

MONITORING OF THE SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS



HISTORY



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INTRODUCTION

The main aim of the project is to promote the formation of the population of Georgia (regardless of people's ethnic and religious backgrounds) into a unified civic nation. We believe this task is difficult to accomplish without integrating relevant views and philosophies into school education. Therefore, our project also serves to fundamentally analyze problems and find ways to eliminate them. To this end, we consider a thorough audit of school textbooks at the initial stage to be the most important task in order to find out to what extent school education helps people of different ethnicities and nations living in Georgia to feel a part of history, development, and statehood of Georgia.

The situation is radically different from each other, when ethnically non-Georgian and non-Orthodox youth, during twelve years of schooling, unsuccessfully search for themselves in school books and when an art history textbook introduces us to the creative work of Parajanov as successfully and broadly as, for example, the work of Lado Gudiashvili, or when children have the opportunity to read in a literature textbook the poetry of Ietim Gurji and Sayat-Nova, similarly as Baratashvili's or Sulokhan-Saba's creative work.

School education policy and the answers to the questions - what, how, and why we teach - create a complete picture of each particular state's attitude toward its citizens. For a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country like Georgia, it is extremely important that not only minority representatives feel part of a unified state but also that majority representatives fully understand the contributions and merits of representatives of all ethnic and religious groups in the development of the country.

In today's reality, school textbooks say almost nothing about the contribution of ethnic non-Georgians to the country's history and development. As a result, this premise leads to a fairly entrenched narrative, according to which Georgia is a country "created" only by ethnic Georgians. In the following stage, this approach, along with other problems already evident in public policy, leads to the separation of ethnic groups from one another and, in the long run, significantly hinders the process of integration and the formation of a civic nation. The problem mentioned above is revealed with particular clarity in forming the majority view of multi-ethnicity as a value.

When we say, "This country is ours," when we organize [campaigns](#) or implement various projects, we must remember that the activities of any non-governmental organization can only be supportive, and it is very important that the "this is ours" approach be presented inclusively in school education.

For an in-depth analysis of the above issue, as part of this project, we, Civic IDEA, studied textbooks in the following subjects:

- **HISTORY OF GEORGIA**
(6-12 GRADES)
- **GEORGIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**
(7 - 12 GRADES)
- **CIVIC EDUCATION / CIVIL DEFENSE AND SAFETY**
(4TH, 7-12 GRADES)
- **GEOGRAPHY**
(7-11 GRADES)
- **HISTORY OF ART / FINE AND APPLIED ARTS**
(2ND, 3RD, 7-9 GRADES)

The findings of the research and textbook audits will be presented in a number of reports that are intended to evaluate how the contributions of ethnically non-Georgian and non-Orthodox Christian learned world, painters, writers, and public figures to the development of our country are portrayed in the school textbooks.

In addition, the process of monitoring textbooks revealed several other essential and noteworthy circumstances that broadened the interest of our study. To demonstrate an overall picture, it was impossible to overlook these issues, precisely for this reason that we critically examined the context, content, and ideological basis for teaching different specific periods of history. These include World War II, Stalin's repressive policies, the Russian Empire's policies, the Bolsheviks' policies towards the Georgian Orthodox Church and the "charm of unity in faith", the Georgian dissident movements, the August War, etc. The observation revealed that there is an incomplete presentation/distortion of the issue in several cases, demonstration of the author's subjective attitude to a specific fact and/or neglect of a particular era, embellishment, or ignoring of facts.

Therefore, in implementing the project, our task is to study and analyze what and how we teach in general education schools in Georgia. Our particular interest is to research and analyze:

- What and how we teach about Georgia's transformation from Soviet rule to a democratic state;
- How adequately our school textbooks reflect Georgia's multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character, and whether the balance is maintained;
- How the Russian occupation is taught and what children learn about Soviet repression, the Stalin Phenomenon and Bolshevik aggression, and other related topics.

This study is our attempt to assess after 12 years of schooling:

- What kind of education do secondary school students begin their later life with;
- What type of understanding do they have of ideas of tolerance, integration of religious and ethnic groups, statehood, formation of a civic nation, and equality;
- How/to what extent do they adapt what they read and hear to the reality in which they live, and how capable are they of generalizing;
- What problems and dilemmas do they encounter at school, and what solutions does literature offer;
- Does the school meet the criteria outlined at the level of principles in the national curriculum of the third level;
- And finally, and most importantly, are the doors of school education open to Georgia's young citizens regardless of ethnic or religious affiliation, and are they provided with an appropriate environment to receive one of the fundamental rights - education in equal and dignified conditions.

THE MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

This report deals with teaching history in schools and all those problems or circumstances that we think deserve special attention.

To begin with, here are the **final opinions** about the problems identified in the textbooks.

Stories about World War II, Soviet repression, the cult of personality, and the Stalin era are disturbing. The narration's context and modest style of storytelling suggest that the authors spent their time mainly making changes to Soviet-era school textbooks rather than creating original history textbooks in an independent Georgia, a country struggling with the Russian occupation and a flawed Soviet past.

- ✓ Although the topic of religious and ethnic minorities is covered in several paragraphs in various subjects textbooks, that emphasize the importance of the integration process and the need for minority involvement, however, the mentioned is only found if the topic/issue of the paragraph is related explicitly to the matter of minorities and **does not represent an organic premise for the textbooks;**
- ✓ As a result of the observation of all subjects, a general picture emerged that individual paragraphs dealing with the diversity of Georgia are usually given in the last chapters of the textbooks, as the last paragraphs. It is impossible for topics like Georgia's ethnic and cultural

diversity and Tbilisi's role as a crossroads of cultures - depending on the content - to naturally appear in the last chapters of textbooks, even for different subjects, which is a kind of manifestation of the state policy towards the issue. Accordingly, program-wise, they are typically either completely absent or given a cursory treatment in schools, in the end of the spring semester;

- ✓ When it comes to religious and national minorities, there are some quite interesting assignments. But, as a rule, the established practice is that **teachers ignore them and do not discuss them during the lesson**. The mentioned will find justification - the material is most often so voluminous that the teacher can not manage/complete all the additional assignments. Also, it is not perceived as part of the primary material;
- ✓ In some cases, the rhetoric of the questions remains problematic; there are **more indicative questions where the subjective attitude of the author of the question to the problem is directly visible**;
- ✓ For all of the subjects under monitoring, it must be said that **textbooks are inherently unrelated to each other**, despite similar teaching periods – an isolation policy is observed;
- ✓ There is no balance between the teachings of the West and the East. Of course, one can only welcome that Western authors, their philosophy, and Western culture are taught on such a large scale in textbooks. Still, against this background, there is a lack of information about the East, as well as about current events, culture, and the social situation in the neighboring area.

THE SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS – THE SUBJECT OF MONITORING

At the beginning of the project, we addressed the Ministry of Education of Georgia with a letter requesting information about textbooks awarded with approval and selected in schools. Similarly, we asked for information from the five private schools with the highest contingent. Based on the information we received, it was found that most of the schools use textbooks from Diogene Publishers; accordingly, we purchased and reviewed textbooks primarily from this publisher.

At the same time, during the monitoring process, we used several textbooks that have been in circulation for years, raised generations, but are no longer used in schools as the actual material. That gave us the opportunity, on the one hand, to compare textbooks with each other - what kinds of changes have been made to them, and, on the other hand, to determine how current textbooks meet modern standards and whether they meet the requirements, according to the goals of the curriculum.

HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD - 6TH GRADE (authors: Ketevan Tvaliashvili, Tsira Chikvaidze, Giorgi Kiknadze, Kona Publishing Company, 2004)

HISTORY - 8TH GRADE (authors: Nato Akhmeteli, Besik Lortkipanidze, Natia Pirtskhalava, Diogene Publishers, awarded with approval by Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia in 2020) - (hereinafter - Diogene, 2020)

HISTORY - 8TH GRADE (authors: Elene Medzmariashvili, Teimuraz Papaskiri, Murman Papashvili, Rusudan Daushvili, Otar Janelidze, Apollon Tabuashvili, Tamar Khatiashvili, Marekh Kavtiashvili, awarded with approval in 2012 by the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia)

HISTORY OF GEORGIA - 9TH GRADE (authors: Otar Janelidze, Apollon Tabuashvili, Leri Tavadze, Nana Iremashvili, Klio publishing House, awarded with approval in 2012 by the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia)

HISTORY OF GEORGIA AND HISTORY OF THE WORLD - textbook for students, 9th grade, Part I (authors: Nato Akhmeteli, Besik Lortkipanidze, Natia Pirtskhalava, Diogene Publishers, awarded with approval by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in 2021) - (hereinafter – Diogene, 2021, Part I)

HISTORY OF GEORGIA AND HISTORY OF THE WORLD - textbook for students, 9th grade, Part II (authors: Nato Akhmeteli, Besik Lortkipanidze, Natia Pirtskhalava, Diogene Publishers, awarded with approval by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia in 2021) - (hereinafter – Diogene, 2021, Part II)

HISTORY – TEXTBOOK FOR STUDENTS, 11TH GRADE (authors: Nino Kiguridze, Giorgi Sanikidze, Levan Gordeziani, Lali Pirtskhalava, Revaz Gachechiladze, Nodar Asatiani, Bakur Sulakauri Publishing, awarded with approval by the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (Order No. 375, 18.05.2012)

HISTORY - 11TH GRADE (authors: Gvantsa Abdaladze, Bondo Kupatadze, Nata Akhmeteli, Niko Murgulia, Diogene Publishers, the textbook is awarded approval by the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (Order No. 375, 18.05.2012)

HISTORY - 12TH GRADE (authors: Gvantsa Abdaladze, Bondo Kupatadze, Nata Akhmeteli, Niko Murgulia, Diogene Publishers, the textbook is awarded approval by the LEPL National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (Order No. 375, 18.05.2012)

HISTORY OF THE WORLD AND HISTORY OF GEORGIA - 12TH GRADE (authors: Nata Akhmeteli, Niko Murgulia, Diogene Publishers), the textbook in Georgian-Armenian language, the year or the fact of the award with approval is not indicated on the book cover.

HISTORY (6-12 GRADES)

GEORGIA AND NEIGHBORHOOD

One of the major problems we encounter when reading history textbooks is the scant information about our neighbors. For example, **the 8th-grade textbook** (Diogene, 2020), which extensively covers current events in Byzantium, the Iranian-Byzantine conflict, and the positioning of Kartli, says almost nothing about Armenia. In addition, our history textbooks tell us almost nothing about the Gregorian Church, which was quite an important and powerful player in the region. While there is plenty of material on Catholicism or Protestant Church, which in itself is essential and valuable, we believe that we must also duly learn the key characteristics of the history and identity of our neighbors. For example, the second chapter of the same textbook (pages 21-43) deals with the formation of the Arab Caliphate. This part of the textbook introduces students to Arab life and culture. We believe that the fact that the student receives information about how Islam was formed should be evaluated most positively. The story and life of Muhammad, the history of the mosque, and the history of the Quran are told. In this part, a rather interesting and varied assignment is given - the student must find a correspondence between passages from the Quran and the Ten Christian Commandments.

This absolutely correct approach by the textbook authors should be encouraged, but we believe developing a similar approach towards our neighbors is also very important. Otherwise, there is naturally a sense that a specific agenda of political expediency exists, due to which facts and events about our neighbors are ignored and glossed over in history textbooks.

In circumstances where history textbooks, for the most part, do not tell us anything fundamental and tangible about our neighbors, such as the same 8th-grade textbook (Diogene, 2020, p.25) about Heraclius Caesar and the Khazars campaign describes data from Armenian historian Movses Kaghankatvatsi's source "History of the Country of Alvan", and following the relevant subchapter we read:

Can we trust Kaghankatvatsi's "History of the Country of Alvan" as a historical source?
How, in your opinion, would a Georgian, Byzantine, or Khazar chronicler have described the
same story?

Perhaps the author's personal goal is not to belittle the author of the source or to encourage a stereotypical attitude of society toward Armenian sources or bias towards Armenian historians in general. Still, given the current reality, **school textbook authors should always approach all such cases with particular sensitivity and be more careful by maintaining a neutral stance and tone** (we do not encounter such kinds of questions about the Georgian authors when the context

gives such kind of possibility). **The subjective attitude of the authors in the questions mentioned and the suggestive nature of the questions themselves lead to the corresponding stereotypical discussion, which is entirely unacceptable.¹**

627 წელს ირანის დედაქალაქის მახლობლად, ნინევიასთან, ირანის შაჰ ხოსრო II-სა და ჰერაკლეს შორის გადამწყვეტი ბრძოლა გაიმართა, რომელშიც ირანელები სასტიკად დამარცხდნენ. ჰერაკლემ ირანელებისგან იერუსალიმიდან წაღებული ჯვრის დაბრუნება მოითხოვა. დაელოდა მის ჩამოსვენებას და იერუსალიმში თავად შეიტანა ძელი ცხოველი“.



სურ. 3 პიერო დელა ფრანჩესკა. ჰერაკლე კეისრისა და ირანელების ბრძოლა.

?

17. როგორ ფიქრობ, შეიძლება თუ არა ვენდოთ მოვსეს კალაკანტვაცის ალვანთა ქვეყნის ისტორიას“, როგორც ისტორიულ წყაროს?

18. შენი აზრით, როგორ აღწერდა იმავე ამბავს ქართველი, ბიზანტიელი ან ხაზარი მემკვიდრე?

The correct perception of the mentioned question and the non-discriminatory nature of the discussion will largely depend on the teacher so that the student will not have a preconception in the future that the sources of the chronicler himself, Movses Kaghankatvatsi, may be unreliable. On the other hand, there is a danger that the student will generalize and reclassify the sources of Armenian authors as unreliable and constantly question the reliability of such resources. The scenario mentioned above becomes realistic, given the stereotypical attitudes in

¹ Fairness demands to highlight that we usually find this type of question regarding other sources and is not exclusive to this paragraph/chapter. For example, a Georgian historian's source about Marwan the Deaf's campaign is accompanied by a question: Do you think the source's author is biased or not? How would an Arab chronicler have described the same story? (Diogene, 2020, p. 40)

Georgia. We consider that the formulation of the question should be changed. If the goal is to develop the student's critical/analytical skills, this goal can be achieved by posing other types of questions.

TRANSCAUCASIAN DEMOCRATIC FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC

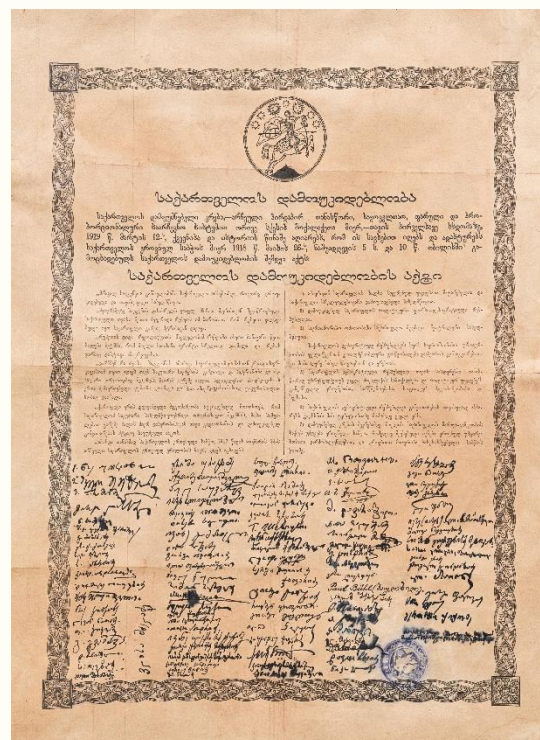


როგორ და რატომ მოიპოვა საქართველომ დამოუკიდებლობა?

ამიერკავკასიის (სამხრეთ კავკასიის) დემოკრატიულმა ფედერაციულმა რესპუბლიკამ დაახლოებით ერთი თვე იარსება, რადგან სამივე ერის განსხვავებულმა პოზიციამ ერთიანობა შეუძლებელი გახადა. აზერბაიჯანელებს პროოსმალური პოზიცია ჰქონდათ, სომხები ანტანტის/ინგლისის ორიენტაციის მომხრენი იყვნენ, საქართველო კი გერმანიასთან დაიწყო მოლაპარაკება. გერმანელებმა ქართველებს შესთავაზეს, დამოუკიდებლობა გამოეცხადებინათ და ოსმალეთთან მოლაპარაკებაში დაეხმარებოდნენ. ასეთ ვითარებაში პოლიტიკურმა ლიდერებმა გერმანელების წინადადება მიიღეს. განხილვის შემდეგ გად-ანყდა, ამიერკავკასიის დემოკრატიული ფედერაციული რესპუბლიკა დაშლილიყო და მის მაგივრად დამოუკიდებელი სახელმწიფოები ჩამოყალიბებულიყო.

1918 წლის 26 მაისს თბილისში ჯერ ფედერაციის დაშლა, შემდეგ კი საქართველოს დემოკრატიული რესპუბლიკის შექმნა გამოცხადდა. ორ დღეში აზერბაიჯანიც და სომხეთიც დამოუკიდებელ დემოკრატიულ რესპუბლიკებად გამოცხადდა.

საომარი მოქმედებები საქართველო-სა და ოსმალეთს შორის საბოლოოდ 3 ივნისს საქართველოს დემოკრატიულ რესპუბლიკასა და ოსმალეთს შორის დადებული ზავით დასრულდა. ოსმალეთს ბათუმის ოლქთან ერთად ახალქალაქისა და ახალციხის მაზრებიც გადაეცა, მაგრამ მას შემდეგ, რაც 1918 წლის ნოემბერში I მსოფლიო ომი გერმანიისა და მისი მოკავშირეების დამარცხებით დასრულდა, ოსმალებმა, როგორც გერმანიის მოკავშირეებმა, ახალციხისა და ახალქალაქის მაზრები დატოვეს, ხოლო 1919 წელს საქართველოს დემოკრატიულმა რესპუბლიკამ ბათუმის ოლქიც დაიბრუნა.



Georgia and the world history textbook for 9th grade (Diogene, 2021, Part II), begins with a description of the events of the first two decades of the twentieth century. Accordingly, its essential component is the existence of the Transcaucasian Federative Republic, the declaration of independence by all three states of the South Caucasus in Tbilisi, and other important events. The fact that only a couple of paragraphs (pp. 232-233) are devoted to this crucial period of the

struggle against the Bolsheviks in our country and the region as a whole, as well as the achievement of independent statehood, is absolutely unjustifiable.

The struggle of Georgia and its neighbors against Russian imperialism is crucial for constructing the modern Georgian state. It is necessary and desirable to know why our neighbors proclaimed state independence exactly in Tbilisi and not in any other capital of the South Caucasus. At the same time, the twenties of the twentieth century is one of the newest historical episodes of the liberation struggle, which gives it even greater significance and historical value. Therefore, an in-depth knowledge of the events of that period helps us better understand and explain the challenges of our time.

GEORGIA AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

It should be noted already at the beginning that an **eighth-grade history textbook** (Diogene, 2020) unfortunately promotes the formation of stereotypes, the emergence and deepening of the distance between representatives of different ethnic or religious groups, and cannot satisfy the important conditions of tolerance and the formation of a unified nation.



For example, the 3rd subchapter of the textbook (p. 37) discusses how Arabs ruled Caliphate and how Kartli came to be part of the Caliphate. It describes the campaigns of the Arabs in Egrisi and Kartli, the campaign of Marwan ibn Muhammad and its results, the devastation of Georgian villages and towns and the establishment of Arab rule. There we read that this period is associated with the appearance of the Muslim population in Tbilisi, as well as the construction of the first mosque. Understandably it is not our task to evaluate historical facts or descriptions, and therefore our report will not touch on the history of the invasions of the Marwan the Deaf or the handing over of Tbilisi to the Arabs. The problem the textbook raises in discussing this particular issue will be related to the student's assignments and questions. There we read that this period is associated with the appearance of the Muslim population in Tbilisi, as well as the construction of the first mosque. It is not our task to assess historical facts or descriptions per se, and thus our report will not address the history of the invasions of Marwan the Deaf or the transfer of Tbilisi to the Arabs. The problem the textbook creates in discussing this particular relates to the student's assignments and questions.

The authors of the textbook, with opinions incomprehensible to us, precisely in connection with the discussion of the violent campaigns of Marwan the Deaf and the destruction of Kartli by the Arabs, decided to question students about relations between Georgians and non-Georgians, and with very touchy questions at that.

We must reiterate that following the story about the destruction of Kartli and the conquest of Tbilisi by Marwan the Deaf, the textbook authors assign eighth-graders to discuss

"the relationship between the population of Tbilisi - Georgians and non-Georgians," with, in our view, the highly provocative question, "Is it possible that members of this society have a common interest?"

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  **15.** იმსჯელე თბილისის მოსახლეობის – ქართველთა და არაქართველთა – ურთიერთობის შესახებ. როგორ ფიქრობ, რა იყო იმის მიზეზი, რომ თბილისში ასეთი კოლერანტული საზოგადოება შეიქმნა? შესაძლებელია, რომ ამ საზოგადოების წევრებს საერთო ინტერესები ჰქონოდათ?

We consider that this question is essentially indicative, the school students have already created preliminary, extremely negative perceptions, and it is hard to imagine a situation where children will discuss the settlement of Muslims in Tbilisi, the construction of mosques, the presence/absence of "common interests" between ethnically Georgian and non-Georgian populations, beyond the emotional mood and context created after that particular lesson.

GEORGIA AND MINORITIES

Special attention should be dedicated to the fact that according to school textbooks, the history of Georgia is created mainly by "orthodox Georgian men", which leaves absolutely no room for discussion of the contributions and merits of our compatriots who are ethnic Georgians, but representatives of other confessions, and especially Georgians belonging to different national minorities. Such an approach is neither historically accurate nor does it leave the possibility that all citizens of this country will find themselves in the construction of Georgia.

For example, we might recall **History of Georgia and History of the World - Subchapter 2nd of the 9th-grade textbook** (Diogene, 2021, Part II). The latter refers to the culture and education of the period of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. It is about the "volcanic eruption of accumulated energy" in free Georgia after many years of imperialist pressure and censorship (Eka Kevanishvili, "Art of 1918-1920 - flowers growing on the pavement"), in particular, about the activities of the "Blue Horns", of life in Tbilisi at the time, cafes and literary salons, artists, writers, studies and education. However, for example, **the creativity and work of Ietim Gurji, whose most published books belong to this period, were nowhere to be found, not even in a subchapter.** This approach by the textbook's authors is regrettable since diversity, which is characteristic of Tbilisi and Georgia in general, plays the most significant role in the successful development of Georgia. **Similar is the fate of another genius, born in Tbilisi but not ethnically Georgian, Sayatnova, who also failed to find a place in the relevant subchapters of the textbooks on the history of Georgia.**

It should definitely be noted that in the same textbook (Diogene, 2021, Part II), an entire subchapter (No. 95-96, p.411, *Why Georgia Became a Crossroads of Cultures ?*) is devoted to ethnic minorities living in Georgia and their activities. However, one technical problem to note in this section is that this very important subchapter is the last subchapter of Part 2 of the textbook and therefore, is presented during the last week of the spring semester on the academic calendar. Unfortunately, this part of the textbook is usually not filled at schools because of the vast schedule and the fact that it is the last week before the school holidays.

A solution to the problem might be to change the structure of the textbook, but actually finding a place in the book for this particular sub-chapter will not fundamentally solve the issue. **Because everything that is written in the last chapter of the textbook and even more, should become an organic part of different chapters according to specific periods and topics. All people born and working in Georgia, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation, are equally a part of the state's development and culture and therefore, should find a place next to each other.** "Crossroads of cultures" is an important topic, but here the attention should be mainly focused on other important stories driven from outside, for example, Alexandre Dumas or Pushkin, and others.

At the beginning of the subchapter, a conversation in the discussion club is given:

"we have already learned that since ancient times along with Georgians in Georgia, lived representatives of other nations; I am sure that they have made a significant contribution to the development of Georgian culture... And this diversity was reflected not only in the appearance and architectural structures of the city but also in everyday life and culture."

ნორჩ მკვლევართა სადისკუსიო კლუბში მსჯელობენ:



- ჩვენ უკვე ვისწავლეთ, რომ უძველესი დროიდან საქართველოში ქართველების გვერდით სხვა ერის წარმომადგენლებიც ცხოვრობდნენ.
- მართალია, სხვადასხვა დროსა და სხვადასხვა ისტორიული გარემოებების გამო საქართველოში სხვადასხვა ეროვნების ადამიანი დასახლდა.
- დარწმუნებული ვარ, მათ მნიშვნელოვანი წვლილი შეიტანეს ქართული კულტურის განვითარებაში.
- განსაკუთრებული მრავალეროვნულობით ხომ ქალაქი თბილისი გამოირჩეოდა.
- ნეტავ, რატომ?
- იმიტომ, რომ სამხრეთ კავკასიის სავაჭრო-ეკონომიკური ცენტრი იყო. XIX საუკუნიდან კი, როდესაც რუსული მმართველობა დამყარდა და მთავარ-მართების, შემდეგ კი მეფისნაცვლის რეზიდენცია აქ იყო, ეს ქალაქი ამ რეგიონის პოლიტიკური ცენტრიც გახდა.
- ეს მრავალფეროვნება, ხომ, არა მხოლოდ ქალაქის იერსახესა და არქიტექტურულ ნაგებობებზე, არამედ ყოფასა და კულტურაზეც აისახებოდა.

That is the spirit and content that should stay with a person after reading school textbooks, and when studying different eras and historical events, children should be deeply aware of the contribution of our compatriots in the construction and development of Georgia, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation.

This kind of story on the fact that individuals of many nationalities live in Georgia serves as the opening to the text narration in this final lesson of the textbook. Armenians mainly live in large cities and Samtskhe-Javakheti, Azerbaijanis - in Tbilisi, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti, Jews, Ossetians, and Russians - almost all over Georgia, Kurds - in Tbilisi, Kists and Udis - in Kakheti. Tbilisi was and still is characterized by its multi-ethnic population.

Further, it is a brief description of Georgia in the context of the crossroads of cultures, the influence of ethnic minorities living in the country on the culture, how their creative work became part of the diverse Georgian culture, that Armenian, Azerbaijani, Jewish, German and other nationalities writers, artists, playwrights, film and theatre directors, architects who lived and worked in Tbilisi together with Georgians, etc. In particular, the following persons can be found in the textbook:

Azerbaijani poet	Mirza Shafi Vazeh
Azerbaijani writer	Mirza Fatali Akhundov
Azerbaijani journalist-satirist	Jelil Memed-Kuli Zadeh
German writer	Arthur Leist
Georgian painters of Polish origin, brothers	Ilia and Kirill Zdanevich
Georgian painter of German origin	Oskar Schmerling
Georgian-Jewish primitivist painter	Shalom Koboshvili
Armenian writers and public figures	Hovhannes Tumanyan and Gabriel Sundukyan and others

Students have the opportunity to learn that Hovhannes Tumanyan founded the "Vernatuni" literary club in Tbilisi, Sundukyan's plays were performed in both Armenian and Georgian theaters, Mirza Shafi Vazeh and Mirza Fatali Akhundov were engaged in literary activities in this city, Arthur Leist was a friend and like-minded of Ilia Chavchavadze; Ilia and Kirill Zdanevich discovered the great Georgian painter Niko Pirosmiani and preserved his artworks for the future generations, in Tbilisi there was a center of Jewish culture.

The sources for this lesson are:

- **Kurban Said - Ali and Nino;**
- **Azerbaijani women in the family and society in the early twentieth century**
(based on the publications of "Molla Nasraddin" periodical) (authors V. Abbasov, N. Jafarova);
- **Sergo Parajanov about Tbilisi. Creative work of Sergo Parajanov at the Crossroads of Epochs and Cultures**
(author: A. Dzhamagidze);
- **How we Lived Together in 20th Century Georgia. Worksheet: Everyday Life in the Tbilisi Court**
(by Sh. Khetsuriani), 2011;
- **Creative work of Sergo Parajanov at the Crossroads of Epochs and Cultures;**
Excerpt from an Interview with Rita Sahakyan, a native of Tbilisi.

GEORGIA AND RUSSIA

At the outset, it should be made clear that our task is by no means to conceal any part of Georgia's history, and naturally, we are not asking to forget history or to embellish the truth. One of the essential points is to maintain a balance.

Accordingly, it is important to be critical of those parts of textbooks where the authors cannot free themselves from their subjective attitudes when talking about historical facts. Consequently, when describing the invasions of the Arabs, Mongols, or Kizilbashi, the devastation of Kartli and Kakheti, and other similar events, the authors widely use an element of denial on Muslim customs and religious grounds. However, there is nothing of the sort when describing and evaluating a "united in faith" enemy. Moreover, for example, when talking about the Bolshevik repression, almost nothing is said about the violence and brutality perpetrated by the "united in faith" brother against the Georgian Orthodox Church, the churches and monasteries, and the clergy (Diogene, 2021, Part II). The textbook gives this issue as an ideological framework, which is more of an attempt to explain than evaluate and serves as a punishment of the autocephalous Georgian Orthodox Church. In particular, we read in the textbook that -for the Bolsheviks, atheism was an integral part of ideology, and the telegram of Lenin to Dzerzhinsky of May 1,

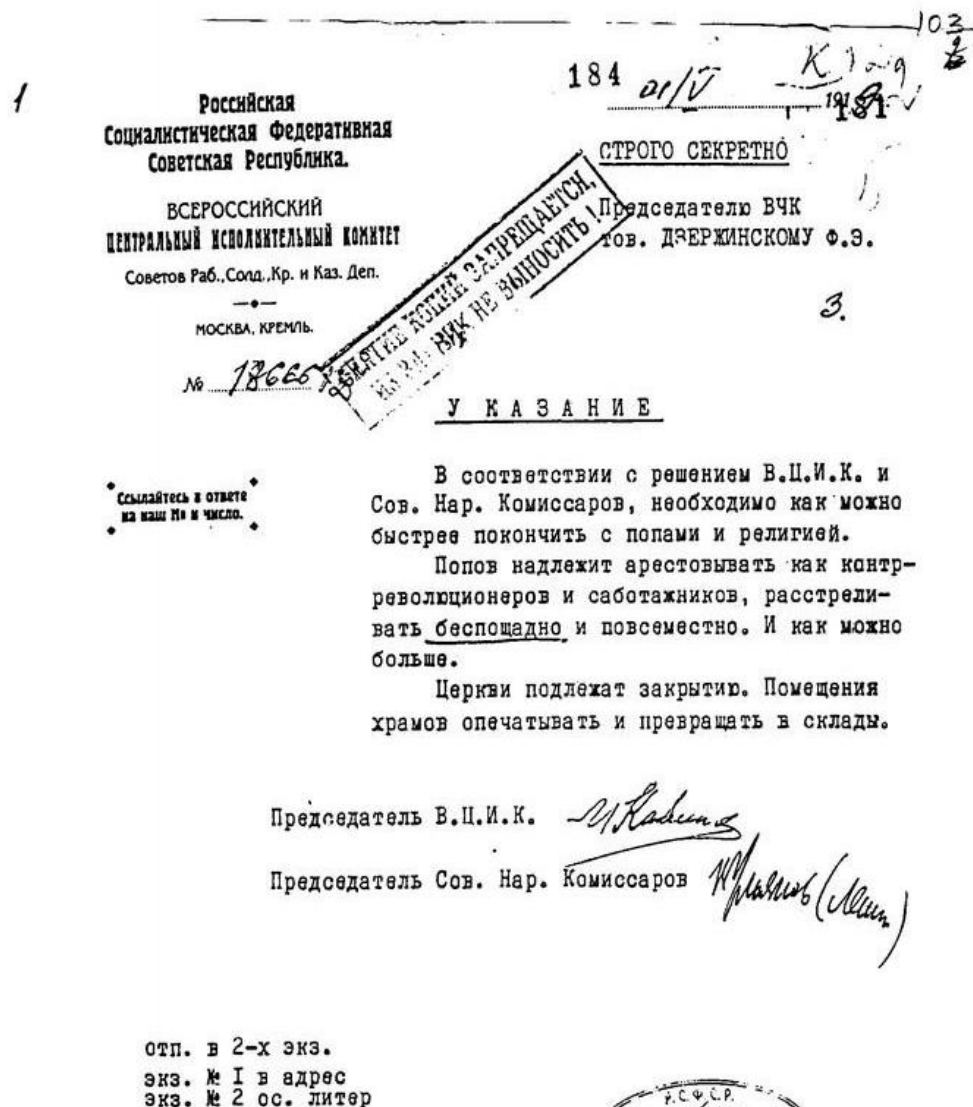
1919, is cited, where he encourages and calls for an end to churches and practice. However, the textbook does not say much about how this task of Lenin was implemented in reality.

ბოლშევიკებისთვის ათეიზმი იდეოლოგიის შემადგენელი ნაწილი იყო

წყრო დ) ლენინის დეპეშა, გაგზავნილი ძერჟინსკისთან, 1 მაისი, 1919წ.

„აუცილებელია, რაც შეიძლება სწრაფად მოეღოს ბოლო ეკლესიას და რელიგიას. მღვდლები დააპატიმრეთ, როგორც კინტრრევოლუციონერები და საბოტაჟის მომწყობნი.

See the original version of the letter



Another issue that is quite controversial in school textbooks deserves special attention. This is the theme of the Treaty of Georgievsky. According to our assessment, the textbooks consider its significance and destructive impact on Georgian statehood to be of secondary importance. Its content, the historical context, and the arguments of supporters and opponents are misrepresented, and even more problematic is the narrative of its evaluation. The textbook (Diogene, 2021, part I) mentions that the Treaty has long been positively evaluated in Georgian historiography and cites the relevant source, the author being Geronti Kikodze. When reading this part of the lesson, one gets the impression that in the following paragraphs, you will encounter critical sources, and there will be an opportunity to get acquainted with the positions of both sides on this most important historical event, which is still a cause of controversy and contradiction in society. **However, no other source is used in the textbook to evaluate and discuss Georgievsk's legacy.** In addition, there is no discussion of the dangers of the Treaty.

Space for discussion is left only in the questions box. Still, precisely because the textbook itself does not suggest any particular author or literature, the mentioned question is entirely at the discretion and interpretation of the teacher.

Below the source mentioned above of Geronti Kikodze, we find the following question - *do you agree with the source (Geronti Kikodze)? To what extent were the Georgian people threatened at this point, loss of national identity along with the loss of faith?* You would probably agree that the question is also shaped very originally. The author regards this as the completely unequivocal fact that we were definitely losing faith and now offers a discussion only to assess the likelihood of losing "national identity". However, it is wholly unreasonable and incomprehensible why the Georgian state, which had survived centuries of Muslim invasion and domination and preserved its Christianity, inevitably faced the threat of losing its faith.

The information mentioned above is also missing from other history textbooks for other classes, for example, when discussing this topic (Diogene, 2012, 11th grade). The issue is presented in more detail in the 11th-grade history textbook (Sulakauri, 2012), but this section, too, mainly contains the author's assessments and is not characterized by the abundance of sources (p. 517);

Additionally, the abundance of Soviet authors and sources from the same era in contemporary Georgian history textbooks merits special attention. In itself, we consider this fact an anomaly. If we assume that, for example, for the teaching of ancient Rome or the ancient period, such a situation does not represent any particular problem, then we deem it wholly unacceptable to use Soviet sources when narrating the history of the time after the advent of the Russian factor in Georgia. We do not think that a reminder should be required that the Soviet educational system was entirely subject to one-party censorship and everything published at the time was produced from the limited perspective of the Communist Party's ideological apparatus, which makes it absolutely impossible for students to reflect or show the objective reality.

GEORGIA AND THE WORLD

One of the main problems characteristic of history textbooks is that they lack a unified line, ideology, and vision of the state regarding the future and development of the country.

We teach history as a compilation of past events, not as a means and basis for building the future.

To demonstrate the above problem, it is enough to review the sections on the post-Cold War period. While hundreds of pages are devoted to talking about where, in what battle, how many warriors Georgia was represented, conditionally say, in the 7th or 14th centuries, or which king went to the court of which sultan, shah, or emperor to ask for help, almost nothing is said about the struggle and the success Georgia has had in partnership with the West over the past three decades. Moreover, we find a strange discussion **in the 9th-grade textbook** (Diogene, 2021, Part II) in subchapters 91-92 (p. 397): How Georgia's Relations with the World Community Developed.

The events of the 1990s are discussed at the start of the subchapter during a conversation in the discussion club. Initially, *"The military formations of Kitovani and Ioseliani"* are presented as an ordinary event; no understanding that they were illegal and criminal formations are found in the textbook. Moreover, the only question for discussion is the timing of their existence - *"For how long have they been in effect?"*... *"They need to be eliminated in time."* It is unclear what purpose such a discussion serves, rather than allowing students to think about and discuss the unacceptability and inadmissibility of such criminal actions. However, the problematic nature of this particular passage does not end there. The last part of the discussion topics makes children deviate from the primary task, which, in our opinion, should serve such sections of the educational process.

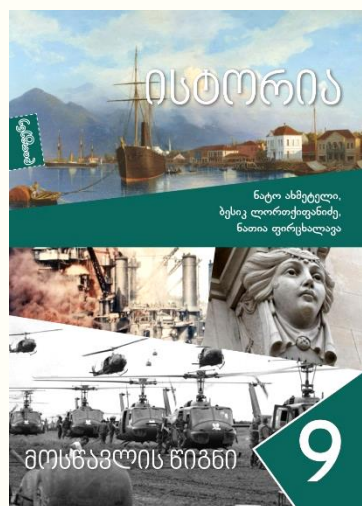
In particular, the authors, when talking about the place of Georgia in the international environment, do not offer students questions focused on values, freedom, and democratic governance but the choice based on the geographical location of the country, where it becomes clear that **the Western world or the "civilized world," as the authors call it, are not neighboring countries to Georgia, and that above all, we should not be friends with them, but with our neighbors**, and if not possible, at least maintain peaceful relations with them. Apart from the fact that it is not clear what is meant by "above all," and the geographical (neighboring) criterion in the partnership-alliance is entirely unacceptable and unclear, it is also not clear why the authors do not mean, for example, our neighbor, NATO member country Turkey.

This particular section of the textbook is cited only to demonstrate the problem, since, unfortunately, the question-and-answer and discussion club sections of the books are primarily saturated with such problematic and, more importantly, **false dilemmas**.

Stories about World War II, Soviet repression, the cult of personality, and the Stalin era are disturbing. The authors' attempt reminds us more of a modified version of Soviet-era school textbooks than a history textbook created in independent Georgia, a country struggling with the Russian occupation and a flawed Soviet past.

So as not to give the wrong impression about the problematic nature of the ideological narrative in the textbook and to avoid the impression that we are dealing only with the challenging nature of the discussion parts, we offer you another passage for demonstration. Subchapter No. 88 of the textbook, "Why the Civil War Started in Georgia" (p. 385), deals with the same events of the 1990s. It is almost a universal truth that the opening sentence is one of the most important in any writing. At the very beginning of the subchapter, the very first sentence, in answer to the question of why the civil war began in Georgia, offers us a story of how the West, unwilling to confront Russia, has disappointed us:

"After Georgia's declaration of independence, a great expectation arose in the country that Western countries would immediately recognize us and extend a helping hand. However, these countries were not willing to confront Russia, and there was still goodwill toward Gorbachev, the reformer and unifier of Germany."



საქართველოს დამოუკიდებლობის გამოცხადების შემდეგ ქვეყანაში დიდი მოლოდინი გაჩნდა, რომ დასავლეთის ქვეყნები მაშინვე გვალაირებდნენ და დახმარების ხელს გამოგვიწვდიდნენ. თუმცა ამ ქვეყნებს რუსეთთან კონფრონტაცია არ სურდათ და რეფორმატორი და გერმანიის გამაერთიანებელი გორბაჩოვის მიმართ კეთილგანწყობა კვლავ არსებობდა.

And in this case, we are dealing with a false dilemma, and it is entirely incomprehensible what such ideology serves in school textbooks. As a historical fact, on March 31, 1991, an independence referendum was held in Georgia, based on which the Supreme Council of Georgia declared the restoration of the country's independence on April 9. **On the same day, April 9, 1991**, initiated by Republican Senator Jesse Helms, the United States Senate passed Resolution S.Res.94, "Resolution commemorating the two-year anniversary of the Soviet crackdown in

Tbilisi, Georgia, on April 9, 1989, and urging the Soviet Union to recognize the will of the Georgian people and the legitimacy of the March 31, 1991, referendum".² The first declarations on recognition of Georgia as an independent state were adopted by the states of the "civilized world" in the same 1991.

If we follow the abovementioned subchapter - How Georgia's Relations with the World Community Developed (Diogene, 2021, p. 397), in chronological order, we read in the textbook that Saakashvili's government continued close relations with Europe and the US, and also managed to overcome corruption and implement reforms in all areas. It is noted that criminal bosses struck a deep blow during the National Movement. It is also mentioned that the Ergneti market was closed in connection with the fight against corruption and smuggling, which hindered the development of Georgian-Ossetian relations. In addition, it is noted that during the same period, "arrests under uncertain circumstances" began, and "several murders were committed under the pretext of combating criminals." After that, it is written that Zurab Zhvania "died under uncertain circumstances." The prosecutor's office was winning 99% of court cases. Human rights were often violated. Protests by the disgruntled population began. The activists involved in these protests were often unreasonably arrested and imprisoned. Total lawlessness reigned in prisons, manifested in prisoners' psychological and physical abuse.

The textbook describes the current status quo and events well in the section about the criticism of Saakashvili. But again, nothing is said about the most critical issues of security, strengthening of statehood, and integration into international democratic society for Georgia: the charter of strategic cooperation with the US, withdrawal of Russian bases, the protocol of Bucharest summit according to which Georgia will definitely become a NATO member, as well as, for example, the visit of President of the United States George Bush and others. For the sake of fairness, it should be noted that the textbook contains enough information about the immutability of Georgia's European course after the Georgian Dream came to power, as well as about the deepening of integration processes.

² See [Senate Resolution S.Res.94 - A resolution commemorating the two-year anniversary of the Soviet crackdown in Tbilisi, Georgia, on April 9, 1989, and urging the Soviet Union to recognize the will of the Georgian people and the legitimacy of the March 31, 1991, referendum.102nd Congress \(1991-1992\)](https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-resolution/94/text), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/102nd-congress/senate-resolution/94/text>

THE 2008 RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR

First, it should be noted that although textbooks of different grades talk about the same historical event and periods, they provide different materials/historical sources for in-depth analysis of the issue by the student. It is not the case with the August 2008 war; all textbooks repeat the same narrative and provide the same information.

For a demonstration, let's examine the textbook of the 9th-grade (Diogene, 2021) and 12-th grade (Diogene, 2012).

2003 წლის შემდეგ საქართველოს სწრაფვა ევროპისა და ნატოსკენ მნიშვნელოვნად გაიზარდა. რუსეთის მრავალი მცდელობა, ხელი შეეშალა ამ პროცესისთვის, უშედეგო გამოდგა. ერთდროულ საშუალებად დარჩა საქართველოს ჩართვა სამხედრო კონფლიქტში იმგვარად, რომ აგრესორი ქართული მხარე გამოსულიყო. ყოველივე ეს საქართველოს საერთაშორისო ავტორიტეტის შელახვისკენ იყო მიმართული. 2008 წლიდან რუსეთი ფორმალურადაც კი აღარ იცავდა აფხაზეთთან და სამხრეთ ოსეთთან დაკავშირებულ საერთაშორისო შეთანხმებებს. 2008 წლის ივნის-ივლისში მკვეთრად მოიმატა შეიარაღებულმა პროვოკაციებმა ცხინვალის რეგიონში. ქართული სოფლებისთვის ცეცხლის გახსნა, გზების დანალექა, მშვიდობიანი მოსახლეობის გატაცება ყოველდღიურ მოვლენად იქცა. 2008 წლის 6-7 აგვისტოს ოსურმა შეიარაღებულმა ფორმირებებმა ცხინვალის მიმდებარე ქართულ სოფლებს ინტენსიური ცეცხლი გაუხსნეს. საქართველოს პრეზიდენტმა ადგილობრივი მოსახლეობის დასაცავად ცხინვალის რეგიონში შეიარაღებული ძალების შეყვანის ბრძანება გასცა, რასაც რუსეთის ფედერაციამ პირდაპირი სამხედრო აგრესიით უპასუხა. 2008 წლის 8-10 აგვისტოს რუსეთმა სამხრეთ ოსეთსა და აფხაზეთში ათასობით ერთდროულ სამხედრო ტექნიკა და ათათასობით ცოცხალი ძალა შემოიყვანა. მძიმე ბრძოლების შემდეგ ძალების აშკარა უთანასწორობის გამო საქართველოს ხელისუფლებამ კონფლიქტის ზონიდან ჯარები გამოიყვანა. რუსეთის შეიარაღებულმა ძალებმა არა მხოლოდ კონფლიქტური რეგიონების, არამედ საქართველოს ტერიტორიის მნიშვნელოვანი ნაწილის ოკუპაცია მოახდინა. მათ დაიკავეს გორი, ფოთი და სენაკი, გადაჭრეს საქართველოს დასავლეთი და აღმოსავლეთი ნაწილების დამაკავშირებელი კომუნიკაციები. პარალელურად მიმდინარეობდა სამხედრო და სამოქალაქო ინფრასტრუქტურის დაზიანება და განადგურება მთელ საქართველოში (მათ შორის აკრძალული ტიპის შეიარაღებით – კასეტური ბომბებითა და ბალისტიკური ტაქტიკური რაკეტებით), იბომბებოდა საცხოვრებელი სახლებიც, რასაც მოსახლეობაში მსხვერპლი მოჰყვა. რუსულმა სამხედრო რაზმებმა ეთნიკური წმენდა მოახდინეს ცხინვალის რეგიონში. ათეულობით ქართველი მოკლეს და მთლიანად გამოდევნეს ქართველები დიდი და პატარა ლიხევის, ფორნეს ხეობების, ასევე კოდორის ხეობის ქართული სოფლებიდან. რუსეთის მფრინავმა აპარატებმა ცეცხლი გაუჩინეს ბორჯომისა და ატყნის ხეობის ტყეებში.

მის გაღვივებას. საქართველოში რუსი „სამშვიდობოები“ ჩადგნენ აფხაზეთისა და ცხინვალის რეგიონში. ისინი ირავლით ამარაგებდნენ სეპარატისტულ მთავრობებს და საჭიროების შემთხვევაში მათ მხარეზეც იბრძოდნენ.

2008 წლის შემდეგ მნიშვნელოვნად გაიზარდა საქართველოს სწრაფვა ევროატლანტიკური უსაფრთხოების სისტემაში ჩართვისაკენ. რუსეთის მრავალი მცდელობა, ხელი შეეშალა ამ პროცესისთვის, უშედეგო გამოდგა. ერთდროულ საშუალებად დარჩა საქართველოს ჩართვა სამხედრო კონფლიქტში იმგვარად, რომ აგრესორი ქართული მხარე გამოსულიყო. ყოველივე ეს საქართველოს საერთაშორისო ავტორიტეტის შელახვისკენ იყო მიმართული.

2008 წლიდან რუსეთი უკვე ფორმალურადაც აღარ იცავდა აფხაზეთსა და ცხინვალის რეგიონში. ქართული სოფლებისთვის ცეცხლის გახსნა, გზების დანალექა, მშვიდობიანი მოსახლეობის გატაცება ყოველდღიურ მოვლენად იქცა. ამას დაემთხვა რუსეთის შეიარაღებული ძალების ფართომასშტაბი

გეგმებით საქართველოში ათასობით ერთდროულ სამხედრო ტექნიკა და ათათასობით ცოცხალი ძალა შემოიყვანა. მძიმე ბრძოლების შემდეგ ძალების აშკარა უთანასწორობის გამო საქართველოს ხელისუფლებამ კონფლიქტის ზონიდან ჯარები გამოიყვანა. რუსეთის შეიარაღებულმა ძალებმა არა მხოლოდ კონფლიქტური რეგიონების, არამედ საქართველოს ტერიტორიის მნიშვნელოვანი ნაწილის ოკუპაცია მოახდინა. მათ დაიკავეს გორი, ფოთი და სენაკი, გადაჭრეს საქართველოს დასავლეთი და აღმოსავლეთი ნაწილების დამაკავშირებელი კომუნიკაციები.

პარალელურად მიმდინარეობდა სამხედრო და სამოქალაქო ინფრასტრუქტურის დაზიანება და განადგურება მთელ საქართველოში (მათ შორის აკრძალული ტიპის შეიარაღებით – კასეტური ბომბებითა და ბალისტიკური ტაქტიკური რაკეტებით), იბომბებოდა საცხოვრებელი სახლებიც, რასაც მოსახლეობაში მსხვერპლი მოჰყვა. რუსულმა სამხედრო რაზმებმა ეთნიკური წმენდა მოახდინეს ცხინვალის რეგიონში. ათეულობით ქართველი მოკლეს და მთლიანად გამოდევნეს ქართველები დიდი და პატარა ლიხევის, ფორნეს ხეობების, ასევე კოდორის ხეობის ქართული სოფლებიდან. რუსეთის მფრინავმა აპარატებმა ცეცხლი გაუჩინეს ბორჯომისა და ატყნის ხეობის ტყეებში.

9TH GRADE, DIOGENE, 2021

12TH GRADE, DIOGENE, 2012

In the 9th grade textbook, we read that after 2003 Georgia's aspiration to join Europe and NATO increased significantly, which was followed by an attempt by Russia to prevent this process, which was not successful, and the only solution was to involve Georgia in the military conflict in such a way that Georgia became the aggressor. Since 2008, Russia has not even formally complied with international agreements regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In June-July 2008, armed provocations in the Tskhinvali region increased sharply. The shooting of Georgian villages, the mining of roads, and the kidnapping of civilians have become a daily occurrence. On August 6-7, 2008, Ossetian armed formations opened intense fire on Georgian villages near Tskhinvali. The President of Georgia ordered the deployment of armed forces in the Tskhinvali region to protect the local population, to which the Russian Federation responded with direct military aggression. On August 8-10, 2008, Russia moved thousands of units of military equipment and tens of thousands of military forces into South Ossetia and Abkhazia. After heavy

fighting, the Georgian authorities withdrew their troops from the conflict zone due to the apparent inequality of forces.

An identical text can be found in the 12th-grade textbook: “After 2003, Georgia's desire to join the Euro-Atlantic security system has increased significantly. Many attempts by Russia to prevent this process have been unsuccessful. The only way left was to involve Georgia in the military conflict in such a way that the Georgian side would appear as the aggressor...”

This narrative reiterates Moscow's position, according to which Saakashvili first introduced the army into Tskhinvali, and only then Russian units entered Georgian territory. Besides, the question posed is also disputable: *In your opinion, was the president of Georgia mistaken when he responded to the shelling of Georgian villages by Ossetian armed formations, by introducing military units into the region?*

While one might have different opinions and different interpretations when reading the text about who started the war, what was the sequence of events, etc., the question posed for discussion leaves no room for such different opinions and quite directly and crudely repeats the messages of the Russian propaganda machine.

The narrative of the 2008 war in school textbooks is extremely disturbing and especially difficult to read for those who have witnessed the most complex historical events of the outbreak, escalation, and cease-fire of the war; it calls into question the credibility of the narration of any episode or event from a history textbook, and consequently significantly devalues it.

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