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**School textbooks on history: a case of representing the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet era and the period of independence of Kazakhstan**

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# **School textbooks on history: a case of representing the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet era and the period of independence of Kazakhstan**

## **Abstract**

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The article analyzes Soviet and modern Kazakhstani school textbooks to cover the Great Patriotic War's history using the "Opening Up the Textbook" method. The purpose of this article is a comparative analysis of the textbooks of the Soviet era and the current textbooks to cover the events of military history in them. Particular attention is paid to the presentation of the history of the Great Patriotic War. Not only were different textbooks compared, but also the description of the history of the war in them. The study identifies standard and distinctive features and analyzes the specifics of the presentation of the main points of the war in the textbooks.

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**Keywords:** The Great Patriotic War, World War II, the history school textbooks of Kazakhstan, the Soviet Textbooks of history

# **Libros de texto escolares sobre historia: un caso de representación de la Gran Guerra Patria en la era soviética y el período de independencia de Kazajstán**

## **Resumen**

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El artículo analiza los libros de texto escolares soviéticos y kazajos modernos para cubrir la historia de la Gran Guerra Patria utilizando el método "Abriendo el libro de texto". El propósito de este artículo es un análisis comparativo de los libros de texto de la era soviética y los libros de texto actuales para cubrir los acontecimientos de la historia militar en ellos. Se presta especial atención a la presentación de la historia de la Gran Guerra Patriótica. No solo se compararon diferentes libros de texto, sino también la descripción de la historia de la guerra en ellos. El estudio identifica características estándar y distintivas y analiza los detalles de la presentación de los puntos principales de la guerra en los libros de texto.

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**Palabras clave:** La Gran Guerra Patriótica, la Segunda Guerra Mundial, los libros de texto escolares de historia de Kazajstán, los libros de texto soviéticos de historia.

**T**he events of the Great Patriotic War, scientific understanding, and evaluation are still the subject of scientific discussions. Different scientific schools have different approaches to analysing and explaining the causes of the Great Patriotic War, the role of the USSR in the war, the results of the war, etc. These contradictions in historical science also find their place in school history textbooks.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the aftermath of events that led to the formation of an independent Republic of Kazakhstan, fundamental changes took place in the content of textbooks for secondary schools on "History of Kazakhstan." They can be grouped in two main directions: firstly, a paradigm shifts in transforming the historiographical and methodological foundations of historical science in Kazakhstan. Secondly, there was the introduction of a system of alternative textbooks on school subjects, differing from each other in structural components, consistency, educational materials, linguistic and factual apparatus. All the changes can be identified when conducting a content analysis of educational literature of the subject 'History of Kazakhstan', both on general historical topics and the themes of World War II and the Great Patriotic War.

Our study began by formulating a research question: How the narrative of "World War II" was represented in Soviet time textbooks and how it continues to shape war memorialization in the school textbooks of independent Kazakhstan?

Thus, using the example of the Great Patriotic War, which is an integral part of the Second World War, the study analysed the school textbooks of the Soviet era and modern Kazakhstan and traced the changes in approaches to the representation of war in school literature.

## **Methodology**

### **Research methods**

In the article, general scientific methods and principles, as well as historical ones, were applied. The method of analysis called "Opening Up the Textbook" (Wineburg & McGrew, 2015) was used in the evaluation of the textbooks to identify their characteristic features, the method of analogy and comparison - when considering textual and other materials of educational and regulatory literature.

The textbook tells us about the past. Textbooks are very widely distributed. In education systems, they occupy a central place in the history curriculum and are often the most accessible teaching material. Therefore, there is a need for analysis and critical reflection of history textbooks. Using the "Opening Up the Textbook" method, it is necessary to consider the textbook as a primary source and take it through six stages of analysis. Six tools for Opening Up Textbooks:

- 1) Comparison (Soviet textbooks to Kazakhstan textbooks)
- 2) Direct Challenge (bringing primary evidence to challenge issues of fact or interpretation)
- 3) Narrativization (where does an event begin? and where does it end?)
- 4) Articulating Silences (who is left out of the narrative of the event?)
- 5) Vivification (breathing life into a text)
- 6) Close reading (careful, attentive focus on the content of the textbooks).

The analogy method based on establishing the similarity of textbooks from different periods in this study is about Soviet and Kazakhstani school literature. According to some properties, you can understand what the standard features are and, according to others - the differences. Conclusions were formulated based on the results obtained by using the method of generalization in the study. The research was guided by the principle of historicism, which involves considering the sources of research - textbooks in the context of time.

In Soviet times, school history education had a single program and a single textbook for all schools. Today, in most countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, a pluralistic model of historical education has been adopted, which implies, among other things, the plurality of educational literature. However, criteria for assessing the quality of the content of history textbooks in most countries of the former Soviet Union and Kazakhstan are in their infancy.

In connection with the growing role of education and its reform, the issue of developing a school textbook will remain one of the most important and relevant not only in Kazakhstan but also abroad.

On this topic, it should be noted that it is presented in a very diverse way, with its characteristics in the textbooks of different countries. Therefore, some examples were introduced in the article. Therefore, this topic is relevant and very controversial in many world countries.

## **Literature review**

Foster and Nicholls (2015) examined how textbooks from England, Japan, Sweden, and the United States portray America's role in World War II. The authors identified that the historical information provided to students from different countries varied significantly. Accordingly, US textbooks highlighted the US's important and prominent role in suppressing Axis forces in Europe and the Pacific. In contrast, in English textbooks, the military action of the USA's allies, the USSR, and the British Empire is viewed as a joint venture of equal partners. Authors of Japanese textbooks give minimal attention to the war in Europe and focus primarily on events in the Pacific Ocean. Swedish textbooks tend to focus on the war in Europe and especially on the Eastern Front. Thus, above all, the study highlights the dramatic differences in World War II's national portrayals and suggests that textbook perceptions are likely to be influenced by nationalist biases, different cultural and geopolitical views, and socio-political agendas in contemporary societies.

Klymenko (2014) illustrated the conceptualization of the textbook as a place of memory, discourse, and genre. The author highlights the semantic and linguistic elements of the discourse of World War II in Ukrainian school history textbooks for the 11th grade, with an emphasis on such historical topics as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the German attack on the Soviet Union and subsequent Nazi wars, the occupation regime, the offensive the Soviet army with the subsequent restoration of the Soviet regime and the resistance movement. The author concluded that Ukrainian textbooks deal with the Soviet myth of the Great Patriotic War and disclose Stalinism's atrocities. Besides, the educational literature highlights the heroic deeds of Ukrainians in the Soviet Army and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, who fought for the independence of Ukraine and the suffering that Ukrainians endured under the German occupation and the Stalinist regime.

Gross (2010) examines the processes of revising statehood in Poland's educational materials related to the Second World War. The study analyses the changes in state-approved history textbooks published between 1977 and 2008, thus covering the political transition from communist to democratic Poland. The authors found that Poland's educational literature on World War II, in particular, focuses on an ethnically homogeneous nation. Throughout

the 31-year sample, educating young people about World War II in Poland continued to focus on returning to "Polishness" rather than upholding global understanding and citizenship.

Youngee Suh and Makito Yurita (Nakou et al., 2010) in their paper, "International Debates on History Textbooks: A Comparative Study of Japanese and South Korean History Textbook Accounts of the Second World War," explore the descriptions and significances of the approach in which the Second World War is presented in Japanese and Korean high school history textbooks? In the context of the historical controversy surrounding the issue of teaching World War II among East Asia nations. The research of relevant history textbooks elucidates the pattern of history education in the two countries and asserts that the history textbooks of both countries bypass presenting controversial issues by deliberating the war as a "chronological account of events seen from a single perspective" (Nakou et al., 2010, p. 153).

Musabalina (2015) pointed out that the military themes in the history textbooks of Kazakhstan 5 years ago showed important didactic content. On the other hand, the author emphasized several flaws of the textbook, for instance the absence of a systematic structure and the description of the relationship between historical events and processes.

A lot of didactic issues of the representation of World War II and the Great Patriotic War in the history textbooks of Kazakhstan were analysed by Zueva (2015a; 2015b) and Zueva et al., (2016).

Scientists historians Ayagan and Kabuldinov in the textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan according to the updated program for schools of Kazakhstan introduced new concepts, new archival materials, previously unknown historical facts in the context of the Great Patriotic War, and also made attempts to consider contradictory topics of the war (Ayagan, 2015).

As a result of the analysis of the educational literature on the history of World War II and the Great Patriotic War, we identify that the war is considered differently in political, educational contexts, not only in different periods of the history of Kazakhstan, but also in textbooks from different countries of the world. Thus, the history of the Second World War remains one of the most ideological topics in history, and also serves as a tool for the formation of political views, patriotic feelings and historical consciousness of schoolchildren.

**Context: The development of history education in Kazakhstan**

The experience of forming the textbook "History" in Kazakhstan has its history. Its features of origin and stages of development as a curriculum are essential for everyday tasks of improving the teaching of this subject. There are four stages: pre-war, post-war, stagnation, and contemporary. The first three stages cover the Soviet, and the last - the period of national Independence. The pre-war period of the formation of materials on the history of Kazakhstan is characterized by the participation of representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia of the "Alash" national movement<sup>1</sup>, who subsequently underwent political repressions in the 30's of 20 century, among them there were M. Tynyshpaev<sup>1</sup>, S. Asfendiyarov<sup>2</sup> and others. At this time, the first formation of the Soviet education system took place, the construction of Soviet schools, pedagogical institutes, and the Kazakh State University<sup>3</sup>. Representatives of the Kazakh national intelligentsia were persecuted and often accused of Kazakh nationalism, pan-Islamism, and pan-Turkism.

The war and post-war periods are characterized by Soviet Kazakh historiography of two leading historical schools - pro-national and party-Soviet historiography, completely committed to Marxism-Leninism. At this time, school education was expanding from eight-year-old schools to ten-year ones, and a network of scientific institutions and pedagogical universities was being built. During the years of stagnation in connection with the closure of Kazakh branches in universities, there was a reduction in national schools in the country, and the teaching of the History of the Kazakh SSR, within the framework of which the History of Kazakhstan was to be taught, existed not really, but formally. The subject "History of the USSR" was introduced everywhere, and "History of the CPSU" was presented in universities. There was only one department of "History of the Kazakh SSR" in the Kazakh State University. Many issues and topics in the teaching of the national history of the Kazakh people were unpopular because they were banned, as contradicting the official views of Soviet historical science, censored and controlled by the party and state security bodies.

During Independence, there was a gradual process of restoration of the departments of "History of Kazakhstan" and the revival of the tradition of Kazakh national historiography.



The Ministry of education and science of Kazakhstan evaluates textbooks, including History textbooks written by authors and publishing houses. Committees of experts under the guide of the Ministry recommend textbooks that are provided to schools free of charge. Moreover, the Ministry recommends textbooks, which should pass the approbation at pilot schools before being used in educational organizations.

Introductory textbooks are approved and published in the Republic of Kazakhstan under the Law "On Education" (2007) for primary and secondary schools. The World Bank adopted new methodological recommendations for the development and examination of textbooks in Kazakhstan (Savvy business – Astana-Kitap, 2021).

### **Discussion**

#### *"Opening Up the Soviet Textbooks of history"*

The peculiarities of the consecration of military history in school textbooks, both in the post-Soviet space and Kazakhstan, do not lose relevance. This issue includes a significant layer of historical knowledge.

During the Soviet period, which Ferro's study covers, "official history" was extremely monopolistic, ideologized, and manipulative (Ferro, 2003, p. 305). The Soviet regime is rightly called ideocracy, and in the USSR, history served ideology more than anywhere else. As Ferro stated, apologetics, national and / or religious bragging, is inherent in any "official history" (Ferro, 2003, p. 1). However, there are various degrees of mythologization, and the number of deliberately falsified facts also varies significantly. In this respect, Soviet historical science and pedagogy were unique.

In the late Soviet period, the messianic complex of the builders of communism was inseparable from the imperial ambitions of the "country - the victor of fascism" (and the victor in general) (Ferro, 2003, p. 310), from the nationally colored great power (the praise of the Russian people as the eldest in the "family": "Great Russia united the unbreakable union of free republics forever") ... (Ferro, 2003, p. 330). It is precisely this configuration of ideas that we find in all Soviet textbooks on history, in Soviet cinema and history books for children.

Analysing Soviet textbooks on the history of the Great Patriotic War, such features as the uniformity of the style of presentation, the invariability of the described military events and battles, and a single periodization are

revealed. Educational literature is distinguished by its clarity of presentation, the absence of contradictions typical for textbooks of the post-Soviet period. In this sense, textbooks of the 70s and 80s stand out, which have undergone dozens of reprints (Berkhin et al., 1962; Esakov et al., 1986). It should be noted that the sequence of the presentation of military events and battles and the periodization of the war have remained practically unchanged even in most modern textbooks of Kazakhstan.

When describing the first stage of the war, the key topics were the German attack on the Soviet Union, the restructuring of the national economy on a war footing, and Moscow's battle.

The second stage is associated with a radical change in the course of the war and includes events such as the Battle of Stalingrad, the Battle of the Kursk Bulge, the advance of the Red Army to the west, and the Battle of the Dnieper.

The third, final stage of the war implies the liberation of the territory of the USSR, European countries, and the fall of Berlin. The main topics covered by the Soviet textbooks were the foreign policy of the USSR during this period, the conferences of the heads of state of the anti-Hitler coalition, the partisan movement, the heroic labor of the people in the rear (“Everything is for the front, everything is for Victory”).

An ideal example of how history served the totalitarian system was narrated on the theme dedicated to the war in the Soviet history textbook (Bazilevich et al. 1952).

The textbook addressed that before the war; the Soviet Union conducted a peace policy and was in constant expectation of an attack by Germany (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 366). It is indicated that the fascists identified themselves as a "superior race," while all other peoples were considered by them as inferior, with particular hatred towards the Slavic peoples, especially the "great Russian people" (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 366).

In the textbook, too much attention is paid to the role of Stalin in the war of liberation of the USSR from Germany, this can be seen in statements such as "Comrade Stalin revealed the robber plans of the Nazis" (Pod znamenem Lenina, 1946).

In the textbook, the aim of Nazis was identified with all that was hated in Soviet society, everything that in the minds of Soviet citizens pawned as the most terrible and hostile. Furthermore, it was emphasized that "the Nazis

is out to restore the rule of landlords, tsarists, the destruction of the national culture and statehood" (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 367).

The textbook did not point out any facts about the defeat of the Soviet army in the first years of the war. The author masterly concealed the failures of the Soviet Army under a veil; all the reverses of the Red Army were reduced to a temporary advantage of the enemy, such as a sudden attack, a quantitative advantage in tanks, aircraft, automatic weapons, and the absence of a second front in Europe (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 367).

The text of the textbook gloriously described that "the Soviet Army stubbornly defended every inch of Soviet land" (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 368), but did not indicate at what cost.

The textbook contained a quote from Stalin "Let the courageous image of our great ancestors – Alexander Nevsky, Dmitry Donskoy, Kuzma Minin, Dimitri Pozharsky, Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov – Inspire you in this war! Let the victorious banner of the great Lenin overshadow you!" (Stalin, 1942, p. 40). This quote does not mention the name of more than one hero of other peoples of the Union Republics. This suggests that all the merits and honor were given to the "privileged Russian people."

The textbook described that during 1941 the Soviet Union was fighting alone against Germany. In July 1941, an agreement was signed between the USSR and Great Britain governments on joint actions in the war against Nazi Germany. In 1942, the Soviet Union and Great Britain agreed on an alliance in the war against Germany and her accomplices in Europe and on cooperation and mutual assistance after the war for 20 years. The USA also signed a military agreement with the Soviet Union. However, the conclusion of these treaties did not mean that the authorities of Great Britain and the United States abandoned their anti-Soviet policy. On the contrary, the reactionary elements in every possible way delayed the opening of the second front in Europe. The intrigues of the reactionaries led by Prime Minister Churchill and his associates in Great Britain and the United States were aimed at weakening the Soviet Union in every possible way in the struggle against Germany, at all costs to drag out the course of hostilities on the Soviet-German front. Thus, even the allies of the USSR in the Second World War are described as enemies in the textbook (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 374).

The textbook promoted the socialist system in every possible way. The text of the textbook described that the socialist system, engendered by the

October Revolution, gave the Soviet people and the Soviet Army great and invincible strength. Further, it told about the result of the victory of socialism in the USSR, allegedly as a result of the successful implementation of three five-year plans for the development of the national economy, it became possible to prepare the country for active defence. It pointed out that the victory of the policy of industrialization of the country and collectivization of agriculture created material opportunities for organizing the defence.

The textbook honored everything that was implanted by the ideology of the Communist Party that being an example of a multinational state created based on socialism, the Soviet Union had the source of its strength in the inviolable friendship of peoples, but with the proviso "under the leadership of the great Russian people on the fronts" (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 362).

Since the end of the 50s, the name of the supreme commander in chief Joseph Stalin is rarely mentioned in textbooks: only in connection with the creation of the State Defence Committee and a radio speech on July 3, 1941, as well as one of the participants in international conferences, along with Churchill and Roosevelt.

After the death of Stalin and the XX Congress of the CPSU, information about the so-called "Ten Stalinist Strikes" disappeared from the textbooks, but paragraphs about the personality cult appeared. In the 1963 textbook (Berkhin et al., 1962; Esakov et al., 1986), the blame for the disastrous start of the war was laid on Stalin and the leaders of the People's Commissariat for Defence S.K. Timoshenko<sup>4</sup> and G.K. Zhukov<sup>5</sup>. The presentation of material on the history of the war as a complete suppression of losses among the military and civilian population and information about material damage of the USSR during the war was avoided. Loss statistics in the textbooks were provided only for Germany and its allies.

As for the Red Army, Soviet schoolchildren were only informed that 7 million Soviet soldiers took part in the liberation of European countries and over 1.5 million in the liberation of China and Korea. Textbooks of the 1950s did not provide information on the most tragic events of the war (Bazilevich et al. 1952, p. 404). So, the 1952 textbook did not say that dozens of cities were surrendered to the enemy at the beginning of the war, and the student could only get information about this from the chapters on the counteroffensive of the Red Army and the liberation of the occupied territories of the USSR. Until the description of the military events of 1943

and the breaking of the blockade of Leningrad, the occupation was not mentioned anywhere. There was also no information about the American atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

During the Cold War, Soviet textbooks paid little attention to the international dimension of World War II (Berkhin et al., 1962; Esakov et al., 1986). This topic was exhausted by mentioning the conferences of the heads of state of the anti-Hitler coalition and pointing out that the leading cause of the war was the struggle of the imperialist powers for world domination. The relationship between the USSR and its allies was characterized as complex and contradictory. Britain and the United States were presented as capitalist states and geopolitical opponents of the USSR. It was noted that the leaders of these countries acted exclusively in their interests: for three years, they delayed the opening of the second front and began military operations only when it became clear that the USSR could occupy Germany and France without their help.

The textbooks of the Soviet era convinced students that the allies were striving to seize good footholds and economic regions and also “took all measures to ensure that the struggle of European peoples for national liberation did not lead to the removal from power of the reactionary bourgeoisie, which had betrayed the national independence of their countries and cooperated with Nazi Germany (Berkhin et al., 1962; Esakov et al., 1986).” “The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact” was viewed at that time in the context of the conflict between the “forces of reaction” and “the forces of social progress.”

The authors of the textbooks of the 80s noted that the conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Germany made it possible to avoid a war on two fronts, gain time to strengthen the country's defence, and prevent the creation of a unified anti-Soviet bloc of imperialist powers Esakov et al. (1986). The schoolchildren were not informed about the existence of secret protocols to this pact.

A complicated topic for all authors of Soviet textbooks was the reasons for the failures and defeats of the Red Army at the very beginning of the war, in 1941. Many of them explain the retreat of the Red Army at the beginning of the war by the surprise factor of the attack and the military might of Germany: “The German army was the most trained, armed and experienced of all the armies of the capitalist countries.” True, in a later textbook by Berkhin et al. (1962), Published during the “thaw”, all the blame

for the situation that had arisen then was placed on the Supreme High Command<sup>6</sup>, which did not take the necessary measures to strengthen the army's combat capability. However, it was evident that "despite the existence of a non-aggression pact, Nazi Germany will eventually start a war against the USSR" Berkhin et al. (1962). In the 1980s, during the period of "stagnation," the textbooks did not say anything about the responsibility of the country's leadership - all the failures were explained only by the suddenness of the attack Esakov et al. (1986).

The problem of collaborationism was not raised in Soviet textbooks either in the textbook of Esakov et al. (1986). It was stated: "the conversation of M.I. Kalinin with front-line agitators on August 4, 1943", which only mentions the existence of "individual exceptions" when Soviet people agreed to work for the Germans as chiefs Esakov et al. (1986). On the contrary, textbooks are imbued with the spirit of friendship and "the great unity of the peoples of the USSR" as an essential factor in the victory (Berkhin et al., 1962; Esakov et al., 1986). A striking example was the fact that Turkmen women voluntarily and gratuitously donated 7392 kg of gold and silver jewellery for the needs of the front.

In the Soviet textbook, no sentence is not devoted to the complex fate of entire peoples convicted of treason and deported to Siberia and Central Asia. Such concealment is deeply rooted in the Soviet narrative when whole groups of victims were excluded from the war story, whose stories did not fit into the picture of a heroically fighting people.

Meanwhile, there was also a parallel history of this war in the form of the stories told by front-line soldiers, who were not considered by anyone, including those who were in German captivity and subjected to repression after liberation, as well as those front-line soldiers who became members of the national military formations of the Wehrmacht.

There was also foreign historiography of the war, which also said that on the eve of the war, not only Germany but also the Soviet Union were recognized by the world community as aggressor countries and that a treaty and a secret was signed between these countries (Moorhouse, 2014).

*"Opening Up the New History Textbooks of Kazakhstan."*

In the textbook for the eighth grades on the History of Kazakhstan on the updated content of education (Kabuldinov et al., 2019) the problem of the

Great Patriotic War is presented with clarity and understandably. The paragraphs of the textbook tell how during the Second World War, the Kazakhs, as well as representatives of other nationalities, showed mass heroism and courage. It is said that “the Kazakhs vividly demonstrated to the world that the spirit of brave warriors still lives in them” (Kabuldinov et al., 2019). In addition, it is noted that the republic was also a reliable rear.

One of the tendentious topics in the history of Kazakhstan is highlighted that in the pre-war and war years, more than one and a half million representatives of peoples were resettled in Kazakhstan: Poles, Ukrainians, Koreans, Germans, Ingush, etc., describes the plight of the deportees and hospitality and tolerance of the Kazakhs towards them. In addition, the textbook contains excerpts from archival written sources, drawings, maps, diagrams, and tables, to better understand the events that took place in Kazakhstan during the Great Patriotic War. The textbook is provided with additional material and an anthology for students to better master the events of the Great Patriotic War. At the end of the paragraphs, questions and creative tasks are given for repetition and consolidation.

The standard curriculum compiled all tasks in the textbook for the subject "History of Kazakhstan" for grades 5-9 of the primary and secondary education level according to the updated content, features of criteria-based assessment, and a differentiated approach to education. For example, by the learning objectives of the paragraph, tasks were compiled on Bloom's taxonomy, taking into account the skills of high order thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). The sections contain functions for developing the skills of the 21st century and critical thinking. The tables and graphic materials of the textbook are presented in such a way that they carry a didactic load. Tasks were drawn up for all schemes, tables, and diagrams.

One of the tasks of history is the development of communication and speech skills of students, so the textbook contains a glossary and key concepts in two languages. Moreover, in the educational system of Kazakhstan, the process of learning three languages and the transition of the alphabet to the Latin alphabet has been launched. To promote such significant modern trends, the textbook authors considered it necessary to give some words in English. This also contributes to interdisciplinary communication and the development of students' motivation.

In the textbook of grade 8 (9) for secondary schools, part 1 (Uskambaev et al., 2019) the history of the war is considered in detail and

widely. The block of topics on the Great Patriotic War is considered in the context of nine paragraphs. At the beginning of the paragraphs, there are headings "Today in the lesson", which sets out the problematic issues for studying the material, and "Keywords", which marks the main terms of the topic. The content of the paragraphs includes additional material that allows student to expand and deepen knowledge about the years of the Great Patriotic War. At the end of the sections there are multi-level questions and creative tasks.

At a superficial glance, the educational literature contains all the necessary data for the complete assimilation of the theme of the Great Patriotic War. Still, it is worth paying more attention to explaining specific facts and concepts. It becomes clear that it is difficult for schoolchildren to deal with the flow of information since the lack of an accessible explanation leads to a break with already known knowledge and, as a result, a lack of continuity and gaps in knowledge.

When comparing textbooks, it turned out that the most used concepts are the following: World War II, Plan Barbarossa, arsenal, surrender, conversion, resources, evacuation, patriotism, special settlers, espionage, deportation, militarization, and blockade. However, the explanation of several concepts is presented too abstractly, and there are no definitions for some terms at all, among them the following concepts can be distinguished: fascists, front, division, Patriotic War, brigade, partisans, artillerymen, regiment, echelon, invaders, squadron, etc. In this situation, one can only hope that teachers in the classroom will fill this gap, but time constraints also make it challenging to provide such explanations.

After analysing the educational literature on the History of Kazakhstan, authors concluded that in almost all textbooks, the life of the people themselves during the Great Patriotic War is overlooked. It does not describe how the soldiers who went to the front felt and the attitude of the people towards the war. This topic is also relevant because, in modern realities, it is necessary to highlight the everyday history of the people during the Great Patriotic War. It is essential to convey to modern children how the Soviet people, including Kazakhstanis, treated the war.

All textbooks focus on Kazakhstan's political, economic, and cultural development during the Great Patriotic War and describe the exploits of the rear and the invaluable work of enterprises that worked day and night for the benefit of the front. Undoubtedly, it would be valuable and exciting to know



what difficulties the soldiers and rear soldiers went through, what they felt, and how they overcame various obstacles and hardships of the war.

In the current textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan, the content lacks essential information found in many historical sources. In this connection, it is necessary to introduce new methodological developments into the educational process, taking into account additional materials on the problem of war in the history of Kazakhstan. The basis should be based on materials not previously studied in the school course. Thus, the “Institute of State History” of the Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan published a manual (Ayagan et al., 2020). The purpose of the manual is a truthful presentation of the war's course using new historical sources and information. The manual offered to students in educational institutions and history teachers for in-depth study the Great Patriotic War (Ayagan et al., 2020).

The thematic content of the manual compiled by the basic structure and order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, dated July 24, 2012, No. 344 (2012).

The manual aimed at deepening knowledge of military history, and increasing students' interest, is written by taking into account the age characteristics of students. For the history of the Great Patriotic War to be studied systematically and consistently, the manual identifies the main defining directions of the learning process. That is, students must achieve the following expected results:

1. To study the grave consequences of the war, leading to a tragedy for humanity;
2. Assess the feat of the soldiers-heroes of the front and workers of the rear, thereby revealing the nationwide nature of the Great Patriotic War;
3. Introduction to reading scientific and fiction, allowing a comprehensive and in-depth study of the history of the Great Patriotic War.

The manual contains tasks aimed at systematizing the acquired knowledge and developing students' scientific and creative search abilities. In addition, students have created opportunities to work with educational and information resources on the Internet and write essays on the topic.

The methodological components of the manual are photos, illustrations, terms, documents of the era, memoirs of participants in events, biographies of heroes, questions for self-control: creative and test tasks, and recommended fiction are coordinated and systematized among themselves.

## **Results**

According to the research findings, during the period of the USSR, there was one official version of the history of the Great Patriotic War, which was represented in the school textbook. The obligation to study history by all citizens of the country formed within the policy of memory, a single consistent version of the war. The main provisions of understanding war were reduced to the following statements:

The USSR was a peace-loving country and was not ready for war.

Germany was much more prepared and perfidiously violated the peace treaty concluded between the two countries.

The war showed the advantages of a socialist planned economy, making it possible to quickly transfer industry from a peaceful track to a military one.

The Allies dragged out the opening of the Second Front in every possible way, resulting from which the Soviet Union fought almost single-handedly against Germany and its satellites.

The victory was forged both at the front and in the rear.

The victory was won due to the joint efforts of the fraternal peoples of the USSR under the leadership of the "great Russian people."

The Soviet textbook was an essential tool for discrediting capitalist countries, including the allies of the USSR in the war with Germany.

There were practically no primary or secondary sources in Soviet history textbooks, but there were contour maps for independent study, which was supposed to increase students' skills in history. Besides a characteristic feature of the Soviet history textbook were questions for students' self-evaluation on each topic, but the questions were mainly about memorizing the material read.

All of the above theses were presented in the same way throughout the USSR. In the union republics, local facts and events were woven into the general fabric of this narrative: the number of Heroes of the Soviet Union - representatives of local nationalities, the number of those called up to the army, and the contribution of the workers of this republic to the overall victory.

In 90's new history programs were adopted, which radically changed the structure of history education, since instead of the general course of

history, two independent school subjects were introduced at once: "World History" and "History of Kazakhstan."

As for studying the Second World War in history textbooks, we concluded that it has both historiographic and educational flaws.

The story of the mass deportations is indeed new information that was omitted in Soviet textbooks.

In the textbooks on the history of Kazakhstan, the content of the paragraphs is composed in such a way that the authors of the textbooks tell about the war, including historical facts, statistics, the names of the heroes of the war and rear, the name of the battles in the textual material, thus a great emphasis is placed on factual material. There are practically no historical documents in textbooks, as well as tasks that are aimed at interpreting and critically analyzing sources.

In both Kazakhstan and Soviet history textbooks, the beginning of the Great Patriotic War is considered the day of the German attack on the USSR - June 22, 1941.

Furthermore, the first day of the war was September 1, 1939, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland.

Despite the different attitudes towards the actions of the Soviet Union since 1939, the final stage - the great victory of the Allies over the German dictator - is decisive for assessing the war as a whole.

Both in Soviet and Kazakhstan history textbooks, the "Great Patriotic War" was the "most critical component of World War II." The textbooks emphasized that the treaty was a "forced step" dictated by Stalin's fear of remaining in political isolation. Human destinies, as a rule, are lost against the background of the broad picture of the events of the Great Patriotic War. Consequently, there are tendencies in textbooks to avoid complex formats in terms of narrative and content and simplify and standardize information.

Analyzing history textbooks during the period of independence of Kazakhstan, one can see how the methodological apparatus of the textbook has changed, the content of the textbook has moved away from simply stating historical facts, and a new apparatus has appeared in the structure of the textbook, aimed at developing research skills and developing high-level skills.

In Soviet times, textbooks contain material that was aimed at the ideological education of schoolchildren, for example, there are whole

sentences that form the personality cult of Stalin, elevate the Communist Party, and attribute victory in the war to the person or the party.

During the period of independence of Kazakhstan, new topics appeared in textbooks describing the feat of the Kazakhs at the front and in the rear. The texts describe the heroic deeds of the Kazakh heroes of the rear and front. The geography of battles during the war covers those battlefields where Kazakhstanis fought mainly. With the transition of Kazakhstan to the updated content of education in the last decade of the century, cardinal changes are taking place in the methodological apparatus of textbooks associated with the transition from a knowledge-centric approach to education to a competency-based approach.

### **Recommendations and conclusions**

In conclusion, it was found that the knowledge of student youth about specific events and participants in the Great Patriotic War is very contradictory and needs to be supplemented. In this regard, attention should be paid to the complexity of the possibility of forming an individual historical memory of representatives of the youth. Furthermore, there are still many missing war veterans, and the possibilities of acquaintance with documents reflecting the military fate of many soldiers and officers are minimal. Besides, every year, the Great Patriotic War history is supplemented with new facts and historical figures.

In order for the textbook to function as a source of knowledge that forms the historical consciousness of students, it is necessary: firstly, to develop educational material that is informatively meaningful, but not overloaded with unnecessary historical facts and dates, or rather vivid examples from the life of society and personalities; secondly, to offer problem-cognitive tasks for the development of active thinking of students; thirdly, to adhere to the conceptual and systemic transmission of historical knowledge, through the disclosure of the causal relationship in the content and didactic apparatus, providing evidence, comparative analysis, establishing continuity and changes, determining historical significance, as well as interpreting various perspectives in history. Besides, it is necessary to pay attention to historical figures' life stories within the framework of the topics under consideration. So biography, memoirs can serve as the basis for

understanding the historical context through familiarization with personalities' visual life situations.

In Kazakhstan's educational literature, reproductive issues prevail; insufficient attention is paid to problem-cognitive tasks, limiting the development of the subject and social skills, leading to the formal nature of the implementation of interdisciplinary connections. Furthermore, the textbooks practically do not pay attention to the everyday life's history during the War. Moreover, many authors of educational literature prefer to avoid contradictory topics of military history.

For complete coverage of all areas of the history of the Great Patriotic War, it is necessary to introduce optional, elective, and author's courses on military history in the schools of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The general picture revealed during the review of educational school literature on the Great Patriotic War themes and World War II allows us to judge that the issue is being sanctified in sufficient detail, but there are gaps in some fundamental issues. Thus, this issue requires a further and more detailed description and consideration in the scientific and pedagogical circles.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> With the collapse of tsarist rule in Russian empire, the Westernized Kazakh elite formed a party, the Alash, as a vehicle through which they could express their aspirations for national autonomy.

<sup>2</sup> Mukhamedzhan Tynyshpaev (May 12, 1879 - after November 21, 1937) was a Kazakh engineer, activist, and intellectual.

<sup>3</sup> Asfendiyarov Sanzhar (1889-1938) was a statesman, historian, professor.

Today it is called Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

<sup>4</sup> Marshal of the Soviet Union

<sup>5</sup> Chief of the General Staff

<sup>6</sup> J. Stalin, S.K. Timoshenko, and G.K. Zhukov

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