

**Fighting  
false news  
narratives**



# **THE RUSSIAN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN THE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN NORTH MACEDONIA**

**February 2022**

# CONTENTS

## 3 INTRODUCTION

## 4 THE RUSSIAN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE SECOND WORLD WAR

4	MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND FACTS
5	THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT – THE USSR WAS NOT NEUTRAL BEFORE AND IN THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR
8	THE RAMIFICATIONS FROM THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT DURING THE WAR – POLAND AND THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE WERE OCCUPIED BY THE USSR
10	THE END OF THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT – THE USSR CHANGED SIDES IN THE WAR
10	THE OFFICIAL END OF THE WAR – THE WAR IN EUROPE DID NOT END ON 9 MAY
11	RAMIFICATIONS FROM THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT AFTER THE WAR – THE USSR DID NOT LIBERATE THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
11	CONDEMNATION OF THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP PACT BY THE USSR
12	PUTIN'S REVISION OF HISTORY

## 14 THE RUSSIAN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE SECOND WORLD IN THE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

14	INTRODUCTION
15	MAIN CONCLUSIONS
16	SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN THE PERIOD 1948-1990
19	SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN THE PERIOD 1991-2022

## 23 REFERENCES

23	ARTICLES AND DOCUMENTS
25	TEXTBOOKS (ARRANGED IN A CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

© 2022 THE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION MOST/FIGHTING FALSE NEWS NARRATIVES (FN)

**Direct inquiries to:** The Citizens Association MOST/Fighting False News Narratives (FN)

Pariska 12, 1020 Skopje

Republic of North Macedonia

**E-mail:** [most@most.org.mk](mailto:most@most.org.mk)

**Program Manager and Editor:** Rosana Aleksoska

**Authors:** Rosana Aleksoska, Zlatko Dimitrioski and Darko Aleksov

**Contribution to the research:** Magdalena Aleksoska and Živko Mickoski

**Design:** Marina Stojmirova

**Cover page photo source:** Wikimedia Commons

**Disclaimer:** The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are those of the implementers/authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the donors of the FN project.

# INTRODUCTION

*This research analyses the various narratives about the Second World War promoted by Russia and their embedment in the collective memory in North Macedonia. Although it was not part of the Warsaw Pact and under Soviet influence after 1948, SFR Yugoslavia was still a socialist country, which can be considered as one of the factors for the continuous presence of the Russian narratives about the Second World War in the former country, thus in North Macedonia as well.*

*The first part of the research will show that by subtle twists, alterations or omissions of facts, and using the fact that it changed sides in the Second World War, Russia tries to maintain and promote two major narratives – that the USSR was neutral in the period 1939-1941 and that it liberated the peoples of Eastern Europe and saved Europe and the world from slavery. Between these two major narratives, there are a plethora of other distortions that have been constantly present in order to maintain and amplify the Russian narratives about the Second World War.*

*The second part of the research focuses on the embedment of these narratives in the collective memory of North Macedonia through an analysis of the history textbooks that have been used in the country since 1948. This part will show that these narratives have been constantly present in the history textbooks, and despite the changes in the 90's (the dissolutions of both the USSR and SFR Yugoslavia), continue to be present in the history books, together with other anti-Western narratives. The analysis of the narratives and the sentiments within the textbooks, relies on the facts presented and analyzed in the first part of the research, thus providing an overall picture of what really happened and how the real events were twisted to suit Russian narratives.*

# THE RUSSIAN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE SECOND WORLD WAR

This part of the research analyses the main events and facts related to the USSR's role in the Second World War, as well as their ramifications until the present day. The Russian narratives were analyzed through the prism of the facts related to the critical events, and the general conclusion is that Russia presents a false version of the story about its role in the Second World War.

## Main conclusions and facts

- **The USSR was not neutral in the period 1939-1941** – In August 1939 the USSR signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Germany, which, together with its secret protocols, enabled a 22-month long military and economic cooperation between Nazi Germany and the USSR in the period August 1939 -June 1941.
- **The secret protocols of the Pact foresaw division of Central and Eastern Europe into spheres of influence between the two regimes**, which actually paved the way for the war.
- Besides by Nazi Germany, **Poland was also invaded and occupied by the USSR**, along with the Baltic countries and other parts of Eastern Europe, in accordance with the secret protocol.
- **The war in Europe ended on 8 May, and not on 9 May 1945.**
- **The USSR did not liberate the peoples from Eastern Europe.** In the aftermath of the war, they remained under Soviet control or influence until the dissolution of the USSR in the beginning of the 1990s.
- In 1989 **the USSR officially condemned the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact.**
- In 1990 **the USSR accepted responsibility for the Katyn forest massacre.**
- As a response to the reversal of Russia's positions on the events from the Second World War, in 2019 **the European Parliament adopted a resolution on remembrance of the victims of the totalitarian regimes.**

Russian narrative	Facts
The USSR was neutral in the period 1939-1941	The secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact enabled a 22-month long military and economic cooperation between Nazi Germany and the USSR in the period August 1939 – June 1941
The signing of the Pact was justified, the USSR did not have any other option	In 1989 the USSR officially condemned the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact
The Pact was only an agreement for non-aggression	The secret protocols of the Pact foresaw division of Central and Eastern Europe into spheres of influence between the two regimes, paving the way for the war
Germany started the Second World War, while Soviet troops only “entered” Polish territory	Poland was the first country to be attacked, in a coordinated action by Germany and the USSR and was divided between the two regimes
Russia [the USSR] is not responsible for the Katyn forest massacre of nearly 22,000 Poles	In 1990 the USSR officially accepted responsibility for the Katyn forest massacre
The Baltic countries collaborated with Nazi Germany	The Baltic countries were occupied by the USSR, together with other parts of Eastern Europe
The war in Europe ended on 9 May 1945	The war in Europe ended on 8 May 1945
The USSR liberated the peoples of Eastern Europe	Contrary to the will of their peoples, these countries were incorporated in the Soviet regime or remained under its control and influence until its dissolution, and suffered great atrocities

## The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – the USSR was not neutral before and in the beginning of the war

The Second World War began on 1 September 1939, when Nazi Germany attacked Poland, while two weeks later, on 17 September, Poland was also attacked by the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> On 28 September the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed, with which the fourth partition of Poland in the history was finalized.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Snore E., *The Soviet Story* (an excerpt), 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFTtuHxxBLo>

<sup>2</sup> *The Criminal Secret Protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Chronology*, Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, 2019, <https://communistcrimes.org/en/criminal-secret-protocol-molotov-ribbentrop-pact-chronology>





These military campaigns of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were direct result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact<sup>3</sup> that was signed on 23 August 1939 between the two countries, which means that the Soviet Union may be also held responsible for its contribution to the start of the Second World War.

The pact is a non-aggression agreement between the two totalitarian regimes for a period of 10 years. It was public, and it was not different from other non-aggression agreements. However, what is significant and which has had impact until this day, are the secret protocols for dividing Central and Eastern Europe into spheres of influence between the two regimes, which actually paved the way for the war.

*[The section below was not published at the time the above was announced.]*

**Secret Additional Protocol.**

**Article I.** In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement in the areas belonging to the Baltic States (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the northern boundary of Lithuania shall represent the boundary of the spheres of influence of Germany and U.S.S.R. In this connection the interest of Lithuania in the Vilna area is recognized by each party.

**Article II.** In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San.

The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish States and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments.

In any event both Governments will resolve this question by means of a friendly agreement.

**Article III.** With regard to Southeastern Europe attention is called by the Soviet side to its interest in Bessarabia. The German side declares its complete political disinterestedness in these areas.

**Article IV.** This protocol shall be treated by both parties as strictly secret.

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

**The secret protocol of the Pact**

<sup>3</sup> Modern History Sourcebook, The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1939pact.asp>



Actually, the secret protocols of the Pact enabled the 22-month long military and economic cooperation between the two regimes in the period August 1939-June 1941. Examples of this cooperation are not very much present in the public discourse, but from the small number that are, this cooperation becomes very clear. In example, the joint military parade of the German and Soviet armies at Brest-Litovsk<sup>4</sup> or the use of the Soviet radio station at Minsk to help the Luftwaffe navigate during the invasion of Poland.<sup>5</sup> The cooperation also included extensive supply of strategic resources to the German war industry by the USSR, such as oil, iron ore, and construction materials.<sup>6</sup> Even grain was sent, while Soviet citizens not only from Russia, but also from other countries that were then under Soviet rule, were starving.

Another very important episode is the complicity of the USSR and Stalin in the Holocaust. In February 1940 Adolf Eichmann proposed to the Soviet leadership that two million Polish Jews be transferred from Germany to the USSR, but Moscow was not interested.<sup>7</sup> This was one of the few German requests that was not fulfilled by Stalin during the period of the alliance, thus leaving the destiny of these two million Polish Jews in the hands of the Nazis.

<sup>4</sup> Snore E., *The Soviet Story* (an excerpt), 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFTtuHxxBLo>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Weber C., *The Pact that started World War II*, 2020, <https://communistcrimes.org/en/pact-started-world-war-ii>

<sup>7</sup> Snyder T., *When Stalin was Hitler's ally*, Eurozine, 2015, <https://www.eurozine.com/when-stalin-was-hitlers-ally/>



It was in the interest of the USSR to keep the cooperation with Nazi Germany secret, in order to preserve the fiction of Soviet neutrality at the beginning of the war. While putting the focus on the Pact as just another non-aggression agreement, the USSR denied the existence of the secret protocols right up until 1989 [see more details below in the text]. Russian foreign minister Molotov statement at that time, that fighting Nazi ideology was actually a crime, was published in all the largest Soviet newspapers. However, later that page disappeared from the public libraries of the USSR, similar to the editing of photos in order to revise history.

The Secret Protocols remained unknown until 1948, when thanks to the investigation of the Nazi archives, they were published by the US State Department.

## The ramifications from the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact during the war – Poland and the countries of Eastern Europe were occupied by the USSR

As a direct consequence of the signing of the Pact, the countries of Eastern Europe were occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union, and a large number of their citizens have undergone the terror of Stalin and the communist regime. More than 1 million citizens of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Ukraine and Romania were deported in the period 1939-1945.

### *The occupation of Poland and the Katyn massacre*

On 17 September 1939 Poland was also invaded by the USSR. During the invasion of Poland by the totalitarian Soviet regime headed by Stalin, terrible atrocities were being committed, both on civilians and military personnel. One of those is the Katyn forest massacre<sup>8</sup> – a series of mass executions of nearly 22,000 Polish military officers, doctors and intelligentsia carried out by the Soviet secret police NKVD in 1940 – which remains as a testament to the victims of Stalinism.<sup>9</sup>

### *The war with Finland – the Winter War*

The Soviet invasion of Finland began in 1939, when Stalin wanted to take over the territory that was agreed with the secret protocols and to expand the territory of the Soviet Union. After a series of ultimatums to Finland and failed negotiations, on 30 November the Red Army began the invasion of Finland with approximately 1,000,000 soldiers, which is known as the “Winter War”. After the largest artillery bombardment since World War I, in

<sup>8</sup> *Katyn Massacre*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Katyn-Massacre>

<sup>9</sup> *Stalinism*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Stalinism>

February-March 1940 Finland agreed to an armistice. According to the treaty, Finland remained an independent country, but 11% of its territory was ceded to the Soviet Union.

#### *Occupation of parts of Romania*

In June 1940 the Soviet Union occupied parts of Romania – Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina.<sup>10</sup> In accordance with the secret protocol, while the USSR occupied or tried to occupy (Finland) the countries from its sphere of influence, Nazi Germany has already occupied large parts of Western Europe, including France, and was preparing for an attack on Great Britain.

#### *Occupation of the Baltic States*

On 15 June 1940, with an ultimatum to Lithuania to receive unlimited number of troops and form a government that will be acceptable to the Soviet Union, Stalin first occupied Lithuania. In the next two days, with similar ultimatums he also occupied Latvia and Estonia. For a very short period of time, the Soviet and communist way of life and suffering became part of the everyday life in the Baltic countries.<sup>11</sup> Even though small-numbered in the past, the communist parties became political leaders, in order to conduct the Stalinist terror. Property was massively nationalized, the academia was harassed, while during 1941 mass deportations to the USSR and the Arctic were conducted, also including women and children.

#### *Atrocities committed in Ukraine*

Ukraine first proclaimed its independence in 1917 and attempted to fight a war against Soviet Russia. By 1920, it had lost the war and the eastern part of its territory was incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1922, while the western part was incorporated in Poland. Ukraine suffered similar fate in the beginning of the war to the Baltic States. In 1940 and the first half of 1941 more than 10% of the local population from the newly-occupied territories of Western Ukraine, which the USSR took over from Poland, were deported. Between the fall of 1939 and June 1941, when Germany attacked the USSR, the Soviet secret police deported close to 1.25 million people from Ukraine.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Victor E., *The Soviet Occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina*, <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/the-soviet-occupation-of-bessarabia-and-northern-bukovina>

<sup>11</sup> *Baltic states - Soviet occupation*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-states/Soviet-occupation>

<sup>12</sup> *Communist Dictatorship in Ukraine. The Soviet Occupation (1920-1991)*, Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, <https://communistcrimes.org/en/countries/ukraine>

## The end of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact – the USSR changed sides in the war

On 22 June 1941 Germany attacked the USSR and suddenly the Soviet Union found itself on the other side of the war and few months later allied with Great Britain and the United States. Soviet propaganda passed over the first period (1939-1941) in silence and celebrated Soviet achievements in the second (1941-1945). The victory in the “Great Fatherland War” became something like a second founding myth of the Soviet Union,<sup>13</sup> thus the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had to be denied. In the decades that followed the war, the Soviet Union wanted to present itself as a liberator, so it had to deny that it was one of the powers that bears responsibility for the beginning of the war.

## The official end of the war – the war in Europe did not end on 9 May

In terms of the date<sup>14</sup> when Germany was defeated, which marked the end of the war in Europe, the first document for unconditional surrender of all German forces was signed on 7 May 1945 in Reims, France, in the presence of Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, General Dwight Eisenhower,<sup>15</sup> while the definitive German Instrument of Surrender was signed on 8 May 1945, with the active operations of the German forces scheduled to be ceased at 23:01 hours Central European time later that evening. However, Stalin prepared a separate document of capitulation of Germany, and the second act of signing was held in Berlin on 9 May, but this document was identical with the first one that was recognized by the United States and Britain.<sup>16</sup> When analyzing the sequence of the events, it is evident that when the second document of capitulation was signed on 9 May, the German capitulation was already in place. This contributed to the celebration of the latter date as the date when the war in Europe ended by the Soviet Union, the countries of the Soviet Bloc and former Yugoslavia (thus North Macedonia as well). However, the fact is that the last important battle in Europe took place on May 14-15 on the territory of Yugoslavia,

---

<sup>13</sup> Snyder T., *When Stalin was Hitler's ally*, Eurozine, 2015, <https://www.eurozine.com/when-stalin-was-hitlers-ally/>

<sup>14</sup> Goncharenko R., *World War II and the battle over collective memory in Eastern Europe*, DW, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/world-war-ii-and-the-battle-over-collective-memory-in-eastern-europe/a-53356626>

<sup>15</sup> *Germany surrenders unconditionally to the Allies at Reims*, History.com, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/germany-surrenders-unconditionally-to-the-allies-at-reims>

<sup>16</sup> Gelava S., *Soviet myths about World War II*, 2016, <https://mythdetector.ge/en/soviet-myths-about-world-war-ii-2/>

but even in Yugoslavia this date was overshadowed by 9 May as the dominant narrative about when the war ended.

## **Ramifications from the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact after the war – the USSR did not liberate the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe**

After the end of the war, the USSR reclaimed the lost territories that it occupied previously in 1939-40, such as the Baltic countries, as a direct consequence of the secret protocols of the Pact. In spite of the efforts of Russia to represent the end of the war as total liberation, the reality is that for the countries of Eastern Europe this was not a liberation. The USSR has contributed to the defeat of Hitler and Nazism, but it certainly did not liberate the peoples of Eastern Europe.

The citizens of Ukraine and the Baltic States continued to fight the new occupators and the dictatorship of the Communist Party, while in 1954, the other countries from Eastern Europe, such as Poland, became part of the Warsaw Pact and remained under Soviet control or influence until the dissolution of the USSR in the beginning of the 90's.

For the Baltic countries the Second World War ended in 1991-1992, while for Lithuania it ended as late as 1993, when the last Russian troops left the country.

## **Condemnation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by the USSR**

After the war, Stalin and the Soviet Union continued to deny the existence of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Molotov continued to hold various positions in the Soviet Union, right until his death in 1986, never acknowledging the existence of the secret protocols.

In 1989, in accordance with Gorbachev's policy of *Glasnost*, the Congress of the People's Delegates of the USSR officially condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

The same year, on 23 August, the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Pact was marked by a peaceful protest named "the Baltic Way",<sup>17</sup> where citizens of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia demanded acknowledgement of the secret protocols and giving back their independence. More than two million citizens holding hands formed a 600-km chain from Tallinn, over Riga to Vilnius. The campaign was participated by 700.000 citizens of Estonia, 500.000 from Latvia and more than 1.000.000 from Lithuania.

---

<sup>17</sup> *The Baltic Way Stories*, <https://www.thebalticway.eu/en/history/>



The Baltic Way

Source: <https://www.thebalticway.eu/en/history/>

## Putin's revision of history

Despite the official condemning of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by the Duma in 1989, and the fact that for 16 years Russian leadership never derailed from this position, in the period 2005-2007 Russian President Putin began a revision of the history. Namely, he accused the Baltic countries that they attacked Russia in order *"to hide the shame from collaborationism"*,<sup>18</sup> and blamed Europe for *"ignoring the Nazism in the Baltics"*.<sup>19</sup> With regard to Ukraine, in 2014 Putin compared Ukraine's forces to Nazis,<sup>20</sup> while in January 2022 Russia claimed that the U.S. brought *"pure Nazis"* to power in Kyiv.<sup>21</sup> From this it can be concluded that this narrative has been more intensively amplified as a part of the Russian information operations in the recent years.

As to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in 2010, on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn massacre, Putin stated *"do not blame us for Stalin's slaughter"*.<sup>22</sup> In 2020 Russia went even

<sup>18</sup> Roth A., *Molotov-Ribbentrop: why is Moscow trying to justify Nazi pact?*, The Guardian, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/23/moscow-campaign-to-justify-molotov-ribbentrop-pact-sparks-outcry>

<sup>19</sup> *Putin Accuses Europe of Ignoring Nazism in the Baltics*, DW, 2007, <https://www.dw.com/en/putin-accuses-europe-of-ignoring-nazism-in-the-baltics/a-2817872>

<sup>20</sup> Walker S., Ragozin L., Weaver M., *Putin likens Ukraine's forces to Nazis and threatens standoff in the Arctic*, the Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/29/putin-ukraine-forces-nazis-arctic>

<sup>21</sup> McKnight P., Quayle E., Chapman O., *Russia Accuses US of Bringing 'Pure Nazis' to Power in Ukraine as Tensions Rise*, Newsweek, 31.01.2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-accuses-us-bringing-pure-nazis-power-ukraine-tensions-rise-1674789>

<sup>22</sup> Kelly L., *Don't blame us for Stalin's slaughter, says Putin*, Independent, 2010, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/don-t-blame-us-for-stalin-s-slaughter-says-putin-1938727.html>



further and removed the Katyn Memorial plaques commemorating the Polish victims,<sup>23</sup> 30 years after the USSR accepted the responsibility for the massacre, in 1990.<sup>24</sup>

On 19 December 2019, at the annual press-conference and 30 after the Duma condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Putin justified its signing, stating that the Soviet Union did not have any other option.<sup>25</sup> Putin added that Stalin was not compromised by agreeing with Hitler, while at the same time he accused Poland for collaboration with Germany.

As a response to this reversal of Russia's position on the signing of the pact, together with its refusal to accept its share of responsibility for the beginning of the Second World War and its ramifications, on 19 September 2019 the European Parliament adopted a resolution<sup>26</sup> on remembrance of the victims of the totalitarian regimes.<sup>27</sup> The resolution states that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between representatives of two totalitarian regimes and paved the way to the start of the bloodiest war in human history.

In continuity with the position of the Soviet Union, Putin's regime makes the victory over Nazism one of the main principles of the ideology that it wants to impose in order to mobilize the Russian public, while unfortunately, it manages to export to the world the successfully founded narrative that the Soviet Union has been always on the side of the victors.

---

<sup>23</sup> Tlis F., *30 Years After Admitting WWII Massacre of Polish POWs, Katyn Memorial Plaques Removed in Russia*, Polygraph.info, 2020, <https://www.polygraph.info/a/katyn-poland-russia/30601790.html>

<sup>24</sup> *On This Day: April 13, 1990*, The Moscow Times, 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/04/13/on-this-day-april-13-1990-a65218>

<sup>25</sup> *Vladimir Putin's annual news conference*, 2019, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366>

<sup>26</sup> *European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html)

<sup>27</sup> *The European Parliament Condemns the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Fighting False News Narratives*, 2020, <https://f2n2.mk/%d0%b5%d0%b2%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bf%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%be%d1%82-%d0%bf%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b5%d0%bd%d1%82-%d1%81%d0%be-%d0%be%d1%81%d1%83%d0%b4%d0%b0-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d0%bf%d0%b0%d0%ba%d1%82/>

# THE RUSSIAN NARRATIVES ABOUT THE SECOND WORLD IN THE HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN NORTH MACEDONIA

## Introduction

The subject of investigation is the presentation and interpretation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, as a part of the events that led to the beginning of the Second World War, within the history textbooks that have been used in North Macedonia from 1948 until the present day.

A total of 59 history textbooks were mapped online through the information available on the online-library system.<sup>28</sup> These books cannot be accessed online and for the purposes of the investigation they were obtained in a hard copy from the Bureau for Development of Education and the Ministry for Education and Science. The investigation focused on the history lessons related to the beginning of the Second World War which are taught in the final year of primary (8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade) and secondary schools (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year).

Out of the mapped 59 history textbooks, FN managed to obtain 30, out of which 17 were relevant for the subject of investigation, since the lesson/topic "How the Second World War started?" is included there. There may be a small number of textbooks that may contain relevant data about the investigation, but due to lack of accessibility were not found. However, the textbooks that were found and analyzed provide a solid ground for drawing conclusions within this investigation.

The analysis is divided by (1) periods – 1945-1990 and 1991-2022, and (2) levels of education – primary and secondary:

- The first period from 1945 to 1990 refers to the history textbooks that were used in the times of SFR Yugoslavia and encompasses 7 textbooks. The subject of interest of the analysis is being taught in the final grade of primary school, which back then was the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, where a total of 6 textbooks were analyzed, and 1 textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school.
- The second period from 1991 to 2022 refers to the history textbooks that have been used since North Macedonia gained its independence and encompasses 10 history textbooks, out which 5 are for 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade of primary school and 5 are for the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school.

---

<sup>28</sup> <https://mk.cobiss.net/>

## Main conclusions

- In none of the analyzed history textbooks the events from the period 1939-1941 are presented factually and objectively. On the contrary, only partial information with semi-truths and questionable interpretations and conclusions is offered to the students.
- With few exceptions, the sentiment in the lessons on the start of the Second World War is anti-Western. While it may be justifiable when Germany is in question, involving France, the UK and the U.S. within this negative sentiment indicates a cultivation of pro-Russian attitudes among the population.
- The narrative used across almost all of the history textbooks is that *"the UK and France (and to a smaller extent the U.S.) are 'Western powers' and part of the culprits for the start of the Second World War."* The sub-narratives are that *"the UK and France were tolerating the rise of the fascism and were being tactical on the preservation of the Versailles system, which they saw as a guarantee for their world supremacy and therefore wanted to preserve peace at any cost."*
- Another important narrative in most of the history textbooks refers to the *"hopes held by the UK and France that fascism will focus on the Eastern countries, thus suffocate and eliminate socialism, while the capitalist democracies would remain untouched."*
- The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which in the analyzed history textbooks is known as "non-aggression agreement", is not presented as a problem, but as a consequence, whereas *"the rise of Germany and fascism is a result of the lack of preparedness by the UK and France to understand Stalin's 'concern' and his view of the fascist ideology."*
- The fact that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols divided Europe in two spheres of influence has not been properly and precisely elaborated and only partial information is provided to the students. This creates confusion and lack of understanding of the events. The complete list of territories that were invaded and occupied by the USSR in the period 1939-1941 as a direct consequence of the pact cannot be found integrally in one lesson. The ramifications from the Pact after the war are also not presented.
- There is no mention of the Katyn massacre in any of the history textbooks analyzed, together with the atrocities conducted by the USSR in the occupied countries and territories.
- The occupation of Poland and its territories inhabited by Belarusians and Ukrainians by the USSR is described as *"penetration"* or *"taking over"* the territories in accordance with the "non-aggression agreement". In this way, the real picture has not been provided for the students, since the correct term - "occupation" - has not been used. In addition, in some of the textbooks it is stated that those territories were inhabited with Belarussians and Ukrainians, giving the impression that they were "naturally" belonging to the USSR/tsarist Russia.

## Summary of the history textbooks in the period 1948-1990

This part provides short summary of each of the analyzed textbooks/lessons. The history textbooks were analyzed and the main narratives and sentiments are being provided. However, more details can be found in those editions that are currently used in the schools.

- 1. In the first history textbook (History of the USSR - Short course) from 1948** the events of 1939 and the start of WWII are presented in a manner describing the Polish state as unprepared for battle and its leaders fleeing the country, leaving the Polish people at the mercy of the German invaders. The fact that the USSR attacked Poland two weeks after the German invasion and occupied the Polish territories is presented as a good deed and as an assistance to the Polish people by the USSR. The same narrative is used for the USSR's actions in the Polish parts of Belarus and Ukraine.

The lesson referring to the start of WWII says that *"Germany started WWII in 1938. Germany occupied Czechoslovakia and one year later it invaded Poland. On 17<sup>th</sup> of September 1939, the Red Army took under its protection the people from Western Ukraine and Western Belarus and by doing that it prevented further fascist penetration."*

In the same history textbook the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is mentioned only as a peace agreement which was broken by the Germans, without giving any specifics about the division of Europe in spheres of influence and the occupation of the neighboring states by the USSR. No mention of the Katyn massacre.

The narrative of *"the incapable Polish Government which fled the country and left its people in the hands of the enemy (fascists)"*, as well as the narrative of portraying *"the Red Army as a protector of the people"* are set in this history textbook. The different variations of these narratives, implemented mostly by playing with words, can be found up to the present day.

**The facts are that in accordance with the provisions from the Polish Constitution of 1935<sup>29</sup> related to government succession in the event of war, at the end of September/beginning of October 1939 a new President took oath and appointed a new government in exile.<sup>30</sup> Faced with the fourth annihilation in its history, with this move the political leadership secured the political continuity of the Polish state, although its territory was occupied. Additionally, in the later course of the war Polish troops participated in many Allied operations.**

<sup>29</sup> *Constitution of the Republic of Poland from 1935*, <http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/tek01/txt/kpol/e1935-spis.html>

<sup>30</sup> *Władysław Sikorski*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wladyslaw-Sikorski>

2. **Within the history textbook (History for 8th grade) from 1969**, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is named as Hitler-Stalin Friendship and Non-aggression Pact. This is the first textbook from the obtained materials offering some details on the agreement, including the secret protocol for dividing the territories between the USSR and Germany, i.e. the occupation of the Baltic States, Bessarabia (Romania) and Belarus by the USSR. There is mention of the Stalin's strategy to stay away from the battle of the "*capitalist countries*" against Germany. The failed attempt of brokering a peace agreement between the UK and France on one side, and the USSR on the other, is captured, thus picturing the UK and France as the party that was calculating and did not want to promise full assistance to the USSR in the event of a war with Germany. No mention of the Katyn massacre and the atrocities committed by the USSR.
  
3. **The history textbook [History for 8th grade (third edition)] from 1972** follows almost the same logic as the one from 1969. The occupation of Poland by the USSR and the occupation of the Baltic States, as well as Belarus and Bessarabia (Romania), are captured as a "normal follow-up" from the brokered Pact between the USSR and Germany and its protocols. No mention of the Katyn massacre and the atrocities committed by the USSR.
  
4. **The history textbook from 1982 [History for 8<sup>th</sup> grade (third edition)]** follows the same narratives as the previous textbooks of 1972 and 1969, but this time with no mention of the occupation of the Baltic States by the USSR and **the secret protocols to the "Non-aggression Agreement"**. Within this edition, the Belarusian and Ukrainian territories are presented as old territories under **tsarist Russia**, implying that the USSR had every right to claim and annex them. It is also stated that the Baltic States "*joined*" the USSR, repeating the same narrative from the first textbook from 1948 – History of the USSR.
  
5. **History for 4th year of gymnasium (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, general department) from 1983** is the first edition in which "*the meeting of Ribbentrop with Stalin and Molotov*" is mentioned in the context of dividing Poland between Germany and the USSR. Although for the first time USSR's "penetration" of Poland is labeled as an unjustifiable act which "*confused the progressive circles around the world*", the correct term "occupation" is still not used.
  
6. **The history textbook from 1984 (History for 8<sup>th</sup> grade)** continues the same pattern from the previous textbooks in regards to the actions of the USSR – no mention of the Katyn massacre and Soviet atrocities, while the word "penetrated" is used again instead of the word "occupied" when presenting the Soviet invasions.



However, this textbook for the first time portrays the UK and France as responsible for the German expansion and growth, due to the failure to comprehend the danger from Nazi Germany prior to its attack on Poland, thus introducing the narrative of their *"responsibility"* for the start of WWII. They are also blamed that *"with the policy of compromise, they thought that they would turn the aggressors towards the Soviet Union, and thus eliminate the danger of attacking their countries"*. This is a questionable personal interpretation of the facts by the authors that presents the USSR as a victim of the *"policy of appeasement"* by the UK and France.

The signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is presented as an act initiated by Hitler in order to avoid war on two fronts. The textbook claims that *"Hitler took advantage of Western powers' disagreement with the Soviet Union. To avoid war on two fronts, on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1939, he signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union. After the pact secured the neutrality of the Soviet Union, on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland and provoked World War II."* The omission of the fact that the USSR also attacked Poland, and the improper explanation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols, exonerates the USSR from any responsibility for the beginning of the war.

This represents a shift in the sentiment and in the way the facts are presented to the students, and it differs substantially from the editions of 1969, 1972 and 1982.

- 7. The history textbook from 1990 [History for 8th grade (second edition)]** The period of SFR Yugoslavia ends with the textbook published in 1990. This textbook shows another shift in the presentation of the historical facts. If up until this edition the responsibility for the German rise and power was placed (in different textbooks) amongst the UK and France, there is a slight change in the content within this edition.

**Namely, for the first time USA is introduced along the UK and France, stating that the three countries *"saw the decisions at Versailles as a guarantee for their world supremacy and therefore wanted to preserve peace at any cost, even if this meant concession before the fascist countries on the detriment of the small peoples and countries. It was important to them to isolate the USSR..."* This part does not take into consideration the developments that happened in these three countries at the time and represents an anti-Western narrative that derives from a questionable interpretation of the events prior to the war.**

However, unlike the history textbook from 1984, where France and the UK are blamed for not brokering an agreement with the USSR, within this textbook Stalin is pointed as the main cause for not brokering the agreement, as well as for being unprepared for the German invasion, although being informed and aware of it. This is the first textbook among the obtained and analyzed editions which presents Stalin's actions in a rather negative light, describing them as *"wrong policy"*, yet still not providing the full picture of his atrocities.

In terms of the start of WWII, the attack on Poland by the USSR is missing – the text is the following: *“after Germany attacked Poland and had occupied its Western part, the Eastern part belonged to the USSR”*. The “non-aggression agreement” is vaguely presented, more through the prism of Germany’s non-observance of it and Stalin’s lack of seriousness and preparedness to defend the USSR from the sudden German attack.

## Summary of the history textbooks in the period 1991-2022

- 1. The history textbook from 1992 (History for 8th grade)** continues the narratives from the 1990 textbook about the reasons for the start of the war and blames the Western countries that they tolerated Hitler because they thought he will attack only the USSR and not them as well – *“[i]n contrast to the fascist countries, the democratic capitalist Western countries - Britain, France, and the United States, which were also victorious in World War I - did not want change. They wanted to preserve the Versailles system, which gave them world supremacy, and they wanted to preserve world peace. For these reasons, these countries made a series of concessions to the fascist countries. They also pursued a policy of isolating the USSR and directing the fascist countries against this socialist country.”*

Regarding the start of WWII and Poland, the word “occupation” is used for the first time when the invasion of the USSR is in question, mentioning it together with the German invasion. Also, when elaborating on the UK and France, in an effort to present that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact triggered the declaration of war by the democratic countries against Germany, the textbook confuses the students with a blurry interpretation of the context, stating the following: *“Britain and France, when they learned that Germany and the USSR had concluded a non-aggression pact, realized that Germany’s aggressive attacks were aimed not only at the USSR, but also at them. Therefore, they decided not to make any more concessions to the fascist countries and on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939, they declared war on Germany.”* Building upon the previous context, provided in the paragraph above, these two sentences are not very clear. However, it is obvious that Britain and France did not declare war on Germany after the signing of the Pact, but only after the latter invaded Poland on 1 September, which is omitted in the text.

- 2. The history textbook from 1992 [History for 4th year of Gymnasium (General and language department)]** gives more in-depth information on the reasons why WWII began, compared to the previous textbooks. Contrary to the previous textbook, this one says that the USA was not satisfied with the Versailles system dominated by

the UK and France, thus maintaining the anti-UK and anti-France narratives, similar to the previous textbooks.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is presented as an agreement between Germany and the USSR for dividing Eastern Europe into spheres of influence, and there is a line which states that with the invasion by Germany, Poland was "occupied and divided" between Germany and the USSR.

Within the lesson "The beginning and course of the Second World War 1939 – 1941" there is a section entitled "The policy of the USSR before the Second World War", but there are no such sections dedicated to the other countries. This section is very problematic since it reinforces the narrative from the previous textbook that *"the imperialist countries wished for a conflict between Germany and the USSR in order for the latter to be destroyed."*

**In this section it is also mentioned for the first time that "Stalin did not pursue a consistent anti-fascist policy". In addition to this, Stalin's beliefs that "there would be a clash between fascist and Western democracies, and that the USSR would benefit by staying away from that clash" are elaborated. These two parts downplay Stalin's role and the significance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact for the start of WWII and its ramifications in the aftermath of the war.**

Once again, the Russian narrative in regards to the Pact is presented in the way that its signing was justified, since the USSR found itself under *"specific circumstances"*. The *"specific circumstances"* are described as follows: *"Such contradictions between the Western countries and the USSR were skillfully used by the fascist states of Germany, Italy, and Japan to carry out their aggressions without hindrance."*

- 3. The history textbook from 1998 [History for 8th grade (second edition)]** is identical with the one from 1992 with no changes made.
- 4. In the history textbook from 2003 (History for 3rd year),** the events prior to and at the start of WWII are presented on a very general level. This is the only example where the "agreement for non-aggression and friendship" is mentioned in the section that describes the establishment of the Axis. Also, the start of WWII and the manner in which the USSR occupied the Belarusian and Ukrainian territories under Poland is described in the following manner: *"Meanwhile, while the German attack was going on, Soviet troops penetrated Polish territory from the East and annexed parts inhabited by Belarusians and Ukrainians."*

**As it can be seen, the same activity – attack on Poland – is described differently. In the case of Germany is labeled as an attack, while in the case of the USSR it is labeled as "penetration" and "annexed parts inhabited by Belarusians and Ukrainians".**

5. **The textbook for 8<sup>th</sup> grade from 2005 (History for 8th grade) is identical with the one for 9<sup>th</sup> grade from 2016 [History for 9th grade (second edition)], both published by publishing house "ALBI."** Here for the first time the start of WWII is described as an invasion of Poland by both Germany and the USSR, thus dividing the country between them. However, the "non-aggression agreement" is not part of the lesson on the Second World War but it is included in the lesson "The World after WWI," together with the other developments that happened prior to WWII, which is very misleading, thus downplaying USSR's role in the lead up to WWII.
6. **History for 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school education, 2006 (publishing house "ALBI") is identical with History for 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Gymnasium, 2019 (publishing house "ALBI").** This textbook presents the reasons for the war and does not provide too many details on the "non-aggression agreement" between the USSR and Germany. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is mentioned within the topic "The World and Europe between the Two World Wars", without mentioning the secret protocols and the ramifications from them, thus aiming to preserve the fiction of Soviet neutrality in the period 1939-1941. The lesson "The World in the Second World War" mentions the Pact only as a non-aggression agreement, without referring to its name. However, there is an explicit line that the USSR attacked Poland on 17 September 1939.

A complete twist of the facts and distortion can be noted in the following claim: *"The USSR was not a guarantor of the Paris Peace Conference and was not satisfied with the solutions for the territorial issues between the USSR and Poland, and the USSR and Romania. The USSR demanded revision of these agreements and annexation of the eastern parts of Poland, as well as of Bessarabia and Bukovina."* On one hand, the narrative is that the Western powers divided the world, their policy is responsible for the rise of fascism and a cause for the war, and they don't want to accommodate the USSR's demands. On the other hand, the narrative implies that the disputed parts of Poland and Romania were the USSR's territories and they had every right to claim them.

In the lessons dedicated to the aftermath of WWII, without providing relevant background on the aggressions of the USSR as a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, it is stated that *"only the USSR significantly expanded its territory on the account of Poland. Poland received territories of Germany, Romania ceded territories to the USSR. The Baltic states and part of Eastern Prussia were incorporated in the USSR."*

7. **History for 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school education from 2006 (Publishing house "Prosvetno delo")** gives more comprehensive overview of the developments before and at the start of WWII. This textbook is the first in which the *"forcible annexation"* of the territories of Finland, Romania (Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina) and the three Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania by the USSR is elaborated, but without

bringing these actions into correlation with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Instead, the Pact is described in the following manner: *“Following the signing of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact in August 1939, Germany demanded the city of Danzig (Gdansk) and the narrow Polish corridor, which separated Eastern Prussia from Germany, to be ceded to it.”* This sentence is very confusing since it mixes the agreement for dividing Poland between Germany and the USSR with the later ultimatum issued by Germany to Poland, which was the excuse for the German attack and the start of WWII.

The attack of Poland by the USSR on 17 September 1939 is described as *“the Soviet army penetrated Polish territory”*.

#### **8. History for 9th grade from 2017 (VI edition, publishing house “Prosvetno Delo”)**

The Second World War is presented as *“a consequence of the conflicting attitudes between the great imperialist countries”*, which portrays the Western countries in a negative light. Furthermore, the text states that *“the winners of WWI that were satisfied with the division [after WWI] did not want change, but demanded observance of the Versailles system.”* The word “division” refers to the division of the world, and should be interpreted in the context of the “dissatisfaction” of the fascist countries from the division of the world after WWI. This implies that the “Great Powers”, winners in WWI, divided the world.

The anti-Western narrative, portraying the USSR as a victim is also present, through the claims that *“[the] democratic countries made many concessions to the fascist countries aiming to isolate them and divert them from a new war. They also implemented a policy to isolate the USSR and to direct it against the fascist countries.”*

The other narrative that is present is the one that downplays the responsibility of the USSR for the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its ramifications. There is only one mention of the “non-aggression agreement”, while the aggression on and division of Poland, the occupation of Bessarabia, Belarus and Western Poland, as well as the three Baltic States, are not included in the lesson at all.

The fact that USSR attacked and occupied Poland is not mentioned, together with the fact that the UK and France declared war on Germany after it attacked Poland.



# REFERENCES

## Articles and documents

1. 75th anniversary of the end of WWII - Victory Europe Day, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1090765291322425>
2. The Baltic Way Stories, <https://www.thebalticway.eu/en/history/>
3. Britannica, *Katyn Massacre*, retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Katyn-Massacre>
4. Britannica, *Baltic states - Soviet occupation*, retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-states/Soviet-occupation>
5. Britannica, *Stalinism*, retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Stalinism>
6. Britannica, *Władysław Sikorski*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Wladyslaw-Sikorski>
7. *Constitution of the Republic of Poland 1935*, <http://libr.sejm.gov.pl/tek01/txt/kpol/e1935-spis.html>
8. Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, *Communist Dictatorship in Ukraine. The Soviet Occupation (1920-1991)*, <https://communistcrimes.org/en/countries/ukraine>
9. Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, 2019, *The Criminal Secret Protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Chronology*, retrieved from: <https://communistcrimes.org/en/criminal-secret-protocol-molotov-ribbentrop-pact-chronology>
10. *European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe*, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html)
11. Fighting False News Narratives, *The European Parliament Condemns the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, 2020, <https://f2n2.mk/%d0%b5%d0%b2%d1%80%d0%be%d0%bf%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8%d0%be%d1%82-%d0%bf%d0%b0%d1%80%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b5%d0%bd%d1%82-%d1%81%d0%be-%d0%be%d1%81%d1%83%d0%b4%d0%b0-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d0%bf%d0%b0%d0%ba%d1%82/>
12. Gelava Sopo, *Soviet myths about World War II*, Mythdetector, 2016, <https://mythdetector.ge/en/soviet-myths-about-world-war-ii-2/>

13. Goncharenko Roman, *World War II and the battle over collective memory in Eastern Europe*, DW, 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/world-war-ii-and-the-battle-over-collective-memory-in-eastern-europe/a-53356626>
14. History.com, *Germany surrenders unconditionally to the Allies at Reims*, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/germany-surrenders-unconditionally-to-the-allies-at-reims>
15. Kelly Lidia, *Don't blame us for Stalin's slaughter, says Putin*, Independent, 2010, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/don-t-blame-us-for-stalin-s-slaughter-says-putin-1938727.html>
16. *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, retrieved from: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1939pact.asp>
17. *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*, retrieved from: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110994.pdf>
18. *On This Day: April 13, 1990*, The Moscow Times, 2019, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/04/13/on-this-day-april-13-1990-a65218>
19. *Putin Accuses Europe of Ignoring Nazism in the Baltics*, DW, 2007, <https://www.dw.com/en/putin-accuses-europe-of-ignoring-nazism-in-the-baltics/a-2817872>
20. Roth Andrew, *Molotov-Ribbentrop: why is Moscow trying to justify Nazi pact?*, Guardian, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/23/moscow-campaign-to-justify-molotov-ribbentrop-pact-sparks-outcry>
21. Snore Edvins, *The Soviet Story* (an excerpt), 2008, retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFTtuHxxBLo>
22. Snyder Timothy, *When Stalin was Hitler's Ally*, Eurozine, 2015, retrieved from: <https://www.eurozine.com/when-stalin-was-hitlers-ally/>
23. Tlis Fatima, *30 Years After Admitting WWII Massacre of Polish POWs, Katyn Memorial Plaques Removed in Russia*, Polygraph, 2020, <https://www.polygraph.info/a/katyn-poland-russia/30601790.html>
24. Victor Eric, *The Soviet Occupation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina*, retrieved from: <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/the-soviet-occupation-of-bessarabia-and-northern-bukovina>
25. Vladimir Putin's annual news conference, 2019, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62366>
26. Walker S., Ragozin L., Weaver M., *Putin likens Ukraine's forces to Nazis and threatens standoff in the Arctic*, the Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/29/putin-ukraine-forces-nazis-arctic>
27. Weber Claudia, *The Pact that started World War II*, 2020, retrieved from: <https://communistcrimes.org/en/pact-started-world-war-ii>

## Textbooks (arranged in a chronological order)

1. Shestanova A. (ed.), *History of the USSR - Short Course*, An Enterprise for Textbooks of the People's Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 1948
2. Dimevski J., Kushevski V., *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade*, Publishing house "Prosvetno delo", Skopje, 1969
3. Dimevski J., Kushevski V., *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*, Publishing house "Prosvetno delo", Skopje, 1972
4. Dimevski J., Kushevski V., *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1982
5. Apostolov A., Cvetkovski B., Gligorov Gj., *History for 4th year of Gymnasium (general department)*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1983
6. Dimevski J., Kushevski V., *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1984
7. Manevski I., *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1990
8. Veljanovski N. et al, *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1992
9. Mladenovski S. et al, *History for 4th year of Gymnasium (General and language department)*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1992
10. Veljanovski N. et al, *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 1998
11. Dimitrijevski M., Goneva-Jancheva Lj., Sarova-Mirchevska K., *History for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year*, Makedonska iskra, Skopje, 2003
12. Ristovski B. et al, *History for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade*, ALBI, Skopje, 2005
13. Veljanovski N. et al, *History for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of Gymnasium*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 2006
14. Ristovski B. et al, *History for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of Gymnasium*, ALBI, Skopje, 2006
15. Ristovski B. et al, *History for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade*, ALBI, Skopje, 2016
16. Velkoski V. et al, *History for 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*, Prosvetno delo, Skopje, 2017
17. Ristovski B. et al, *History for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year of Gymnasium*, ALBI, Skopje, 2019