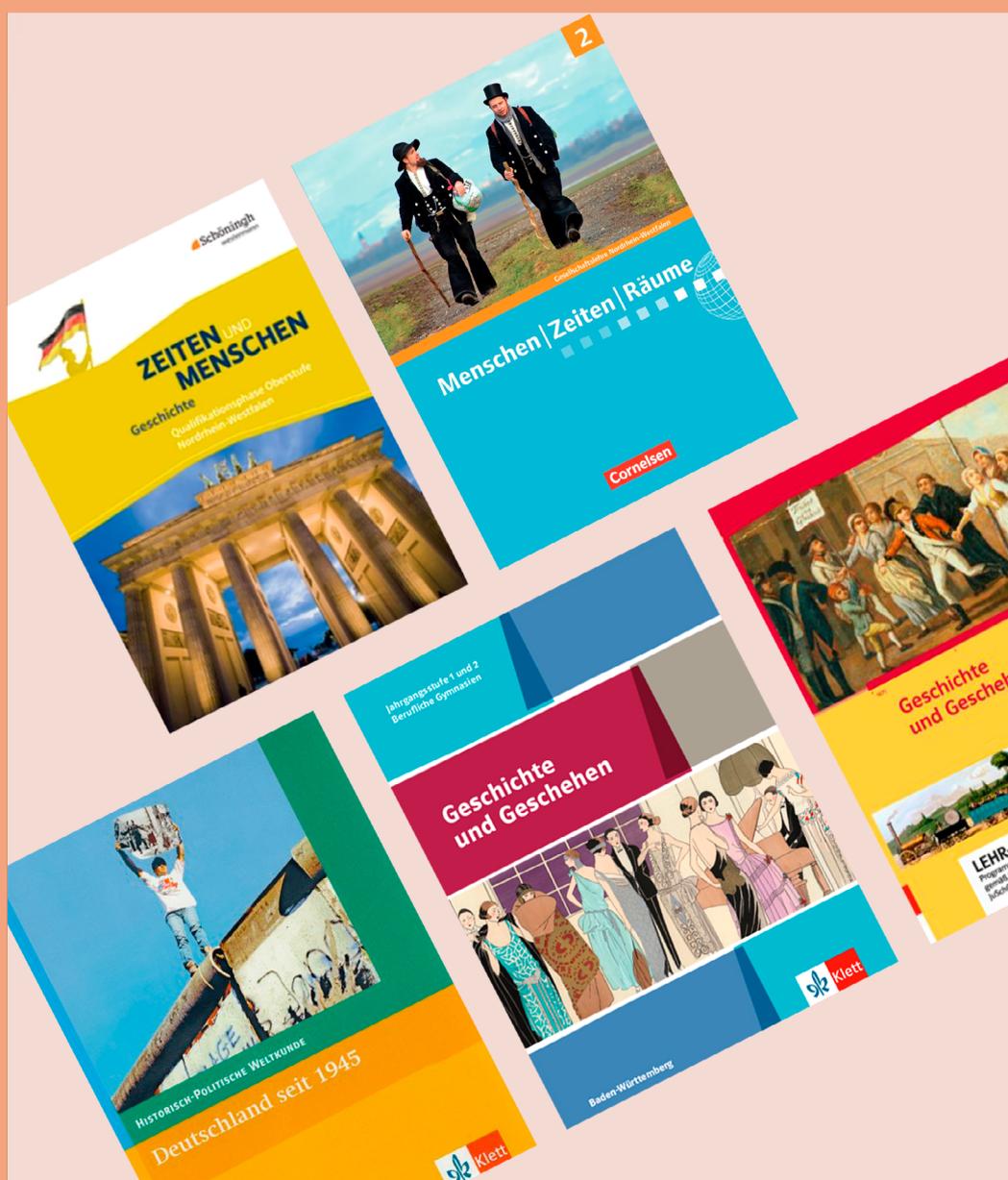


20TH-CENTURY HISTORY OF UKRAINE IN GERMAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS



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Ukrainian Institute, 2022

This research is part of a study of European school textbooks and manuals on the representation of key historical events related to Ukraine's role in global processes, organised and commissioned by the Ukrainian Institute. The opinions expressed within this report are the expert group's only and do not reflect the opinions and positions of representatives of the Ukrainian Institute.

Translated into English by Anna Korbut

1 History textbooks in German secondary education system

The educational system of contemporary Germany prioritizes “political and democratic education” as a foundation for teaching history in schools. Different German federal states take diverse approaches to education in general and history instruction in particular. In general, however, the goal and objective of “history” as a subject, as well as its didactic and methodological framework, comprise a single space of meaning and axiology. The only differences are in the specific historical content and the temporal organization of the curriculum. We can therefore presume that the overall German approach to history teaching is to understand the importance of history in education, while the state is interested in cultivating patriotic and civically engaged members of society. The impact and significance of history as a school subject are defined as follows by programs: “A democratic society requires citizens who are knowledgeable and politically capable. The way an individual sees the past determines the present and the future.”¹

The German civil society, educational community, program editors, and textbook authors all agree that the selection of the material for history teaching must take into account the immensity of modern history knowledge, which makes it impossible to represent all of history – especially in the classroom. However, the school history course must provide the necessary objective and sufficient knowledge for individual development.

As noted above, German education and history teaching are decentralized. The federal states determine the structure and curriculum independently. In Germany’s educational system, children

are introduced to primary (propaedeutic) history knowledge in grades 1-4 (6) of primary school (*Grundschule*). Starting from grade 5-6, history becomes mandatory individual subject in the curriculum.

At stage two (grades 10-13), history remains an individual subject, and it can be studied both as a major (deepened level) or at the standard level. The concentric approach prevails in history teaching. A comprehensive history course is studied at stage one, and it is repeated at stage two at a more complex problem-based level. Typically, problem-oriented history courses are also prevalent at stage one.

Germany has different types of schools that serve various societal functions. Respectively, different hours are allocated to history teaching in different schools. In the *Realschule* (grade 5-10), history is taught in grades 6, 8-10 and is skipped in grade 7. 52 hours are allocated to history teaching per year in every grade. In the *Hauptschule*, history is taught in grades 6, 7, 9 and 10, and it is skipped in grade 8.

While Germany does not have one and only ministry of education, academic plans and programs are approved at regular meetings of the heads of federal ministries. In Eastern Germany, the history of the GDR is studied in greater depth, whereas in Western Germany, relations with France in the second half of the 20th century, receive greater emphasis, among other topics. In sum, there is no single history textbook for all German federal states.

Textbooks and professors do not dictate their assessments of historical events. They provide students with a toolkit to design their own interpretations. The federal states have incorporated this strategy into their framework regulations. For example, Bavaria's Ministry of Education, Culture and Science begins its list of textbook requirements with their expected neutrality and objectivity. Students must independently master subject matter. Ideological interpretations are not allowed, and it is essential to avoid grandiloquent and emotional assessments of the events.

Text, illustrations, and charts make up the structure of German history textbooks. Textbooks, especially in grade 11, adhere to the principle of source study. They feature many quotations from historians, and each section concludes with assignments that must be completed using texts from the sources suggested in the textbooks.

In German schools, history is not exclusively presented as a chronological list of events and phenomena. Textbooks take a discretionary approach, selecting topics with the greatest potential for fostering critical thinking. For example, in grade 6, students study topics such as Prehistoric Man, Egypt, or Classical Antiquity. Grade 10 reaches the second half of the 20th century, including the Vietnam War and the unification of East and West Germany. Alongside with this, students learn the history of their region.

By the end of grade 10, most students have amassed historical facts. In grades 11-12, they learn to analyse them in depth. In grade 12, students start learning the basics of European culture and nation building, and take part in debates, for instance, on the role of Christianity in the unification of Germany.

This system of history instruction and textbook design in Germany essentially precludes a comprehensive presentation of Ukraine's history. Ukrainian history was never a priority, and Ukrainian historical events were never of great significance to the Germans.

German (Prussian) historiography was for a very long time influenced by a hostile interpretation of the Polish and Ukrainian independence movements, which had a significant impact on topics pertaining to Ukraine. The 20th-century Ukraine, in the eyes of Germans, was overshadowed by the developments in Russia.² When German historians began active collaboration with the Russian Federation, France, Poland, and Ukraine at the beginning of the 21st century, this created an opening for the research and study of shared history. Germany has valuable experience with "working through the past" (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) and political repentance for Holocaust-related crimes against humanity.³

In Germany, large numbers of school history textbooks are published annually at the initiative of publishers. They are provided at no cost to students and are also available for purchase in bookstores. There are no authorization requirements for their publication. In addition, all textbooks are of decent quality, and there have been no scandals involving errors or the use of non-academic methods. There is also no German history textbook registry. At the same time, they are, as already

² Andreas Kappeler, „In Schatten Russlands,“ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Juni 9, 2015.

³ Oleg Plenkov, Chto ostalos ot Gitlera? Istoricheskaya vina i politicheskoe pokayanie Germanii, (SP(b): Vladimir Dal, 2019).

mentioned, easily accessible. Large collections of German history textbooks can be found at the Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Braunschweig), Goethe-Institut, and in private collections. There is no need to create a full database of all textbooks in all federal states in order to obtain a full textbook source set. The catalogues of the most prominent textbook publishers provide a representative overview. For example, all federal states utilize history textbooks published by Ernst Klett Verlag (Stuttgart, Leipzig).

German history textbooks provide quite up-to-date academic analyses of the recent developments in world history. Many are linked to Ukraine's history, allowing us to evaluate the accuracy of representing Ukrainian history in German textbooks. *Geschichte und Geschehen* (History and Events), edited by Prof. Michael Sauer, features information about Russia's annexation of Crimea.⁴ It is presented neutrally, from the perspective of the introduction of sanctions against Russia, which is ostensibly of greater concern for the Germans than the damage to Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The seventeen textbooks analysed in this study were selected based on, firstly, recommendations from German experts, including those from the Eckert Institute, and secondly, the reputation and market presence of the largest textbook publishers. Despite the decentralized curriculum mentioned above, what unites the course(s) of history in German schools is the consensus on the fundamental *Weltanschauung* principles shared by the German academic and educational community. This applies, among other things, to the assessment of Germany's actions towards its neighbours, including Ukraine, in the past. Therefore, the analysis of textbooks by the top publishers can be seen as perfectly representative and sufficient.

2 German textbooks and representation of the 20th-century history of Ukraine

In modern-day Germany, history textbooks have a tremendous social impact. As the result of the painful revision of national history, particularly the period of Nazi dictatorship, it was the content of textbooks that imprinted the new collective memory into the German psyche. As Jürgen Habermas noted, “the revision of national history that occurred in Germany by the mid-1980s was the result of collective learning that lasted several decades.”⁵ Forty years after World War II, a nationwide debate started in Germany about the nature of democracy and the foundations of German national identity. The then-chancellor Helmut Kohl declared the *geistig-moralische Wende* (a moral and value turn) that was intended to liberate the Germans from the burden of their “inconvenient” past and to “normalize” the West German historical mindset. Kohl urged Germans to “defend our history with its grandeur and suffering, not to withhold or add anything.”⁶ This implied the revision of the compromise with the past based on the Germans admitting their guilt for the Nazi regime’s crimes. As a result, a massive nationwide debate known as the *Historikerstreit* (debate of historians) ensued. Morally and politically, the argument was won by the proponents of liberal democratic values who emphasized the historical responsibility of the Germans for the crimes of Nazism.

The grand scale of German *working through* the past can only be grasped in comparison with other countries where the topic of responsibility is also expected to be present in the social discourse, such

⁵ Hans-Jürgen Lenzian et al., *Zeiten und Menschen: Geschichte: Qualifikationsphase Oberstufe Nordrhein – Westfalen*, Hans-Jürgen Lenzian (Hrsg.), (Westermann Verlag, 2020).

⁶ Michael Sauer et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen. Band 2*, Michael Sauer (Hrsg.), (Stuttgart – Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2021).

as Russia, Japan, and Turkey. However, the Germans are the best at providing examples of such responsibility, such as by commemorating the victims of the Holocaust and compensating the victims of deportations and the Ostarbeiters.

The debate of historians raised the issue of the essence of national identity. Likewise, the Germans made an important worldview choice in favour of what they termed constitutionalism. It can be interpreted as a form of civic nationalism, which means national identity based on the principles of loyalty to constitutional rights and liberties, and civic responsibility. This resulted in an extremely cautious use of the words “nation,” “patriotism,” and “statehood” in textbooks. The topic of nationalism is not simply absent from textbooks. The term “nation” is rarely used in a positive sense. Instead, textbooks highlight the historical fate of the “ordinary Germans”; often interpret the lessons of World War II as “national redemption”; and draw a clear line between the “difficult legacy of the past and the present-day capacity of Germany and the Germans to be a reliable partner.”⁷

Some German history textbooks tend to dissociate the nation from the fascist leadership and Adolf Hitler personally. All German textbooks of the past 20 years intentionally personalize the 1939 treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union, referring to it as the “Hitler-Stalin Pact.” Similarly, they describe the beginning of World War II as “Hitler’s attack against Poland” and Germany’s attack against the Soviet Union as Hitler’s treachery against Stalin. Students are thus taught to separate Hitler from the German people.

When discussing the start of World War II, German textbooks adhere to the commonly accepted date of September 1, 1939. However, another interpretation, namely that World War II began with the 1937 Japanese invasion of China, is also widespread in textbooks. Obviously, this interpretation, though not prevalent, aids the Germans in coping with their sense of guilt for starting the war. Overall, the presentation of World War II is objective and contains a high degree of truthfulness, especially compared to the representations of the history of war in the Russian Federation and Russian “great-power” privatizing the World War II/Great Patriotic War (as it is called in Russia) victory.

History teaching in Germany, as well as the structure of its history textbooks, adheres to topical approach. In contrast to Ukraine and

Russia, where history instruction is organized chronologically, in Germany history is taught through an immersion in specific topics as opposed to in a chronological order. These are some examples of such topics: Inertia and change: the German question in the 19th century; Progress and crisis: Modern industrial society in 1880-1930; National socialism: precursors, domination, post-effect, and interpretations; German identification in the context of international relations after World War II; Present-day peace movement and peace arrangement.

History textbook *Zeiten und Menschen* (Times and People)⁸ used in Nordrhein-Westphalia by the students who prepare for the Abitur school graduation pre-university exam is structured along these topics. All 16 federal states use textbooks from this series: each is a large-format, over 600 pages edition, which is richly illustrated and includes high-quality maps. Each section of these textbooks contains an abundance of methodological material, including documents, test samples and creative assignments, excerpts from the works of historians and press articles, and political cartoons. All of them encourage students to organize their work independently, cultivate the capacity to think and analyse information critically and foster the formation of an individual point of view. Many history educators refer to these German textbooks as exemplary compared to the teaching literature in other countries of Europe.⁹

Textbooks from other series, *Geschichte und Geschehen* (History and Events), *Menschen, Zeiten, Räume* (People, Times, Space), *Zeitreise* (Traveling in Time), are used for secondary school, *Hauptschule*. They offer a less complex and more popular-oriented presentation of history, thus covering fewer events, historical figures, and facts. The focus of these textbooks is on the history of Germany, while developments in other countries are considered only when they were somehow related to Germany and had a direct impact on the lives of the Germans in the past.

Publishers are influential participants in the textbook preparation process. The largest history textbook publishers, such as *Ernst Klett Verlag*, *Westernmann Gruppe*, *Cornelsen*, adhere to the education programs designed by each federal state's education ministry, but they are free to alter the methods of organization and interpretation

⁸ Sauer et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen. Band 2*, 319.

⁹ Lenzian et al., *Zeiten und Menschen: Geschichte: Qualifikationsphase Oberstufe Nordrhein – Westfalen*, 175 – 176.

of the study material. The inclusion of printed textbooks in publisher catalogues that are individualised for each of the sixteen federal states signifies their official approval.

Teams of authors assembled by publishers can differ depending on the federal state for which a textbook is intended. Educators are free to choose textbooks. Educator assemblies make collective decisions regarding the selection of textbooks for grades 5 through 11, but for the high school students, educators can choose the textbooks individually. The website of a publisher's representative office in a given state is used to order textbooks. Depending on its popularity among educators, every textbook can be reprinted for an extended period of time after its initial release. Every reprint is marked in the copyright page data of the textbook.

All textbooks are oriented at fostering students' capacity to independently formulate their interpretations after gaining familiarity with various viewpoints. For example, the "peaceful" Hitler's propaganda speech is contrasted with his secret speeches and memoranda. The Wehrmacht's crimes are studied based on the testimonies of its victims. By contrasting and analysing different explanations for why the Nazis rose to power, students are expected to draw their own conclusions on which is the most plausible.

The methodological structure of textbooks consists of three consecutive blocks of questions, exercises, and tests that all focus on the purpose of the learning and the methods of helping students develop their historical thinking:

- the analysis of original sources as a methodological approach aimed at understanding facts by practically using sources;
- putting things in context implies systematic analysis of known facts in order to arrive at a conclusion about the reasons and consequences of any given phenomenon. At this stage, students look at conflicting interpretations; and
- finally, the assessment that completes the other two stages and requires the knowledge of different viewpoints and normative categories. The student's own assessments and those of others must be criticized from the perspective of methodology of history studies. The results of analysis and contextualization serve this purpose.

Questions and exercises in textbooks contain “operator” verbs that help master these skills, such as describe and structure; assess the environment where the events took place and compare them; discuss and check. A closer analysis of the methodology, structure, and details of the study material selection for history textbooks explains why they contain so little specific material or systematic chronological layout of historical events. German textbooks are not chronicles, encyclopaedias or mere collections of dates. First and foremost, they are study books that help students develop historical thinking using the most up-to-date methodologies of history studies. Therefore, one should not expect German textbooks to offer a full and detailed account of Ukrainian history. The Germans themselves do not seek to present their own history in a systematic manner following thematic lines.

This unique German structure of textbooks is one of the reasons for almost full absence of Ukraine-related topics in them. Another reason mentioned is usually the general ignorance about Ukraine among European audiences during the 20th century. As Andreas Kappeler, a well-known German historian, explained in his article *In Schatten Russlands* (Overshadowed by Russia) published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*¹⁰ in May 2015, “Ukraine of the late 20th and early 21st centuries did not have its proper place in the cognitive map of Europe. This is relevant for the present-day history, too, albeit to a much lesser extent, as testified by open debates where doubts about the existence of the Ukrainian nation, language and history are expressed time and again.”

According to Kappeler, Ukraine is overshadowed by Russia which has been having an upper hand in interpreting the history of Eastern Europe for over a century now. To this day, Russia has not recognized Ukrainians as an independent nation and views it as part of *Russkiy Mir*. Western countries, Kappeler argues, have taken over that perspective. Ukraine is largely not viewed as having agency of its own, and “great powers” have arranged their policies without considering Ukraine. Kappeler blames German and Russian politicians, diplomats, and historians for ignoring Ukraine and consensually perceiving it as part of Russia.

Textbook making in Germany is managed efficiently and textbooks are published on time, either when commissioned by educational

institutions, or destined for sale. Virtually half of all textbooks are reprinted without changes or additions every year after the first publication. For example, part II of the history textbook *Geschichte und Geschehen* that covers the period from the 11th century to World War I edited by Michael Sauer was published by *Ernst Klett Verlag* in Stuttgart and Leipzig in 2009 and has been reprinted for eleven years without any changes until some amendments were announced in 2022.¹¹

This indicates that the system is remarkably stable, even conservative. Brand new textbooks that have not been on the market before and are unknown to consumers are published rarely. Because of this, even the landmark developments in Ukrainian history, even in cases where German historiography really does research and reflect on them, will take a long time before they make it to textbooks. Therefore, individual mentions of “Ukrainian territory” or “Ukrainians” are to be sought beyond storylines in historical maps, photos, or artistic illustrations.

Let us take a closer look at the most standard textbooks.

Geschichte und Geschehen, edited by M. Sauer, is structured topically. The authors included what they consider the most important topics: “How people got to know about each other in the Middle Ages”; “An encounter of cultures”; “Transition to the modern era”; “Europeans discover and conquer the New World”; “Reformation, peasant wars, and religious clashes”; “Absolutism in Europe”; “On the path to democracy: England and the United States of America”; “The French Revolution: Transition to modern society”; “Industrialization and social issues”; “Germans seek unity and freedom”; “Life in the German Empire”; “Imperialism and World War I.”

The textbook includes 25 optional topics out of the total 92. Each section includes methodological material, workshops, reviews, and more. Chapter 10 (“Germans seek unity and freedom”) features lyrics for the song *Das Lied der Deutschen* (“The Song of the Germans”) composed by Haydn (1732 – 1809) and written by the poet Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1718 – 1874). In a poetic form, it claims that everything around is German: Maas, Memel, laws, freedom, men and women, hands and hearts, and, of course, the well-known slogan *Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt* (Germany above all, above all in the world). Educators and students are offered to conduct a methodological workshop titled “Song

as a Historical Source." A CD-ROM with the recording of the "Song of the Germans" comes with the textbook.¹²

In this context, it is unlikely that much attention will be paid to non-German nations. *Imperialism and World War I* is the only topic that offers at least superficial analysis of foreign policy interests of imperialistic blocs and their tensions that resulted in Weltbrand, the world fire, as the World War I is called. A copy of the well-known postcard from 1914 titled *Instigators of the world war* facing a world trial presented in the textbook portrays Germany as the only country that resists the aggressive coalition of France, Italy, Russia, England, Belgium, and others. Archangel Michael blesses the "justice" of German policy. It is within this topic that we find Ukraine for the first time, but it is present only on the 1914-1918 World War I historical map, not in the text.

The maps of military activities on the Eastern Front and of the Russian Empire mark its frontier territories, including Ukraine, Finland, Poland, Bessarabia, Georgia, Courland and others. Kyiv, the capital, is transcribed from Russian as Kiew. The map shows the frontlines that ran through the Ukrainian territory in December 1915-December 1917 and the deepest advance of the Germans to the Don River in the fall of 1918.

The small paragraph 1918, a terrible end describes the final period of the war from the perspective of daily routine ("wartime daily life in every German home"), the horrors of "total war." The November Revolution in Germany sped up the end of the war: the German delegation signed the act of truce. The war ended up being a catastrophe for Europe: Germany lost 1.8 million people, Russia 1.7 million, France 1.4 million, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire 1.2 million. We see that these numbers include numerous Ukrainian victims who fought in the armies of the countries involved on different sides of the frontline. The war resulted in the collapse of Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires. Textbooks put the stress on the establishment of new nation states but do not name them. They only name the regions where the European map was redrawn, i.e., the Balkans and the East. Still, textbook authors see the emergence of new national states as something that led to a "century of instability and revolutions."¹³

¹² Sauer et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen. Band 2*, 244 – 245.

¹³ Sauer et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen. Band 2*, 319.

The methodological workshop offered for this paragraph (*1918, a terrible end*) is filled with anti-war rhetoric. It features cards from 1918 saying "Perished. He gave his life to his Homeland," photos of German soldiers killed on the Eastern front, and propaganda posters urging German women to help the front and the army.

The representation of historical events (discrete approach, thematic or chronological, detailed or simplified) in German textbooks depends on the type of schools for which they are destined. Textbooks for high school students, especially for Abitur preparations, present history in a more or less systematized manner, covering more events, facts and phenomena. It is in these textbooks that one can find rare mentions about Ukraine and some episodes from world history that are linked to Ukraine. These fragments cannot shape a comprehensive understanding of Ukraine's history for the Germans, or of its role in the life of German society. In German history textbooks, Ukraine is not as important to Germany as Russia or France.

German textbooks feature episodes on Ukrainian history only in the sections that focus on the 20th and early 21st centuries, and only in the events linked to global catastrophes, such as wars (World Wars I and II), revolutions, humanitarian disasters etc. Peaceful periods or episodes linked to the development of Ukrainian culture, education, science, or art are absent. Textbooks do not refer to a single Ukrainian scientist or writer. They include no mentions of Ukraine in the period from the 17th to the 19th centuries when it emerged visibly on the European map (starting from the epoch of Bohdan Khmelnytsky).

Ukraine did not demonstrate its agency in international affairs for the first time until 2014-2016, with the EuroMaidan, the flight of Viktor Yanukovich, the conflict in the Donbas, and the occupation of Crimea, i.e., when it began to break out of the Russkiy Mir orbit. As homage to Ukraine's effort, the introductory chapters of German history textbooks, where they cover the present-day socio-political order, represent Ukraine among independent countries. The textbook *Zeiten und Menschen* edited by Hans-Jurgen Lenzian features the map of Europe from 1900 and Europe today: 2014 map in the introductory chapter *In focus: Nation as the theme of the century*. The new states that did not exist in the 19th century include Ukraine in its present-day borders, including Crimea.

In the introduction, the authors discuss the reasons for nationalism-related problems that arose in the late 20th century and early 21st century.

According to them, globalization and supranational political alliances do not exhaust the national questions. They list the Catalan issue or the Basque movement as examples of intensifying national movements. Ukraine is not mentioned in that context. However, the authors note that the national issue is far from being solved in the early 21st century in modern Europe. Nations, both political and ethnic, will still influence the global agenda for a long time. The chapter itself is titled *The Role of Empires*.

German textbooks traditionally pay a lot of attention to World War I. The titles of the relevant chapters contain the harshest descriptions with emotionally charged assessments, such as “global catastrophe,” “global horror,” and others. The events seem to be inexorably predetermined by fate: the July Crisis (after the Sarajevo assassination on June 28, 1914) unavoidably paves the way to war. Supposedly, no one was able to stop the outburst of the world war. The military developments of 1914 themselves point to “a collapse of the illusion of a quick victory” for the Germans. The textbook features horrible photos of the German soldiers killed in the Battle of Verdun in the fall of 1914.¹⁴ Once again, Ukraine only appears on the maps like that of the advance of German troops towards Kyiv and Odesa; or the map depicting the frontline in the fall of 1915 and late 1915–October 1918. In this context, Lviv (Lemberg) is mentioned for the first time: the Austro-Hungarian army was forced to leave it in early September 1914 as a result of the Russian advance. This was not just the beginning of a world war. It was a “modern” war, a battle of military industries, economies and the war with millions of victims.¹⁵

Ukraine is also mentioned in the context of the Bolshevik Revolution and the 1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. But textbook authors come to a controversial conclusion, stating that “Russia left Poland and Baltic States and was forced to recognize the independence of Finland and Ukraine.”¹⁶ It is, however, not true: the Soviet government of Russia accepted the occupation of the Ukrainian territory by the Kaiser’s troops, but never mentioned official recognition of Ukraine’s independence. Instead, their proclamation of the Donetsk-Kryvyi Rih Republic was a political trick aimed at keeping control over Ukraine.

This is followed by the analysis of the situation in Europe after the collapse of the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman empires. Ukraine

¹⁴ Sauer et al., *Geschichte und Geschehen*. Band 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 244 – 245.

¹⁶ Lenzian et al., *Zeiten und Menschen: Geschichte: Qualifikationsphase Oberstufe Nordrhein – Westfalen*, 180.

is mentioned among the nation states that were established in 1918. But the textbook offers no explanation of further developments, including the establishment of the Ukrainian People's Republic, its war with Bolshevik Russia, the declaration of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the takeover of it by the Soviet Union as a new imperial entity. This can lead students to a wrong impression (unless additional sources are used) that Ukraine gained independence at the same time as Finland did. Moreover, the next part of the textbook is an entirely new topic *Between wars and crises (1919-1929)* that focuses exclusively on Germany.

The next few references to Ukraine, Ukrainians and Ukrainian history come up in *National Socialism: Precursors, dominance, post-effects and interpretations*, a big topic that is present in all German textbooks under different titles, albeit with de facto similar content, which illustrates the shared approach in German historiography.

The chapter starts with several photographs and the text demonstrating the crimes of the Nazis during World War II. The photographical reconstruction of Auschwitz ovens features a photo of a Ukrainian young man "with camp number 47829 who was imprisoned in Auschwitz in 1942."¹⁷ The placement of a photo of a "Ukrainian young man" in this particular episode could be seen as purely incidental since historians who write texts often work autonomously from illustrators and artists. Later in the text, however, another photo illustrating the essence of the German Nazi occupation regime in Eastern Europe on page 317 is titled *Exekution (execution), Ukraine 1942: a German soldier shoots a woman, apparently Ukrainian, with a child*. In sum, Ukraine is usually represented merely as an object of the "great powers" activities, and Ukrainians feature as a stateless people who fought at all frontlines for different states. There are no episodes of heroism, resistance, or victories on their part.

In the account of the Holocaust, the biggest death camps and ghettos are mentioned, including Auschwitz where 1.2 million people were killed, as well as Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek and others. However, there are no mentions of the Babyn Yar tragedy.

Ukraine is mentioned as a geographic name in Germany's plans to expand its Lebensraum, the living space, eastward: specifically, its intention to create the Reichskommissariats "East" and "Ukraine."¹⁸

¹⁷ Lenzian et al., *Zeiten und Menschen: Geschichte: Qualifikationsphase Oberstufe Nordrhein – Westfalen*, 233.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 314.

Several problematic issues refer to the post-war period. One is *From ideological competitions to the bipolar world*. The subsection of this chapter titled *Territorial expansion of the USSR* briefly describes territorial gains of the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1945. It mentions treaties with Czechoslovakia and Romania as well as the cementing of Soviet territorial gains in the Baltic States and in Karelia. It does not mention Ukraine, although the issue of Ukrainian territory and its borders, as well as deportations, was already de facto present and reflected in international historiography. German textbooks include nothing of that: Ukraine is not a participant of international relations in the eyes of Western historians, even if Ukraine was a founding member of the United Nations (established on October 24, 1945).

Another postwar topic in German textbooks is titled *The trauma of displacement: How millions lost their Homeland in 1945*. Over 12 million deported Germans left their native land and were forced to look for new territory, cities, and villages for postwar settlement. Other nationalities fell victim to “the most radical forced resettlement in modern history,” according to historian Klaus-Dietmar Henke. The nationalities mentioned in this context include Hungarians, Slovaks, Italians, Ukrainians, and Poles. This section discusses in detail the deportations of Germans and Poles, marks the key directions of forced resettlement on the map, and draws conclusions about similarities in the policies of Hitler and Stalin, using the deportations of Poles and Ukrainians as illustrations.¹⁹

After that, Ukraine vanishes from German textbooks for a long time. In the topic titled *The end of the East-West conflict, revolution in the GDR and German unity* textbook authors rightly link the precursors to German reunification to the reformist policy in the Soviet Union and other policies of Mikhail Gorbachev. A lot of attention is paid to the *perestroika* and *glasnost*, both words are provided without translation in the text. The section features several photos of Gorbachev and his bio. His role in the reunification of Germany and reconciliation with the US is assessed exclusively from a positive perspective. German textbooks cover this aspect of Gorbachev’s work in more detail than modern Russian and Ukrainian textbooks do.

Textbooks link Ukraine’s regained independence with the August Putsch of “orthodox communist forces in Moscow.” Putsch sped up the collapse of the Soviet Union.²⁰ Rather than August 24 or December 1,

¹⁹ Lenzian et al., *Zeiten und Menschen: Geschichte: Qualifikationsphase Oberstufe Nordrhein – Westfalen*, 404, 407.

²⁰ Lenzian et al., *Zeiten und Menschen: Geschichte: Qualifikationsphase Oberstufe Nordrhein – Westfalen*, 505.

German historians see December 8, 1991, as the landmark event when three former Soviet Union republics, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, “terminated the Soviet Union.” At the same time, GUS, or CIS, the Commonwealth of Independent States, was established. A special subchapter describes the Nobel Peace Prize for Gorbachev, which he received on October 15, 1991, as the crown of Gorbachev’s “successful reformist activities.”

The most recent developments of German, world and Ukrainian history rarely make it immediately into German textbooks. This is the result of the methodological requirement of history studies to only deal with the events, processes and facts that have already taken place. Within this approach, the ongoing developments are a matter of political analysis or sociological research. Dealing with more recent times, Germans apply a different approach: they provide press reports (“media story”) or up-to-date journalistic reports in methodological material, workshops and documents.

For example, *Zeiten und Menschen* textbooks offer an excerpt from the 2014 *Friedensmacht Europa* (Europe as a Peace-Loving Force), an article by the German lawyer and media professional Dirk Hermann Voss, rather than an academic historical text. In his article, Voss reflects on the threats that the current world creates to peace. To him, Europe has strong peace traditions. Here comes an interesting idea: that the 2014 Ukrainian Maidan is a struggle for peace in Europe. It exemplifies resistance to aggression and consolidation of peace-loving forces. The mention of the Maidan in February 2014, barricades in Kyiv, forced the author to explain what the “Maidan” is in a footnote. According to Voss, it is a “square in Kyiv where numerous protesters stood for freedom and independence of Ukraine.”²¹ In this way, thanks to the unique methodology of designing history textbooks, great attention to original sources and publications by a German journalist, Ukraine’s Maidan and 2014 developments ended up in history textbooks.

Thanks to this approach, some other episodes from Ukraine’s history ended up in learning materials (Documents and reflections chapter) as illustrations of controversial issues. Chapter 3 of *Geschichte und Geschehen*, edited by Sauer, contains some references to the 1932-1933 Holodomor in the materials for the *Stalin rule: Was it a terrorist government?* debate.

The textbook links it to collectivization and the assault against *Kulaken* (this Russian word is used in the text). According to the textbook, poor harvest and forced collectivization led to the famine that resulted in a huge number of victims, killing from 5 to 7 million people. Just like Lenin before, Stalin now used man-made famine as a weapon against peasantry. International aid was blocked. The famine affected the Ukrainian population especially hard. "Murder by hunger, meaning Holodomor against millions of Ukrainians, was recognized by the European Parliament as a crime against humanity in 2008," the textbook authors conclude.²² This is perfectly in line with the position of both German historiography and of the German government. They avoid defining the Holodomor as a genocide against the Ukrainian people.

It is worth noting how the authors differentiate between the concepts of *Hungersnot* as hunger, *Hungertod* as death of hunger, and Holodomor from Ukrainian as "subjugation of Ukrainian peasants using hunger as a weapon." The number of the Holodomor victims, from 5 to 7 million, is the "all-union" number. Based on the textbook, Ukrainian losses can amount to up to 3.9 million people, the number Ukrainian historians and demographers insist on today.

Similarly, methodological materials mention the most recent Ukraine-related developments in passing, as ongoing developments in world history. The materials for the *Beginning of the end of one idea? A new crisis threatens Europe* encourages students to discuss the relations of the united Europe with Russia, among other topics. They mention that the relations between the EU and Russia have been in crisis in the past years as a result of Russia's conflict with Ukraine. Many commentators see this as the beginning of a new Cold War. The EU is concerned over the attempts of the Russian-speaking population backed by Russia to create their own states. In response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the EU introduced political and economic sanctions against Moscow.²³

In this context, students are asked whether the European Union has a future. Apparently, this points to some solidarity with the statement that a strong united Europe is impossible without Ukraine. This idea is present in the quote of European Parliament President Martin Schulz

from July 1, 2014, which focused on the Ukraine crisis, too. The speech was dubbed "To fear the threat of war." Schulz drew a chronological anniversary parallel with what had happened a century ago when World War I started and 75 years ago when World War II began. Europe is terrified by the threat of a new war. Resolving the Ukraine crisis means preserving peace for a united Europe.²⁴

3 Conclusions

History textbooks in Germany are an exemplary model of the present-day European history teaching literature design. Flawless methodological approach, focus on developing students' awareness, rational policy of developing and distributing history textbooks have taken German history teaching to the leading positions in the world. Minimal state regulation, academic freedom, and advanced modern methodology in history guarantee an organic combination of academic nature and didactic perfection in German textbooks.

German history textbooks offer a moral and value benchmark in shaping German identity. The Germans have successfully coped with their past, and their society is filled with social optimism. The Germans view world history from the perspective of national interests first and foremost. They only learn the history of the countries that have an impact on the world agenda today and matter in bilateral relations. Ukraine, however, is not among German priorities. German politicians continue to look at Russia, prioritizing it in their policy on Eastern Europe. As a result, Ukraine's history remains on the side-lines of the German school history course. School history textbooks rarely mention Ukraine as a state, referring to it instead as a territory or Ukrainians as the population beyond state entities.

Ukraine's government does not have a clearly thought-through policy to protect its history and promote it in the German information space. Ukraine should not instruct the Germans on how to correctly interpret history, as Amb. Andriy Melnyk does. Instead, Ukraine should establish a reliable dialogue between historians from Ukraine and Germany and work in a dialogue with representatives of various political forces, either interested in Ukraine, or Russophile-oriented.

It is worth paying attention to the work of the bilateral German-Ukrainian commission of historians and engaging it in discussing the issues of Ukraine's history representation in Germany and its school

history course. The issue of history textbooks is essentially beyond the commission's scope of attention as it focuses primarily on the debate purely within the field of academic research.

Ukraine needs to engage influential German institutions, including non-government foundations that deal with reconciliation with the past, and try to represent and promote Ukrainian visions of its history through them, primarily those related to the German-Ukrainian relations, the history of ethnic Germans in the territory of Ukraine, and Ukrainian diaspora in Germany.

It is also important to establish institutional cooperation with the organizations that show interest in Ukraine and its history, such as the above-mentioned Eckert Institut or the Körber History Forum.²⁵ Finally, Ukraine should study the German experience of designing and working with bilateral history textbooks (e. g., between Germany and France).

4 List of analysed textbooks

Barth, Steffen, Peter Johannes Droste. Geschichte und Geschehen. Oberstufe. 11 – 13 kl. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2017.

Bender, Daniela, Christian Hecker, Silke Köhler. Geschichte und Geschehen. Oberstufe. 12 kl. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2009.

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Christoffer, Sven, Elke Fleiter. Zeitreise 9/10. 1900-heute. Stuttgart – Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2016.

Christoffer, Sven, Klaus Leinen, Peter Offergeld. Zeitreise 9. Um 1880 bis 1945. Stuttgart – Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2009.

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Kochenhörfer, Jürgen et al. Geschichte und Geschehen Berufliches. Gymnasium 1 – 2 Jahrgangstufe. Jürgen Kochenhörfer (Hrsg.). Stuttgart – Leipzig: Ernst Klett Verlag, 2016.

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