroad (the exception, of course, being direct military occupation). But efforts over the past half century have demonstrated that historical beliefs in education can be de-chauvinized and commonized. As noted above, the assumption of the danger of pernicious history and the need for truth-telling in history has been the motivating principle of international textbook revision efforts, which have been designed to dampen nationalist bias and extremism in history and ease long-standing tensions between states. Such efforts—international conferences and workshops of historians and educators—which have been carried out regularly in Europe for nearly 50 years, have achieved some notable successes.\textsuperscript{15} In recent years, as national borders

\textsuperscript{14} While there are likely a wide variety of factors that have influenced the de-chauvinization of historical beliefs, changes in education nonetheless remain critical. On explanations for the elimination of chauvinist and nationalist history see P. M. Kennedy, "The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970," in Historians in Politics, eds. Walter Laqueur and George Mosse (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1974), pp. 329-52; Stephen Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," International Security 15, no. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 23-25.

\textsuperscript{15} While there exist few studies that have systematically evaluated the success of nearly a century of textbook exchanges and international textbook revision efforts, limited studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that such efforts can prove beneficial in
have become more porous, the content of national education has become increasingly
susceptible to change. Most notably, George Soros's recent philanthropic efforts at
ameliorating gross distortions and bias in history education. Past efforts in Europe, for
example, particularly between France and Germany and Poland and Germany have been
quite successful in eliminating pernicious history from their educational systems.
Vigand's study of the commonization of history in Scandinavia clearly shows that
when there is a high degree of cooperation among historians, textbook authors, teachers,
and publishers textbooks can be greatly improved and become more objective. There is
no doubt that the work of the Norden Associations on textbook reform has affected the
content of the textbooks published in those countries. Indeed, in some of those
countries it is mandatory that schools only select textbooks that have been approved by
that nation's Norden Association. See Haakon Vigander, "History Textbook Revision
in the Nordic Countries," in History Teaching and History Textbook Revision, eds. Otto
Ernst Schüddekopf, Edouard Bruley, E.H. Dance and Haakon Vigander (Strasbourg:
Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, 1967), pp. 43-64. Also
Volker R. Berghahn and Hanna Schissler, "Introduction. History Textbooks and
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Pertti Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision by and under the Auspices of
combat intolerance and xenophobia and to promote an "intercultural society" in the
activities of the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation, 1969-1983
(Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Co-operation, 1985).

Periods of détente also allowed for limited Soviet and American textbook
exchanges during the Cold War, though participants saw the impact on textbook
content—particularly in the Soviet Union—as negligible. See Howard D. Mehlinger,
"School Textbooks: Weapons for the Cold War," in School and Society in Tsarist and
Soviet Russia, ed. Ben Eklof (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 224-47; Howard D.
Mehlinger and Alexander Rabinovitch, "Teaching About Russia and the Soviet Union,"
revising history textbooks in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have defied the odds to some degree.

Yet, even if these efforts alone cannot prevent pernicious ideas from emerging and achieving popular legitimation in societies, historical revision in education is still a good place to start in order to ameliorate the more malevolent effects of pernicious historical ideas. As noted above, the textbook interpretation of history is an important signal to other states of the views that societies and elites hold. Truth-telling in education, therefore, would be vital to minimizing misperceptions that result from distorted and pernicious history.

The implications for post-Soviet conflicts are self-evident. Russia needs to begin by addressing past Soviet misdeeds with greater honesty in educational curricula and textbooks. To achieve more honest reflection about these events in Russia, and especially in Russian public history education, is a difficult, but not impossible task. George Soros's Open Society Institute (OSI) has already achieved some degree of success (albeit minor) through its textbook publishing endeavors in Russia and the former Soviet Union. But it has been an effort fraught with controversy. Russian nationalists and Communists have attacked Soros and the history textbooks that OSI has

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16 On Soros's earlier efforts see Otto Latsis, Transformatsija gumanitarnogo obrazovaniia v Rossii: Na puti k novoi shkole (Moscow: Interpraks, 1995).
published in Russia, moves that have led to books being condemned by regional legislatures and increased self-censorship among some textbook authors.\textsuperscript{17}

An important solution may lie in promoting the free-flow of ideas and information. Societies and states are often genuinely ignorant of the harm that their distorted version of history can cause, and Russia is no exception. In those cases, providing information may be sufficient to prompt efforts at more self-critical examination of history. In those cases, work by NGO's and international organizations can often be successful in providing resources and information to make the necessary changes, particularly in history education. In addition, a solution may also lie in promoting regular historians' conferences and textbook exchanges. Such efforts, while ubiquitous in Europe since the end of World War II, have been few and far between in the former-Soviet Union since 1991. Increasingly when such conferences do take place, certain important groups of historians are not invited, for example, or rarely participate.\textsuperscript{18} Such efforts need to occur on a regular basis with a sustained professional commitment in order to be successful, something that has been lacking in Russia.

\textsuperscript{17} Some history textbook authors that I interviewed in 1996 admitted that they self-censored themselves in order to meet the tacit demands of publishers and the "Expert Council" which evaluates textbooks for official Ministry recommendation. For more on this see David Mendeloff, "Demystifying Russian Textbooks," ISRE Newsletter on Russian and Eurasian Education 6, no. 1 (Spring 1997).

\textsuperscript{18} This is certainly the case with Baltic historians. Sulev Valdmaa, Director, Civic Education Centre, Jaan Tonisson Institute, interview with author, Tallinn, Estonia, 4 June 1996; Mare Oja, Chief Specialist on History Education, Estonian Ministry of Education, interview with author, Tallinn, Estonia, 5 June 1996.
However, when historians and educators do meet, there is often a tendency to avoid the tough historical issues and disputes that need to addressed. This is often a major problem with many of the education reform projects funded and organized by international organizations and NGO’s. Even those, such as UNESCO, whose original mission in part was to foster the de-chauvinization of history teaching and textbooks, have increasingly focused on other, "unemotional" aspects of educational reform. The most worrisome aspect is the growing emphasis on civics education to the exclusion of history education. Given the importance of self-evaluative history and historical accountability to democracy, history education should be a vitally important component of a "civics education" curriculum. Unfortunately, those promoting civics education in the formerly-communist states, including Russia—educationists, civil-society activists, and the international aid agencies and philanthropic organizations that support them—have largely neglected the content of history education. While basic history education in many of those states, including Russia, still whitewashes key events and is lacking in genuine self-criticism, proponents of "democracy education" enthusiastically encourage the development of civics textbooks and curricula. Rather than seeking to instill democratic values, these textbooks and curricula aim to teach "democracy" largely by describing its institutions. Clearly, a strong civics curriculum without a healthy history education, i.e., one which is based on serious self-evaluation, is likely doomed to failure.19

19 Even Soros's initiatives have been somewhat guilty of this. His early initiatives were designed to revise educational curricula and textbooks across the board,
In the current economic climate, linking Western foreign aid to Russia, as well as participation in international institutions, to cooperative truth-telling efforts might be the best approach.\textsuperscript{20} The potential benefits of such efforts, if Western Europe and Scandinavia are any example, could be quite great. However, it is apparent that the importance of history and history education has been lost on many US and Western foreign policymaking elites as well. Ever since the major allied efforts at reeducation in post-War Japan and Germany, Western governments have not considered de-chauvinization of education—particularly in the former Soviet bloc countries—to be a vital foreign policy goal. In fact, Western foreign policy practitioners and publics should begin to take the content of popular history much more seriously. Not only is it a powerful window on the perceptions of states, but a potential source of dangerous misperceptions as well. At a minimum, it is essential to monitor popular interpretations of history, to discern the beliefs, assumptions and images that follow from them, and to modify or reject policies that will likely lead to misperceptions and heightened conflict.

Yet, the problem is, of course, much deeper than history textbooks. Historical mythmaking, particularly about World War II and the interventions of 1939-40 are especially in history. But it was an overly-ambitious project, and it soon gave way to revision of more limited school subjects, particularly those "in vogue," such as civics.

\textsuperscript{20} Stephen Van Evera advocated such linkage in 1990. While it may run the risk of eliciting a nationalist backlash in Russia, such backlash is already occurring to some degree, so there would seem little to lose by advocating such an approach today. See Van Evera, "Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War," \textit{International Security} \textbf{15}, no. 3 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 52-53.
deeply embedded in Russian historical consciousness and tied directly to issues of national pride. Yet, the best place to begin the truth-telling exercise is with historians and educators, practicing good history—and teaching it.

The greatest obstacle, however, may be the post-Communist transition itself. As Russians struggle with economic, political, social and ideological disarray they grow increasingly weary of debates over the past at a time when it is most critical to confront it. A common refrain, as noted above, is, "Let's worry about the future, and not dwell on the past." In the words of the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman during January 1998 row with Estonia, "Instead of retrospectively whipping up events of the pre-war years on a political level, we prefer to look to the future of our relations, to strengthen trust and mutual relations between the peoples of the Baltic region with concrete deeds."21 Unfortunately, as has been shown in this study, words and deeds are inextricable linked. Trust cannot be strengthened unless the Russians acknowledge the past. Until that time Russia's relations with the Baltic states, and others, will continue to suffer. From the perspective of the victims it is absolutely essential that the Russians, as the successors of the perpetrators of the interventions, have a lucid understanding of those events and a candid, self-critical assessment of Soviet actions.

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21 Ministerstvo Inostrannykh Del RF, Brifing No. 6, 22 January 1998, Zapis' brifinga, Zam. Direktora Departamenta Informatsii i Pechati RF V.M. Nesterushkina.
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