

20TH-CENTURY HISTORY OF UKRAINE IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS IN THE UK





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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.

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1 History textbooks in British secondary education system

The school education system in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland rests on the recognition of the right of each of its parts to their proper organization of education. This is attested to by the existence of different curricula (standards, teaching plans, and programs) for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.¹

At the same time, the structure of basic education is similar in all four parts of the UK and consists of the following stages:

Primary education that includes the following stages:

- Key stage 1 (aged 3 to 8)
- Key stage 2 (up to 11-12)

Secondary education:

- Key stage 3 (aged 12-14)
- Key stage 4 (aged 14-16)

All students sit for a state exam after completing the nine-year cycle. Between 16 and 18-19 years of age, all students can obtain further education by continuing their secondary schooling either in pre-university academic, vocational, or tertiary colleges.² This system is therefore based on four stages. Each has a description of expected academic performance and a grading system. Apart from public schools

¹"National Curriculum in England: History Programmes of Study," GOV.UK, September 11, 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-history-programmes-of-study>.

² "Education System in the UK," GOV.UK, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219167/v01-2012ukes.pdf.

that account for up to 90% of all secondary education facilities, there are also private schools in the UK, and they are called public as well.

The substance of education is outlined in national curricula. All schools must follow them, although some private schools or homeschooling plans vary to some extent. From 2008 to 2014, national curricula in various areas of school education were reformed. Some courses/subjects, including Mathematics and Nature Study as an integrated course under the umbrella title Science have undergone changes in substance and requirements since 2016/2017.

Northern Ireland is introducing a new version of the curriculum in 2020/2021. The main changes concern the definition and description of education performance and the grading system.

National curricula of the four countries of the UK prescribe what is to be taught at school in history and society/civic studies differently. The program/standard for teaching the history of England was last amended in 2013-2014. Gradually since 2016, Scotland has been introducing the new *Scotland's curriculum – Curriculum for Excellence* containing desirable skills and fundamental capacities. that are necessary to accomplish the curriculum. The curriculum does not specify the contents of each class that must lead to the development of these skills and capacities.³ History is not envisaged as an individual subject in the curriculum. Instead, the topic People, past events and societies is integrated into the educational sector Social studies at every stage of education.⁴

As a subject, history is taught in stages 1, 2, and 3 of school. It is therefore not mandatory in secondary education after the age of 16. The level of requirements is increasing, and the coverage of topics is becoming deeper from primary school (stage 1) to secondary school (stages 2 and 3). At all stages, history studying is primarily centred around the topics linked to the British Isles in a chronological order from prehistory to the present day in its various dimensions, so as to “know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people’s lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.”⁵

³ “Curriculum for Excellence,” <https://education.gov.scot/documents/All-experiencesoutcomes18.pdf>.

⁴ “Scottish Education System,” Education Scotland, <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/>.

⁵ “National Curriculum in England: History Programmes of Study.”

In addition, the curriculum offers the learners the history of the earliest civilizations of Northern Africa and Eurasia, the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, non-European societies in the Middle Ages, and the early modern and modern periods. An emerging trend of recent years is to include the history of colonies and the black population of the UK, the history of slavery, the history of migration, the history of women, the history of minorities discriminated against in the past, etc. Curricula in other UK countries include a similar set of episodes as well as local history and the requirement to understand the origins of their culture and identity. Some episodes are studied repeatedly at a more profound level in all three stages of history learning from ages 5 to 16. As noted above, the structure of the curriculum in Scotland does not stipulate history as a standalone subject. But the description of expected learning outcomes in Social studies suggests that students will be able to develop their own understanding of history, legacy, and culture of Scotland, and to evaluate their local and national legacies in the world, expand their understanding of the world as they learn about human activity and accomplishments in the past and present.⁶

Notably, the school history curriculum in England primarily focuses on describing the competencies that are referred to as key and substantive in Ukrainian practice, such as chronological and geospatial thinking, as well as critical and systemic thinking. The topics for learning listed in the program or curriculum are marked as optional, and only serve as examples of filling the curriculum with contents.

For instance, the following requirements for educational outcomes are proposed for stage 3 learning: "Pupils should extend and deepen their chronologically secure knowledge and understanding of British, local and world history, so that it provides a well-informed context for wider learning. Pupils should identify significant events, make connections, draw contrasts, and analyse trends within periods and over long arcs of time. They should use historical terms and concepts in increasingly sophisticated ways. They should pursue historically valid enquiries including some they have framed themselves, and create relevant, structured and evidentially supported accounts in response. They should understand how different types of historical sources are used rigorously to make historical claims and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed".⁷

⁶ "Curriculum for Excellence," 278-299.

⁷ "National Curriculum in England: History Programmes of Study."

Apparently, this list of requirements is not tied to a specific topic or piece of content. Instead, it requires educators to organize the learning process based on the educational purposes rather than on the learning of chronological line of facts throughout the cycle of school history education from the ages of 4-6 to 15-16. When it comes to the topics that can be used to pursue educational purposes, educators themselves can choose those from various periods from prehistory to present-day history. Teachers are free to decide which periods and topics from those periods they will teach to their students. Four such periods are suggested for Key Stage 3: “The Development of Church, State, and Society in Medieval Britain 1066–1509”; “The development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509–1745”; “Ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745–1901”; and “Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day”. The “Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day” period covers the following topics (including mandatory study of the Holocaust):

- women’s suffrage
- the First World War and the Peace Settlement
- the inter-war years: the Great Depression and the rise of dictators
- the Second World War and the wartime leadership of Winston Churchill
- the creation of the Welfare State
- Indian independence and end of Empire
- social, cultural, and technological change in post-war British society
- Britain’s place in the world since 1945.

The National Curriculum of England notes that it is advised to offer students at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments. Examples include “Mughal India 1526–1857”; “China’s Qing dynasty 1644–1911”; “Changing Russian empires c.1800-1989”; “USA in the 20th Century.”⁸

The list of qualification requirements for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams is important for this research. Specifications of educational outcomes contain a list of historical topics which graduates should use in order to develop their historic thinking and interpretation skills. For example, the 2016-2018 specifications proposed adding deeper studying of events in modern non-British history so that popular topics on Russia, Germany, and the US stay in the curriculum, but Chinese history could also be added.⁹

One specific feature of the British system of history textbooks is its full decentralization. Textbooks focus on specific periods and topics and are labelled with the educational stage and region of the UK they are designed for. Textbooks are a commercial product, but schools can have a subscription with a publisher and get textbooks and special exam preparation materials based on these textbooks at a discount. Schools and educators are free to choose textbooks; it is the responsibility of the educator. The most popular textbooks are often reprinted two, three, and more times with some updates. They are stored at school or in the educator's personal library, where they can be used at any time and in any grade for the content selected.

The biggest and most influential publishers, such as Hodder Education, Coordination Group Publications (a publishing company), or Longman (Pearson Education) (an education publishing group focused on exam preparation materials in various fields), cooperate with certain authors who are in charge of selecting the content for the textbooks while making sure it complies with the national curriculum in terms of developing historical thinking and respective competencies. Notably, an additional publication with preparatory material for stage exams is offered with every textbook. These publications are especially popular for Stage 3, which is followed by the secondary school graduation exam. They offer recommendations to students and educators on how to work with the suggested textual and visual documents; they also identify key phenomena, processes, and concepts for mastering the topic, and offer a temporal line with events marked on it, etc. Since these publications are supplements to the textbooks, they offer deeper coverage of topics similar to those that are covered in the textbooks, based on the selection from the curriculum or academic program.

By contrast to history learning in Ukraine, where a series of textbooks on world history must follow a chronological order with country-by-country coverage, the British system offers a topic-centred approach. For example, one series of textbooks focuses on *World War I*, or *Elizabethan England*, or *Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–40* by Dale Scarborough, Ian Dawson; *Power and the People* by Alf Wilkinson; *Access to History. Conflict and Reformation: The establishment of the Anglican Church 1529–70* by Roger Turvey; *History Explaining the Modern World: Power, Reformation and the Historic Environment* by Ben Walsh, Paul Shuter, and Hannah Dalton, and others.¹⁰

Textbooks for the primary school and Key stage 2 include *Romans in Britain*, *Anglo-Saxons*, *Mayan Civilisation*, *Stone Age to Celts*, *The Tudors*, *Changes* and others. In recent years, there have appeared textbooks on the history of medicine from 1250 to the present, or textbooks such as *History: Britain: Health and the People c1000–Present Day* by Alf Wilkinson; the history of crimes and punishment in the UK through centuries, textbooks titled *Re-discovering the Twentieth-Century World: A World Study after 1900* by Colin Shephard, Keith Shephard, and Terry Fiehn; *Conflict and Tension between East and West 1945–1972* and *Conflict and Tension: The Inter-War Years 1918–1939* by Aaron Wilkes, Jon Cloake; *History: America 1920–1973: Opportunity and Inequality* by Aaron Wilkes and Jon Cloake; *History: The USA, 1954–1975: conflict at home and abroad* by Neil Owen; *Britain 1851–1964: Challenge and Transformation* by Nick Shepley and Michael Byrne, and others have emerged.¹¹

¹⁰ Wesley Royle, *AQA GCSE History: Elizabethan England, c1568–1603*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016); Dale Scarborough, Ian Dawson, *Henry VIII & His Ministers, 1509–40*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016); Alf Wilkinson, *AQA GCSE History: Power and the People*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016); Roger Turvey, *Access to History: Conflict and Reformation: The Establishment of the Anglican Church 1529–70*, (London: Hodder Education, 2015); Ben Walsh, Paul Shuter, Hannah Dalton, *History Explaining the Modern World: Power, Reformation and the Historic Environment* (London: Hodder Education, 2016).

¹¹ Alf Wilkinson, *AQA GCSE History: Health and the People*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016); Alec Fisher, Ed Podesta, *Crime and Punishment Through Time c.1000 – Present*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016); Rob Quinn, Paul Evans, *History Changes in Crime and Punishment in Britain c.500 to the present day*, (London: Hodder Education, 2021); Colin Shephard, Keith Shephard, Terry Fiehn, *Re-discovering the Twentieth-Century World: A World Study after 1900* (ReDiscovering the Past), (London: Hodder Education, 2001); Tim Williams, Aaron Wilkes, Jon Cloake. *Conflict and Tension between East and West 1945–1972*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Aaron Wilkes, Ellen Longley, Jon Cloake, *Conflict and Tension: The Inter-War Years 1918–1939*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Aaron Wilkes, Jon Cloake, *History: America 1920–1973: Opportunity and Inequality*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Neil Owen, *My Revision Notes: Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1) History: The USA 1954–1975 Conflict at Home and Abroad*, (London: Hodder Education, 2019); Nick Shepley, Michael Byrne, *AQA A-level History: Britain 1851–1964: Challenge and Transformation*, (London: Hodder Education, 2015).

Based on the graduation exam qualification requirements after grade 9, publishers compile a series of thematic publications on different historical episodes from different time periods under the titles *History in Focus*, *Making Sense of History*, *Access to History*. These series can cover both traditional themes presented chronologically, and unexpected combinations of episodes centered around history of ideas, technology, changes, continuity of the historical process and more. For example, *Understanding History. Britain in the wider world, Roman times – present* textbook (256 pages) from the Making Sense of History series features the following thematic studies: water and health through time; London through time; sugar, empire, and slavery through time; understanding industry and empire, 1750-1900; migration to Britain through time; and understanding the modern world, 1900 to present.

Since the contents of history teaching are defined both by the general curriculum and by the school or education district formed by local territorial communities and local governments, associations of teachers play an important role in it. For example, the Historical Association has existed since 1906 and offers its members support, including in elaborating their own teaching program on every stage of education, as well as helps them select content for classes.¹² Apart from materials for teachers, from which a significant part are recommendations on fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum as well as examples of learning materials for different topics, the Historical Association website also offers materials for the students aged 14-16 (stage 3) and 16-18 (post-secondary education). These materials include films, articles, and selections of thematic podcasts. These online collections of materials allow us to see the accents in history teaching in English schools.¹³

The analysis of the curriculum and part of the history textbooks present in the market shows that there are few chances to see the history of Ukraine, Ukrainian territories, or Ukrainians mentioned as a standalone episode in history textbooks. Still, thematic publications on the history of the 20th century in Europe, including the history of the Russian Revolution, modernization in the Soviet Union, World War II, and the foreign relations in the post-war period or during the collapse of the Soviet Union, do have references to Ukraine in various contexts, especially in the books published after 2010. This analysis covers textbooks by the biggest publishers of educational literature in

¹² "About Us," Historical Association, <https://www.history.org.uk/>.

¹³ "Student," Historical Association, <https://www.history.org.uk/student>.

the UK and Scotland, including Hodder Education and Collins, which were accessible and whose thematic range is linked to the history of the 20th century overall and the history of the Russian Empire/Soviet Union in particular. Given that history teaching in Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland is complemented by episodes of local history and is characterized by their own design of educational outcomes for secondary schools, as well as because of the restricted access to the database of all UK textbooks, this study remains limited.

2 20th-century history of Ukraine in school textbooks in the UK

For the purposes of this research, only those textbooks that were likely to cover the topics potentially linked to Ukrainian history were selected. Based on the topics suggested by the curricula, these could only be textbooks on 20th century history, primarily covering the history of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, as well as on international relations in the 20th and 21st centuries, especially those used to prepare for the secondary school graduation exam at the age of 16. The UK has a huge market for school history study materials and a specific approach to the choice of their contents. Therefore, it appears too challenging to analyse all the textbooks and manuals where Ukraine-related episodes can be present. In this study, thirteen textbooks for key stages 3–4 (students aged 11 – 13 and 13 – 16) were researched. Younger students study other topics/episodes. The analysis below covers only the textbooks that mention Ukraine in some way. These include 20th-century world history textbooks with similar titles about the present-day world, its origins, and trends in historical development, such as *Modern World History: Period and Depth Studies (Explaining the Modern World)* by Ben Walsh¹⁴ or several textbooks by the same author under the common title *History in Focus. Essential Modern World History*.¹⁵ This group of textbooks also includes John D. Clare's *The Twentieth Century*.¹⁶ These textbooks cover multiple episodes. Despite a rather general focus, they include sections or paragraphs on the Russian Empire and/or Soviet Union in various periods. Hence the focus of this research on these textbooks.

¹⁴ Ben Walsh, *Modern World History: Period and Depth Studies (Explaining the Modern World)*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016).

¹⁵ Ben Walsh, *History in Focus. Essential Modern World History*, (London: Hodder Education, 2001)

¹⁶ John D. Clare, *The Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1999).

The textbooks that address the history of the Soviet Union in detail are of special importance for this research. This cluster includes textbooks that cover the history of the 1905–1907 Russian Revolution, the rise of Stalin’s dictatorship and his domestic policy, World War II, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Examples include *History: Dictatorship and Conflict in the USSR, 1924 – 53* by Simon Taylor; *Russia and Soviet Union, 1905 – 1924* by Rob Bircher; *Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941 – 91* by John Wright and Steve Waugh; and *Reaction and Revolution: Russia 1894 – 1924* by Michael Lynch.

Ben Walsh’s textbooks, reprinted repeatedly between 1992 and 2013, certain topics, such as *The Peace Treaties After the First World War* or international relations in the interwar period, and particularly certain topics from Soviet history that are likely to include materials about Ukraine, draw particular attention. For instance, Ben Walsh’s 2014 textbook *History in Focus* mentions in the text on the restoration of the Polish state after the Treaty of Versailles, that Poland had over 30% of non-ethnic Poles among its population, including Ukrainians, Jews, and Germans.¹⁷ The section titled *The USSR, Germany and the USA between the Wars*, in the chapter *Russia and the USSR in 1905–1941*, pays a lot of attention to the tsarist rule, the February and October Revolutions, and Stalin’s successful struggle for power.

In covering these topics, however, the textbook does not mention Ukrainians⁶ or Ukraine, or the national aspect overall. The paragraph on the creation of the USSR does not offer a list of the republics that became part of the Union under the 1922 treaty. The paragraph on collectivization, on page 133, mentions that Stalin’s policy in agriculture led to famine where millions died “in the richest regions of Russia”, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine, and “when the Germans invaded the Ukraine in 1941, they were at first made welcome for driving out the Communists.”¹⁸ Specialized study materials for the Cambridge IGCSE (for secondary school graduates), including Ben Walsh’s *Modern World History* with several follow-up versions – the most recent one dating back 2016 – mention Ukraine several times.¹⁹ The section titled *Depth Studies* offers the topic *Russia, 1905–1941* that suggests the following key questions: Why did the Tsar’s regime collapse in 1917? How did the Bolsheviks gain

¹⁷ Ben Walsh, Wayne Birks, *Modern World History Revision Guide 2nd Edition (History In Focus)*, (London: Hodder Education, 2014), 96.

¹⁸ Walsh, Birks, *Modern World History Revision Guide 2nd Edition (History In Focus)*, 133.

¹⁹ Walsh, *Modern World History: Period and Depth Studies (Explaining the Modern World)*, 188, 194, 204, 209, 223.

power, and how did they consolidate their rule? How did Stalin gain and hold on to power? What was the impact of Stalin's economic policies? The list of key questions and the titles of paragraphs signal that the entire Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union are perceived and presented as Russia.

Thus, by contrast to expectations, no information is found in this textbook, aimed at in-depth preparation of students for the exam, on Ukraine or any Ukraine-related topics, facts, phenomena or figures. It mentions Ukraine as a geographical concept, or a territory that is somewhat linked to developments in Russian or Soviet history.

Paragraph 8.1 on page 188 features a 1900 map of the Russian Empire where Odesa, Dnipro, and Crimea are marked. Subparagraph titled Stolypin explains that "Stolypin also tried to win over the peasants with the 'carrot' they had always wanted – land. He allowed wealthier peasants, the kulaks, to opt out of the mir communes and buy up land. The kulaks prospered and, in the process, created larger and more efficient farms... On the other hand, 90 percent of land in the fertile west of Russia was run by inefficient communes in 1916. Farm sizes remained small even in Ukraine, Russia's best farmland."²⁰ What is interesting in this research is how the author uses the Russian term kulak (*kurkul* in Ukrainian) to signify a wealthy peasant. This inaccurate terminology suggests that the author was influenced by Soviet historiography, since the term *kulak* or *kurkul* had a totally negative connotation from the mid-1920s and through the 1930s and it was far from being a synonym for wealthy peasants. Instead, Soviet authorities used it as a synonym for 'enemy of the people.' The use of this concept in the section on Stolypin's farmland reform does not help textbook users understand how the people who were the foundation of the rural economy transformed into one of the main victims of Stalin's regime.

Paragraphs on the February Revolution, referred to as the March 1917 Revolution in the textbook, the crisis of the Russian Provisional Government and the rise to power of the Bolsheviks led by Lenin do not mention the national dimension in the list of reasons for the crisis and the fall of the tsarist government in the Russian Empire or in its account on the policy of the Provisional Government. At the same time, the text on the Russian Revolution is very detailed and contains numerous primary sources, including fragments of correspondence, memoirs by Guchkov,

Rodzianko, Kornilov, and Kerensky. It also provides a detailed account of the role of Lenin and Trotsky in the establishment of the Bolshevik regime. Source 17 on page 204 shows the map of territorial changes as a result of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk where Ukraine is painted in a different colour than Russia. It is not mentioned by the name, but the map says that this is the “best agricultural land and an industrial area.”

Ten pages of this textbook give a fairly detailed account of the rise of the Bolshevik regime, the War Communism policy, and the New Economic Policy (NEP), and the establishment of the USSR. However, it does not mention Ukraine or other national republics even once. Obviously, this leaves the impression that the 1917–1921 developments were about Russia alone and its transformation into Soviet Russia, understood as the USSR.

Paragraph 8 on the accomplishments (sic!) of Stalin’s industrialization has a section on Alexey Stakhanov and his role in the propaganda of Stalin’s five-year plans, but without any geographic reference to where his labour accomplishments took place. This paragraph has several fragments about Muslim and Asian regions of the USSR and the impact of Stalin’s modernization policy on them, as well as questions on these processes in domestic political and economic life as a follow-up to the study material.

Page 218 describes in a lot of detail the modernization of agriculture under Stalin, including collectivization and the campaign against *kulaks* (*kurkuls*) as a class. The author describes the outcome of this policy neutrally as the cause, along with the draught, of the famine that was particularly widespread in Ukraine. Ben Walsh refers to these developments as “traumatic experience” and points out that Stalin accomplished his goals of turning backward peasants into workers: “This process in 1930–1932 caused huge disruption in the countryside and there were huge food shortages. This, combined with a poor harvest in 1932, led to a famine on an unimaginable scale, particularly in Ukraine, in the years 1932–33. The Government would not acknowledge the famine and still sent out requisitioning gangs to collect grain for the workers and to export to other countries. Millions starved, perhaps as many as 13 million people.” This was a man-made human tragedy of a grand scale. It ruined the routine life of millions of peasants. The countryside calmed down after this traumatic experience and grain production grew gradually, although the number of animals did not reach the pre-collectivization level until 1940. Stalin accomplished his goals: he took

the grain supply under control and collectivized the peasantry. Apart from that, he ended up with an available factory workforce.²¹

The answers to the key questions in the summary state that Stalin needed to make agriculture more modern, using tractors and fertilizers, in order to produce food for the workers. For that, he used collectivization, forcing peasants to give their land and animals to kolkhozes under government control. Many peasants resisted and were executed, sent to camps, or deported. Millions of people fled to new cities to become workers. As a result, food production dropped in some parts of the USSR, especially in Ukraine, and famine occurred in some parts of the USSR, particularly in Ukraine, in 1932-33. However, Stalin got what he wanted from collectivization: food for the workers, grain to export abroad, more industrial workers, and control over peasants and food.²² Ben Walsh thus builds his account in a way that portrays modernization at the expense of the countryside as justified and states that Stalin's goal was accomplished.

In the special materials for the exam, under subsection Nationalities, Walsh dedicates several paragraphs to the persecution of the Muslims, particularly the Chechens, the Crimean Tatars, and others, as well as representatives of the Baltic States and the Poles. In this paragraph, the author seems to be combining anti-Islamic policy in the USSR, that intensified in 1929, with deportations of the listed peoples in the mid-1940s. He provides no information about repressions or national policy in Ukraine.²³

Ukraine is not mentioned in the paragraphs on the beginning and continuation of World War II. The textbook offers a brief account of the Munich Agreement and the partition of Czechoslovakia, as well as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. However, it does not mention Ukraine or Ukrainians in the context of the partition of Czechoslovakia or Poland. The map on page 398 notes the territory that went to the USSR as a result of the 1939 Soviet-German agreement, but this territory appears just as a spot and is not marked as the territory of Ukraine, Belarus, or the Baltic States. A similar map appears on page 420, in the section *Eastern Europe and Cold War in 1948–1989*, but with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania marked on it. *Walsh's 2014 History in Focus*, in a paragraph on why Gorbachev tried to change the Soviet Union, mentions that

²¹ Walsh, *Modern World History: Period and Depth Studies (Explaining the Modern World)*, 218.

²² Walsh, *Modern World History: Period and Depth Studies (Explaining the Modern World)*, 219.

²³ *Ibid.*, 223.

after Boris Yeltsin was elected president of Russia, Ukraine declared independence in July 1990 and other republics followed suit.²⁴ However, the author provides the date of the Declaration of State Sovereignty but says nothing about August 1991 and the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine or about its role in the official termination of the Soviet Union's existence.

This points to the conclusion that British school students will associate Russia with the Soviet Union through this edition, having no opportunity to comprehend the complexity of processes in Soviet state-building and the Ukrainian factor in the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ukraine is mentioned in the textbook as a geographical name in materials on the history of pre-revolutionary Russia and in paragraphs on the Soviet period from 1917 to 1941. These references do not help learners understand the actual role of the Ukrainian factor in the 1917 revolution in Russia or the subsequent civil war, or in the policy of Stalin's regime during the modernization of the late 1920s and 1930s. The text on the collapse of the Soviet Union mentions Ukraine as a territory, for example, Crimea is mentioned as a place where Gorbachev was detained in August 1991.

Notably, the term "Ukraine" is mentioned more frequently in various contexts in the textbooks that have been published or republished in the past fifteen years.

For example, Simon Taylor's *History. Dictatorship and Conflict in the USSR, 1924–53* looks at the first five-year plans, industrialization, and collectivization in the USSR.²⁵ Page 29 contains the map of new major industrial projects in the USSR during the first five-year plans. It has Ukraine and DniproHES, Dnipro Hydropower Station, marked on it with an explanation of the purpose of this object located on the Dnipro River. Page 26 explains the Stakhanov Movement based on the photograph with the caption that says, "Alexey Stakhanov in a coal mine instructs his companion." However, it does not specify where the mine was, nor does it mention Ukraine. In addition to the account of Stakhanov's "record-breaking performance", students are offered information about the change in perception of this phenomenon of Soviet propaganda: "In the 1980s, the Communist Party finally admitted the truth behind Stakhanov's amazing achievement. It had been a publicity stunt. Instead of working alone, Stakhanov had been supported by a team of

²⁴ Walsh, Birks, *Modern World History Revision Guide 2nd Edition (History In Focus)*, 423.

²⁵ Symon Taylor, *History: Dictatorship and Conflict in the USSR, 1924 – 53*, (London: Pearson, 2017).

fellow miners. The authorities had also provided him with state-of-the-art equipment."²⁶

However, Taylor provides fairly reliable information about collectivization and Holodomor in Ukraine, putting The Great Famine, 1932–33 in a separate chapter and using the term Holodomor transliterated from Ukrainian, which he interprets as ‘extermination by hunger.’ Taylor explains that “The hardest-hit region was Ukraine. Despite being known as Europe’s ‘breadbasket’ because of its vast, rich farmland, millions of Ukrainians died of starvation. To survive, people ate earthworms, tree bark, mice, ants, and even human flesh. The Soviet regime printed posters declaring: ‘To eat your own children is a barbarian act’, but more than 2,500 people were convicted of cannibalism after eating dead bodies. In Ukraine, the famine is known as the Holodomor, which means ‘extermination by hunger’. Its causes are many and include a long drought and the chaos caused by collectivisation. Animals were killed in huge numbers and the most experienced farmers were deported. The new collective farms were badly run, as most managers came from the towns and had no experience of farming. The peasants, bitter about losing their land, put little effort into their work, including the crucial tasks of sowing seeds in spring and harvesting in autumn.”²⁷ This fragment offers a correct explanation of the Holodomor in Ukraine and of its causes. However, it provides inaccurate information about the existence of propagandist posters ‘To eat your own children is a barbarian act’, although the English-language Wikipedia and some other authors also have information about this made-up poster.

Taylor explains that the government carried on its industrialization policy at the expense of peasants, that the hunger was a “man-made tragedy.” Interestingly, the textbook says, as a reflection of the viewpoint of some historians, that Stalin deliberately caused it for political purposes. He wanted to punish the peasantry for their heavy resistance to collectivization. He also saw it as a way of breaking the spirit of the Ukrainian people. Ukraine had its own distinctive culture and many of its people wished for independence outside of the Soviet Union. Famine was Stalin’s way of ensuring this did not happen.

Also, the textbook features a photograph of the statue of a little girl with ears of grain titled “Bitter Memory of Childhood” at the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide in

²⁶ Taylor, *History: Dictatorship and Conflict in the USSR, 1924 – 53*, 26.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 53, 37.

Kyiv, Ukraine. The *Extend your knowledge* textbox next to it encourages students to think whether the Ukrainian famine was a genocide. It offers two perspectives. One perspective represents those who believe that it was a genocide and that Stalin used hunger for political purposes of subjugating Ukrainians and preventing their resistance. The opposite viewpoint refers to the fact that Ukrainians were not the only nation that died of the 1932–33 famine and that, therefore, it allegedly cannot be stated that a particular national or ethnic group was the target of the attack as the UN's definition of genocide requires.²⁸

This textbook is unique in terms of representing this topic, both for the amount and the balance of information. It mentions Ukrainians as the second-largest ethnic group after Russians at 31% when describing social life, policy for national minorities, and Russification in the Soviet Union, using the infographics on the national composition of the USSR in 1926. Beyond these statistics, however, it explains the phenomenon of Russification without giving specific examples of its impact. Volga Germans and "other peoples" are mentioned in the context of forced deportations and their huge impact on the culture and daily lifestyle of the USSR peoples.

The abovementioned system of preparation for the exam checks historical thinking and knowledge of standard aspects on the basis of any material, including in-depth study of some topics listed in the curriculum. The textbooks covered by this research include *History. Russia and the Soviet Union, 1905–24*, by Rob Bircher, was first published in 2017. On its 121 pages, the textbook offers a quite in-depth presentation of the history of the Russian Empire from 1905 until the Soviet Union was founded and Lenin died. It offers a lot of various materials, including a large collection of textual and visual sources. Its table of contents covers *Tsarist Rule in Russia, 1905–14; Opposition to Tsarist Rule, 1914–17; Provisional Government and the Bolshevik Revolution; The Bolshevik Consolidation of Power and the Civil War; and War Communism and the New Economic Policy*. It comes with a glossary and timeline for every chapter. This textbook is interesting for the purposes of this research not only because of its potentially Ukraine-related topic, but also because of the detail with which the developments in it are narrated. It is worth noting that this textbook does not have an individual storyline dedicated to Ukraine despite all of its detail and abundance of content,

even when compared to Ukrainian textbooks. However, it frequently mentions what can potentially be referred to as Ukraine-related themes. Page 9 is fully focused on the Potemkin mutiny and features Pyotr Fomin's 1952 painting titled *The Battleship Potemkin Uprising in July 1905*. This part mentions Odesa, the Black Sea, and Vakulenchuk and Matiushenko as mutiny leaders. Extend your knowledge textbox on page 10 notes that the mutineers were presented in the Soviet Union as revolutionary heroes and that a Soviet film was shot about the mutiny in 1925. One task for the students is to give a 20-second radio report about the mutiny, and to think of a script on the Potemkin mutiny events for a tsarist film, presenting the key events from that perspective.²⁹

The chapter *The Bolshevik Consolidation of Power and the Civil War* mentions the name Ukraine on page 67 in the sentence saying that the Bolshevik government founded four 'Soviet socialist republics,' one for Russia, one for Ukraine, one for Belarus, and one for Transcaucasia (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) in 1917 in order to strengthen its own authority. In December 1922, these four republics were united in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR or Soviet Union). Other parts of the Russian Empire were joined later.³⁰ Page 73 depicts a map of the territory lost by Russia under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, where Ukraine is marked without borders, just as a part of the territory stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and occupied by Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Subparagraph 4.2 on the Civil War mentions "the greens" and Nestor Makhno as their most influential leader. He is described as a Ukrainian anarchist who fought, just like many "greens," for independence from Russia and acted against both the reds, and the whites at different times. Page 79 shows a map of the European part of the former Russian Empire as of October 1919 to illustrate the territory under the control of the forces led by Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich, and Wrangel. While the name "Ukraine" is not present on this map, Ukraine's territory is captioned "Makhno" in green. The chapter titled *War Communism and New Economic Policy* offers a detailed account of the impact of War Communism policy on the peasantry. Documents and photographs illustrate problems with food supply and hunger among peasants; several pages focus on the Kronstadt and Tambov rebellions. However, Ukraine is neither mentioned as a country that suffered from that policy, nor in the context of the 1921 hunger. This textbook ends with the chapter on the death of Lenin

²⁹ Rob Bircher, *Edexcel International GCSE (9-1) History. The Soviet Union in Revolution, 1905-24*, (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2017), 10.

³⁰ Bircher, *Edexcel International GCSE (9-1) History. The Soviet Union in Revolution, 1905-24*, 67.

in 1924 and includes many tasks aimed at helping students understand his role in the developments of 1905–1922. It indicates the creation of the USSR as an accomplishment of Lenin’s policy but offers no context on whether this solved the national issue or the issue of autonomy for certain territories.

Michael Lynch’s *Reaction and Revolution: Russia in 1894–1924* merits special attention. The fifth edition, published in 2021, offers more information about Ukraine and Ukrainians compared to the first edition from 1992. The first chapter, *Geography and Peoples of Russia*, shows a map on page 2 with ethnic groups under two names, Poland and Ukraine, in the western part, and names of peoples, including Lithuanians, Jews, Ukrainians, and Cossacks (closer to the territory of the North Caucasus). Page 6 mentions Ukraine as an important territory for black soil farming. Page 16 mentions Ukraine as a coal region that boosted industrial growth in the Russian Empire in the late 19th century.

This textbook also mentions Ukrainians as a people who, along with others, including Baltic peoples, Germans, Poles, Finns and Armenians, was the target of the heaviest tsarist Russification policy and discrimination that went from covert to particularly widespread and systemic in the 1890s.³¹

The most interesting, from the perspective of this research, is the paragraph *Provisional Government and its problems*, section 5 in 1917: From Provisional Government to October Revolution. The subchapter on the July Crisis on page 112 says that ethnic/national minorities constituted the biggest problem: Particularly problematic was that a number of ethnic groups in Russia used the difficulties of the Provisional Government to create their own national minority governments and declare independence from central control. Ukraine was the most illustrative case of a government that split off. This move for independence helped provoke the July Crisis. Located in the south of Russia, Ukraine had the biggest non-Russian population in the empire (23 million). It was also the biggest food producing region, which made it vital for the Russian state. When the Kadet ministers in government learned that the delegation of the Provisional Government offered Ukraine independence, they resigned in protest, stressing that only the All-Russian Constituent Assembly is entitled to decide on such issues.³²

³¹ Michael Lynch, *Reaction and Revolution: Russia 1894 – 1924 (Access to History)*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2005), 15.

³² Lynch, *Reaction and Revolution: Russia 1894 – 1924*, 114.

In the texts on the food deficit faced by the Bolsheviks after they seized power and signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk Ukraine is mentioned as the richest “grain” territory.³³

In his account of the Civil War in the chapter called *The Red, White, and Green*, Michael Lynch also mentions Nestor Makhno as the best-known leader of resistance to the Bolsheviks. Lynch offers a more nuanced portrait than Rob Bircher. Lynch’s book clearly says that the military conflict of the Civil War period was not just between the red and the white, i.e., the Bolsheviks and their opponents. The greens were part of it, too. These included Ukrainians and Georgians who fought for independence from Russia.³⁴ The name Ukraine, as of the territory where the fight between Bolsheviks and Wrangel took place, is mentioned on page 151, but it is not mentioned in the context of Denikin’s Volunteer Army. Map 6.3 on page 159 that shows the foreign armed intervention against Soviet Russia marks “Ukrainians” and “Cossacks” next to Kharkiv. The map 6.4 *The famine-ridden territory of Russia in 1920* on page 172, marks Chernihiv, Poltava, Kyiv, Odesa, and Izyum under the general name Ukraine but without its administrative borders. The territory of widespread hunger covers the Poltava and Kharkiv regions, the Eastern Kyiv region and the Donbas. In the context of rebellion against the Bolshevik policy of war communism, the greatest attention is given to the 1920 Tambov rebellion. The textbook says that there were hundreds of similar rebellions, including many in Ukraine.

It appears that this author is more familiar with some episodes of Ukrainian history; however, this information is very fragmented, just a handful among the 227 pages of the textbook, pointing to the marginal role of Ukraine-related topics even in the textbooks where authors try to mention Ukraine or Ukrainians when dealing with 20th-century history.

Specialized textbooks focused on certain aspects of European history, such as World War II or Nazi dictatorship, are useful for this analysis. In one example, Richard Kenneth’s *Living Under Nazi Rule, 1933–45* features the WWII-time map of Europe where Reichskommissariat Ukraine is marked without any commentary to explain what kind of occupation zone this was and what its peculiarities were. This same paragraph on the Final Solution features a documentary insert, a mention of Dina Pronicheva’s account as a witness of executions in

³³ Lynch, *Reaction and Revolution: Russia 1894 – 1924*, 140, 147, 150.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

Babyn Yar in 1941, with the location marked as Kyiv, Ukraine.³⁵ Victoria Payne's *Germany: Development of Dictatorship 1918–45* in chapter 5, *Germany and the Occupied Territories during the Second World War*, does not mention the occupied countries or the nuances of Nazi rule there beyond the account of the occupation of Poland and the Holocaust in its territory. While the textbook explains the concepts of ghettoization, Final Solution, and gives an account of the death camps in Auschwitz, Sobibor, and Treblinka, it does not introduce students even to a superficial notion of Nazi rule farther east from Poland.³⁶

John Wright's and Steve Waugh's *Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91* is a specialized textbook of great interest to this research. The topic in this textbook that is relevant to our research is the description of Gorbachev's policy and the collapse of the USSR. Paragraph 9.2 on the collapse of the Soviet Union, in its description of the developments on August 19–21, 1991, says that Gorbachev's last attempt to preserve the Soviet Union was the introduction of the new USSR Constitution with more independence for Soviet republics, such as Latvia and Ukraine. Below that text, the textbook features a map of the USSR with the republics that obtained independence marked on it. These include Ukraine.³⁷

³⁵ Richard Kennett, *Living under Nazi Rule 1933 – 1945*, (London: Hodder Education, 2017), 88, 95.

³⁶ Victoria Payne, *Edexcel International GCSE (9-1) History Development of Dictatorship: Germany 1918-45*, (London: Pearson, 2017), 93 – 97.

³⁷ John Wright, Steve Waugh, *Superpower Relations & the Cold War 1941-91 (Gcse History for Edexcel)*, (London: Hodder Education, 2016), 88.

3 Conclusions

The analysis of the available educational literature for a school history course in the UK, particularly England,³⁸ points to the following trends:

1. Ukraine is present as a name in specialized thematic school textbooks focused on deeper learning of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union history in the 20th century. This presence is particularly notable in editions published after 2010. Since this topic is recommended for extended study in preparation for the qualification exam upon secondary school graduation (key stage 3, aged 15–16), we can assume that a certain group (of an unidentifiable number) of British teenagers can obtain a minimum notion of Ukraine as part of the history of the European continent.

2. Most episodes mention Ukraine as a geographical rather than historical object. General Russian or Soviet topics contain some Ukrainian examples, particularly on the role of Ukraine in economic processes in the Russian Empire before 1917 and sometimes as the territory of the Bolshevik struggle during the Civil War, particularly during Stalin's modernization. We can assume that the fact that episodes from the 1932–33 Great Famine are present in the textbooks results partly from Ukraine's policy of spreading international recognition of the Holodomor after 2005–2010. Little attention is paid to Ukraine as a factor in the collapse of the USSR. It is only mentioned as a country that emerged in the wake of this collapse.

Given that the British school history education system structures facts in a way that helps develop critical and historical thinking, the

³⁸ This analysis did not cover the textbooks used in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland given the specifics of their curricula and limited access to some potential publications on 20th-century history.

ability to analyse historical sources etc., the presence of these episodes and of relevant exercises implies only very limited understanding or notion of the Ukrainian context among the graduates of British secondary schools.

At the same time, Ukraine-related episodes in the textbooks covered by this analysis are presented exclusively as components of Russian or Soviet history. Illustrating the statement about Ukraine's "lack of agency," even in very detailed accounts of the first Russian Revolution, the Civil War, Stalin's modernization, World War II, or collapse of the Soviet Union, there are many cases where textbook maps do not mark clear administrative borders of Ukraine, not to say even contemporary ones.

The imperial and utilitarian perspective can be traced, among other places, in one textbook analysed above that presents Ukraine's territory in the 20th century as fertile land only. Meanwhile, the presence of a minimal Ukrainian context points to a shift in the awareness of textbook authors, and a growing interest in and understanding of historical necessity of showing Ukraine as part of imperial history.

3. The almost complete absence of accounts of the 1917–1920 Ukrainian Revolution in the sections of textbooks focused on 1917 and the Civil War in Russia is unfortunate. It points to a lack of awareness about the national element of the 1917–1922 developments. The 1917 revolution is presented as a phenomenon of Russian history only. Even the unexpected references to the crisis of the Provisional Government in July 1917 because of the Ukrainian factor or to Makhno as a Ukrainian anarchist do not provide an understanding of the Ukrainian dimension of the 1918–1921 civil war. Unfortunately, the account of Stalin's repressions and the GULAG system in the USSR does not demonstrate a Ukrainian dimension either. Therefore, it does not provide a foreign school audience with an understanding of the scale of destruction and trauma of Ukrainian society during Stalin's dictatorship and totalitarian rule.

A passing reference to Ukraine as occupied territory and the site of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" in Eastern Europe does not equip British youth with enough information for a critical assessment of the official Russian narrative of recent decades on the decisive or exceptional role of the Russian people as an ethnic group in the victory over Nazism in World War II.

The absence of episodes on the Ukrainian factor in the collapse of the USSR offers no understanding of the real causes of this process. It does not enable students to develop their own attitude toward it, including toward the present-day Russia-Ukraine war.

This research did not manage to analyse the presence or absence of historical illustrations of human rights development and the struggle for civil rights beyond the exclusively British narrative, including its colonial aspect.

Episodes on the dissident movement in the USSR, including stories about Ukrainian resistance and human rights actors, could provide a better understanding of domestic processes in the post-war Soviet society.

4. This situation with Ukraine-related topics in British history textbooks is not unique when it comes to episodes in the 20th-century history of Eastern Europe overall. Textbooks on 20th-century history most often mention Poland in the topics related to the outcome of World War I and the new political map of Europe, World War II, and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, in particular, the Solidarity movement and Lech Wałęsa. Czechoslovakia is mentioned in passing, also in the context of shifting political borders as a result of the Versailles peace treaties, the 1938 Munich Agreement, and the fall of communism, with the Prague Spring and Soviet invasion in 1968 and the 1956 Velvet Revolution. Hungary is mentioned in the textbooks focused on postwar international relations, including the 1956 uprising and Soviet invasion respectively. Yugoslavia is only present in passing when Josip Broz Tito is mentioned as an opponent of Stalin and Soviet development model, and as an example of European wars after the Cold War. When it comes to the role of other countries of Eastern and Southern Europe or former Soviet republics in history textbooks for British school students, the textbooks covered by this analysis did not feature these topics.

5. This shows that Ukraine-related topics are not exclusively “overlooked” or “absent.” British school history teaching system requires prepared study materials in English in case studies and promotion of these study materials through history associations, professional communities, international workshops and conferences. The website of EuroClio, European Association of History Educators, is an important resource in this respect. The materials in English presented here for the wider audience can become a serious resource for promoting Ukraine-

related themes in the European space of school history education provided that they are of sufficient quality. The text about Crimea in 2014 is one example of a Ukraine-related topic present there.³⁹ Specialized state institutions should prepare history texts, translate them into English, and offer them to textbook authors for a wider and more accurate presence of Ukraine-related topics in school history education of European countries, including in the UK.

4 List of analysed textbooks

"Borders and Self-determination: Crime." Historia.eu, <https://historiana.eu/historical-content/viewpoints/borders-and-self-determination-crimea>.

Bircher, Rob. Edexcel International GCSE (9-1) History. The Soviet Union in Revolution, 1905-24. London: Pearson Education Limited, 2017.

Clare, John D. The Twentieth Century. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1999.

Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000 – Present: ideal for catch-up and the 2022 and 2023 exams (CGP GCSE History 9 – 1 Revision) Grade 9 – 1 GCSE History Edexcel Topic Guide. CGP Books, 2019.

Hudson, Margaret. History the USA, 1954 – 1975: Conflict at Home and Abroad. London: Pearson, 2016.

Kennett, Richard. Living under Nazi Rule 1933 – 1945. London: Hodder Education, 2017.

Payne, Victoria. Edexcel International GCSE (9-1) History Development of Dictatorship: Germany 1918-45. London: Pearson, 2017.

Taylor, Symon. History: Dictatorship and Conflict in the USSR, 1924 – 53. London: Pearson, 2017.

Walsh, Ben, Paul Shuter, Hannah Dalton. History Explaining the Modern World: Power, Reformation and the Historic Environment. London: Hodder Education, 2016.

Walsh, Ben, Wayne Birks. Modern World History Revision Guide 2nd Edition (History in Focus). London: Hodder Education, 2014.

Walsh, Ben. History in Focus. Essential Modern World History. London: Hodder Education, 2001.

Walsh, Ben. Modern World History: Period and Depth Studies (Explaining the Modern World). London: Hodder Education, 2016.

Wilkinson, Alf. AQA GCSE History: Health and the People. London: Hodder Education, 2016.

Wright, John, Steve Waugh. Superpower Relations & the Cold War 1941-91 (Gcse History for Edexcel). London: Hodder Education, 2016.