

## THE NORTHERN WAR (1700-1721) IN MODERN RUSSIAN TEXTBOOKS FOR THE HIGHER SCHOOL

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Relevance of the studied problem is caused by the need of improvement of history of Russia textbooks for university students. The purpose of article is to characterize factual and ideological contents of Northern war parts (1700-1721) in modern Russian textbooks for the higher schools. The leading approaches in research are the problem and thematic and comparative approaches which allowed to differentiate the chosen problem on some key subjects and to carry out comparison of their contents in textbooks for the higher school and in the newest monographs of the Russian historians who study Northern war. The main results of the research are that the informational incompleteness of sections of the Russian textbooks which light Northern war is revealed. The ideological orientation of the contents of textbooks is opened. Lag of the actual contents and estimated judgments in textbooks from achievements of a modern Russian historiography is proved. Need of addition of textbooks materials is proved by the facts of a humane orientation. Materials of article can be useful to teaching history of foreign policy of Russia in the first quarter of the XVIII century, the history of Russia in XVIII century.

**Keywords:** Northern war ; the Northern union ; foreign policy of Russia ; XVIII century ; Peter the Great ; the Poltava battle ; Treaty of Nystad.

### INTRODUCTION

One of the main tasks of modern Russian higher historical education in conditions of increase of a tendency to dehumanization of life of the Russian society, is to form in students the ability of empathy to other people, understanding of motives of their acts. Formation of such ability in process of studying the historical past is closely connected with understanding by students those hard vital conditions where people of previous eras were to exist and survive. Extreme conditions were always typical for military years. In the history of Russia the XVIII century was the most “warring” (Nikitin, 2011). By number of the years spent in the military conflicts, the XVIII century surpasses all the other separately taken centuries in the history of Russia (Nikitin, 2011). Northern war of 1700 - 1721 in the period of Peter the Great’s board (Krasikov, 2010) was the longest and heavy war of the century. Its results are traditionally connected with capture to the Baltic Sea and transformation of the country into the sea power (Anisimov, 2009). However when teaching history of Russia at the higher school not only demonstration on the example of victories of the Russian army and progress of diplomacy of the increased power of the Russian Empire is important, but also to display the price of these victories and progress, what miscalculations and mistakes were made on the way to these victories

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(Krasikov, 2010). The characteristic such “the medal back” will allow on pages of textbooks for the higher school to estimate objectively carrying out foreign policy by political elite of Russia. It will allow to increase student’s professional competence as future teachers.

Chronological framework of the historical period which is analyzed in this research is limited by period of Northern war – 1700 - 1721. Time frames which include the characterized textbooks of the History of Russia for the higher schools are limited by the 2000th. The earliest analyzed textbook is published in 2001, the latest – in 2010. New editions of the analyzed textbooks in the 2010th years according to the text contents don’t differ from textbooks of the given period.

### **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Research goals. During research it was necessary to solve the following problems:

- 1) to establish as far as material of modern Russian textbooks for the higher schools about Northern war corresponds the modern Russian historiography achievements in this area.
- 2) to define an ideological orientation of information on Northern war in modern Russian textbooks for the higher school;
- 3) 3) to give an assessment to a complex of the analysed textbooks and to allocate where Northern war is represented most impartially and objectively.

Conceptual provisions of scientific researches in the field of studying of problems of teaching history at the higher school became the theoretical and methodological basis of research. Use of methodology and a technique of the existing researches promote development of the Russian historical scientific thought in practice of teaching history of Russia at the higher school, ways and methods of research in the field.

Systematic and structural approach gave an opportunity to characterize sources of this research in a complex, in our case, textbooks for the higher school, in their interrelation with each other and with historical researches of modern Russian historians. Systematic and structural approach also allowed to unite data of historical, historiographic , methodological researches within one research.

Problematic and chronological approach allowed to divide the analyzed area into a number of specific problems and to characterize them separately, but in interrelation with other problems.

Application of a comparative-historical method allowed to carry out comparison and contrast of textbooks of various authors.

### **RESULTS**

1. Everyday life of soldiers. The Russian soldier of the first quarter of the XVIII century, the main creator of a victory of Russia in Northern war is described in

textbooks for the higher school only in connection with military reforms of Peter the Great: introduction of new charters, new methods of conducting fight. Behind one can't see a person with his household problems. In the majority these books there is nothing told about the impartial phenomena in the Russian army of XVIII century: desertion (that proves unpopularity of Northern war in among people) and ways of struggle against it (a branding of fluent recruits, hanging), the cruelty of the officers and soldiers in relation to the Russian peasants and citizens during a military billeting (requirements of money, beatings, etc.) theft of regimental money and provisions. The separate paragraph in textbooks could be devoted to recruitments and the family tragedies, after all throughout almost all the XVIII century men were taken for life. In many cases the peasant or townsman left his family forever. The successful example of illumination of a recruitment duty with the quote from the primary source is given only in one textbook – the textbook of L.V. Milov (Milov, 2008). Two exceptions of all complex of textbooks are textbooks of A.N. Sakharova (Sakharov, 2007) and I.V. Kurukina (Kurukin 2010) where the “price” paid by the Russian society for a victory in Northern war is mentioned. Though in the textbook of A.N. Sakharova (Sakharov, 2007) the most general assessment of social expenses of foreign policy of Peter the Great only is mentioned: “He achieved results. But how, what losses for the country, what sufferings for the people!” (Sakharov, 2007). Everyday life of soldiers of the Russian army of the first quarter of the XVIII century is represented only in I.V. Kurukin's textbook (Kurukin, 2010).

There is nothing told about destiny of numerous soldier's veterans of the Russian army in the majority of textbooks. Pupils know that the nobleman after resignation from military service came back to a manor with transition to civil service closer to his manor. But where were disabled people and veterans among soldiers? They were distributed on livelihood to monasteries and almshouses where lived their life in poverty. Except veterans, the “soldier's children” who were born already in armies and inheriting class position of the fathers aren't mentioned in the textbook. Speaking more simply, they were doomed by the state to become soldiers for the rest of life.

2. The help of allies of Russia at the beginning of Northern war. In the majority of modern Russian textbooks the contribution of allies to a general victory over Sweden in Northern war is belittled, and their help to Russia is estimated as insufficient to the assumed allied obligations. There is an established fact that Karl the XII in 1701-1704 “got stuck in Poland”, but the reasons of it aren't revealed. For example, N. I. Pavlenko (2003) writes in his textbook about the period of war of 1701-1704 when Saxony headed by the Elector Augustus II was the ally of Russia, where he waged heavy war against the Swedish army in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: “While the Russian

army won, Augustus II proved to be incapable to serious resistance to Swedes, “ (Pavlenko, 2003). A.N. Sakharov mentions military operations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1701-1704 quite briefly. Only L.V. Milov (2008) recognizes that during this period “In Poland and Lithuania the resistance movement accrued ... the most part of the Polish army remained still faithful to Augustus II” (Milov, 2008). It allowed Augustus II after loss of his royal throne in September of 1704 to take under the control Warsaw when Karl the XII was in Lvov. Thus, it is necessary to recognize that it was the persistent resistance of Poles to the Swedish army of Karl the XII to promote receiving by Russia in 1701-1704 of a respite for reformation of army and to test it in the first fights with Swedes.

3. Poltava battle of 1709. In all Russian textbooks value of a victory of the Russian army in the Poltava battle is highly appreciated steadily, as a change during war. The Poltava victory, according to N. I. Pavlenko (2003), “had decisive impact on all course of Northern war”. “Military power of Sweden was broken, and there came the decisive change during Northern war”, - L.V. Milov writes (Milov, 2008). “Long ten years of fight ended with triumph”, - A.N. Sakharov (2007) echoes authors of textbooks. These estimates are created under the influence of the concept about existence of “a decisive change” in wars. This concept arose in the Soviet historiography of history of the Great Patriotic War during which the victory of Red army in the Battle of Stalingrad was considered as such critical event. Transfer of this approach on events of Northern war is represented not quite justified now.

Due to the specified estimates the solution of a question of why after the Poltava victory Northern war lasted more, than before this battle is submitted problematic? Before the Poltava fight Northern war with participation of Russia went nearly 9 years, after that battles – 12 years. None of the authors of modern Russian textbooks don't pay attention to this fact. It is possible to claim that only relative superiority of armed forces of Russia became the result of the Poltava victory. On an overland battlefield the Russian army began to prevail. At the sea the Swedish fleet still prevailed, the Russian fleet spent 20 years to achieve the superiority over it. Battle of Grenchen can be considered as “the decisive change”, victorious for the Russian fleet, which took place in 1720.

4. Prutsky campaign of 1711. Authors of textbooks write about military failures of Russia in Northern war for the account of external circumstances. It belongs to the Prutsky campaign of Peter the Great whose miscalculations during this campaign are suppressed. But it is much told about treacherous actions of allies (governors of the Moldavian and Valashsky principalities): “... the expected help from allies didn't appear in time” (Pavlenko, 2003). In other textbook we can read: “The Valashsky master betrayed Russia and issued the Russian military plans to Turks. Augustus II didn't send the help” (Sakharov,

2007). All of this was, but occurred when the new allies of Russia understood that the Russian army won't manage to approach them because of difficulties of a campaign. And the Russian army was thrown by Peter on droughty Moldavian steppes owing to the tsar's euphoria after Poltava "Victoria". Even then, when all difficulties of a campaign were already shown, opportunity to stop it, to return back and preserve thousands of lives of the Russian soldiers wasn't used. At the end of May of 1711 when the terrible heat foretold a drought, the field marshal B. Sheremetev wrote to the tsar that "very much I have any grief that bread cannot be gathered" (Vinogradov, 2003). The final fatal decision on a Council of War, not taught by bitter experience of the Crimean campaigns of Vasily Golitsyn, Peter accepted to move further. It is remarkable that in the school textbook this episode is entitled simply - "The Prutsky campaign" though in scientific literature this adventure is given a moral assessment - "The tragedy on the Prut" (Vinogradov, 2003).

5. "German" period of Northern war. Authors of the Russian textbooks mention the period of 1712-1716 when the Russian army conducted military operations in Northern Germany, very much briefly, though the war lasted 5 years. Authors state about the Russian army in Europe, write about its some progress: "military operations in 1711-1715 proceeded on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea in the Swedish province of Pomerania where Russia acted together with allies" (Pavlenko, 2003). "The Russian troops appear in Pomerania - on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea. In 1712 in fight near Fridrikhshtadt Peter the I conducted battalions to attack where the Swedish case was crushed", - A.N. Sakharov writes (Sakharov, 2007). Only L.V. Milov (2008) writes about events of this period more detailed. Texts of textbooks make an impression that Northern war during this period took its course i.e. exactly as it was necessary for Russia. Though in this period Russia began to lose the help of allies mostly because of internal disagreements in the coalition. They are mentioned only by L.V. Milov (2008): "Because of disagreement of allies "the company went to waste" in 1712. "Inconsistency of actions led to frustration of plans" in 1716 (Milov, 2008). Most of the authors of textbooks don't mention these disagreements at all, and L.V. Milov (2008) himself doesn't open their essence. Meanwhile, in the Russian historiography so-called "a Mecklenburg question", is mentioned, where the participation of Russia in this "question" irritated the European powers, including the main sea ally of Russia - Denmark.

Peter received consent of the German duke Karl-Leopold for monetary compensation to placement of the Russian army in Northern Germany in the territory of its duchy - Mekleburg-Schwerin. Denmark was dissatisfied with Russia because of its rapprochement with the Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. Denmark was afraid that the Russian case remained in Mecklenburg for occupation of the nearby Swedish port of Wismar which Danes wanted to

occupy by themselves. Besides, in Mecklenburg there was an idea of digging of the water connecting channel through the territory of the duchy, from the Baltic Sea to the river Elba which puts out to the North Sea. With the help of such channel trade vessels with the Russian goods could bypass the passage Sund where Denmark collected duties. Denmark would remain without an income in a case of creation of such channel. Therefore because of contacts of Russia with Mecklenburg Denmark refused to cooperate with Peter in joint continuation of war with Sweden (Anisimov, 2009).

6. Participation of England in Northern war. Participation of England in Northern war on side of Sweden against Russia, authors of the Russian textbooks traditionally attribute to fears of England strengthening of naval power of Russia on the Baltic Sea. "Sea powers didn't want to let Russia in to Baltic in any way, wishing to limit acquisitions of Russians at most to Narva", - L.V. Milov (2008) writes. "The reason of a tightening of Northern war were actions of diplomacy of the European countries which didn't want to allow Russia to strength on Baltic and sought to keep the status quo in the north of Europe", - echoes V. I. Moryakov (Seamen, 2004). However authors of textbooks lose sight that Peter the Great himself incited England against Russia: in 1717 he visited France – the competitor of England in the World Ocean; conducted negotiations on the conclusion the union with Sweden on the Alandsky congress. In a historiography there is a reasonable assumption which states that by these steps Peter the Great designated the program of an exit of Russia to open spaces of the World Ocean. Therefore, fears of England were caused not by emergence of Russia on Baltic, but by its expansion steps in the direction of the World Ocean where England prevailed (Anisimov, 2009).
7. Treaty of Nystad. In textbooks there is a default about the fact of unjustified personal "generosity" of Peter the I which returned the territory conquered by Russian army to the opponent of Russia. It is about return of the most part of Finland to the Swedish kingdom in 1721 when signing the Nystad peace treaty which finished Northern war. According to the modern historian, Peter the I hurried to release the Russian army for the Caspian campaign to Iran (Kurukin, 2010). Therefore a legitimate conclusion is that Finland, many Russian galleys with people rolled in whose coastal waters for years of Northern war, became peculiar "change" in a new aggressive military action of Peter the Great.

## DISCUSSIONS

In my opinion, in the majority of modern Russian textbooks for the higher school attempts of formation in consciousness of the Russian students the focused patriotism through lighting under a certain point of view of events of Northern war are made. These attempts are represented unpromising from the point of view of

achievement of the set result. After all “international” nature of studying of this war brings the Russian students desire to become professional historians, to need of attraction of achievements of a modern historiography of those countries which population in the XVIII century participated in this war – Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Germany, the countries of Baltic (Latvia, Estonia). And going deep “internationalization” of researches conducts, in turn, to natural refusal of the views of relationships of cause and effect of Northern war limited to “national and state interests” and elaboration of collective, “international” approaches of historians of the countries of the Baltic region to this problem. On this way the modern Russian historiography of Northern war (Bespalov, 2011; Grigoriev, 2006). However Russian “the textbook historiography”, as shown in results of the presented research, either “stands still”, or develops in the opposite direction. Thus, the gap between achievements of the academic community and representation of a subject of Northern war in the Russian university textbooks increases. The prospect of elimination of this gap is represented, unfortunately, improbable in connection with plans of creation of the uniform state textbook of history of Russia for schools. It can negatively affect and the content of the actual and estimated material in university textbooks towards preservation of the narrow-mindedness of illumination of this problem described above. Despite it, material of textbooks needs to be added with “human” history - descriptions of the military burdens transferred the Russian soldiers, progress and failures of the Russian weapon, progress and mistakes of the Russian diplomats and Peter the Great. This “live” history will allow students to distract from the notorious thesis about upholding in Northern war of “national interests of Russia” and to commemorate simple people of the past more.

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, problems of Northern war of 1700-1721 lighting on pages of the modern Russian textbooks for the higher school published in the 2000th years are characterized in this research. It is possible to draw a conclusion that now there is no textbook where a complete view would find full reflection of achievement of a modern Russian historiography of Northern war. It is also possible to state the absence of the textbook where the comprehensive objective picture of events and relationships of cause and effect of this war would be given. Generally in textbooks, besides some exceptions which aren't changing the general background, the point of view about compliance of participation of Russia in this war to national interests of the country and correctness of the losses suffered in it by the Russian society prevails. Northern war in textbooks is represented generally in tones, victorious for Russia. The question of the reasons of long nature of Northern war (the second for duration in all history of Russia) in textbooks isn't regarded as of paramount importance. The dragging on of war is charged to unwillingness of allies of Russia

on the Northern union to be faithful to allied obligations and resistance of the West European powers to an exit of Russia to open spaces of the Baltic Sea.

### ***Recommendations***

Material of article is of interest to experts who are engaged in teaching geopolitics, history of Russia of XVIII century, foreign policy of Russia in the XVIII century at the higher school.

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