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TOWARDS EUROPE? HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN POST- COMMUNIST POLAND

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Abstract

How have the images of the past in Polish history textbook changed since 1989? Is the content of Polish history textbooks moving “towards Europe”? This paper answers these questions by comparing the content of Polish textbooks from 1989, 1999 and 2009. After analysing the portrayal of Yalta and Potsdam conferences in 1945, I argue that over the years history textbooks have ascribed new meaning to ‘Europe’, its threats and its Others.

Introduction

Public debates on history education and history textbooks take place across Europe. Are textbooks influenced by European integration? How much of national, European and global history should history textbooks contain? These are some of the questions that feed such debates. They show that history matters not only to historians, teachers, educators, and textbook publishers; but also to citizens, politicians and nations as well as European actors and institutions. Similar interests in history teaching and history education can be found, in particular, in Poland that ‘returned to Europe’ in 1989 and joined the European

Union in 2004. Have Polish history textbooks been influenced by these developments and moved ‘towards Europe’ by developing different transnational forms of telling contemporary history? Or whether nationalistic forces that re-emerged after the collapse of communism have managed to introduce purely nation-centred narrative?

Although the EU does not have direct competencies or coercive mechanisms to influence primary and secondary education, academic literature suggests that EU membership may have an indirect influence on history teaching in member states. For example, Elmersjö in his study of Swedish history textbooks from the period 1910-2008 shows that the concept of Europe has been altered by European integration and that “Europe as a historically coherent entity is becoming attached to the idea of European economic, cultural and political co-operation in the wake of the Second World War” (Elmersjö, 2011, p. 61). Nevertheless, there are variations between EU member states and their responses to include European dimension in history education. For instance, by comparing French and English curricula for geography and history Haus shows that the “French system (...) was more conducive to incorporating a European dimension into the domestic curriculum than was the (...) British system” (Haus, 2009, p. 939). Thus, one might not expect European integration to lead to a general Europeanisation of history textbooks. What is more, the effect of the EU membership might produce a contrary result. Furthermore, as pointed out by Fuchs, the meaning of Europe depends on a national context and “diverse representations of Europe and Europeanness can be found in contemporary textbooks” (Fuchs, 2011, p. 20).

The aim of this paper is to investigate whether Polish history textbooks have moved ‘towards Europe’ and what the meaning of Europe is. In order to do so, I first of all provide contextual information on the use of Polish history textbook and the wider socio-political setting. Secondly, I analyse the portrayals of Yalta and Potsdam conferences in

1945 in Polish history textbooks. The conferences were selected as they have special importance for Polish case. Decisions taken at Yalta and Potsdam appear to have facilitated the eventual division of Europe. Thus, the portrayal of the conferences in textbooks can indicate what relationship Poland has with other European Union member states, i.e. whether they are perceived as friends or ‘traitors’ who abandoned Poland in 1945. Furthermore, the abandonment can also be linked to the concepts of suffering, victimhood and martyrdom on which Polish ethnic nationalism is historically built. The concept of victimhood of the Polish nation emerged in eighteenth century when Poland was partitioned and lost its sovereignty until 1918 (Mach, 2011, p. 2). This definition of the nation was later enriched with the idea of martyrdom that envisioned Poland suffering and dying, but then being reborn to save humankind (Mach, 2011, p. 2).

To answer the questions raised above, I analysed twenty one history textbooks used in 1989, and introduced for use in 1999 and 2009. I selected year 1989 as the starting point of the analysis as it was the year when communism collapsed. The years 1999 and 2009 were chosen as these were years when new history textbooks were introduced. Since I am mostly interested in the images of Europe and the nation, I conducted a content analysis of textbooks for their portrayal of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences: i) to what extent they are represented as a Western betrayal and ii) the meanings that textbooks attach to ‘Europe’ in this particular context.

Polish history textbooks in context

Textbooks and, in particular, history textbooks are not simply collections of historical facts and narratives about them. They have different functions. Pingel, for example, points out that they “attempt to explain our roots, how and why we happen to be living in a certain place and how that place can be described and characterised – in other words, who we

really are” (Pingel, 2010, p. 7). Crawford, on the other hand, puts emphasis on textbooks serving as political tools: “School textbooks are crucial organs in the process of constructing legitimated ideologies and beliefs and are a reflection of the history, knowledge and values considered important by powerful groups in society” (Crawford, 2003, p. 5). The functions of textbooks depend on the institutional, political and cultural settings in which they are developed. They are also influenced by the networks of actors and institutions: their interests, motivations and actions. Since systems and networks are in constant flux, the functions of textbooks also change.

Polish history textbook in 1989

The year 1989, when the transition of Polish the political and economic system started, was not a ‘zero hour’ for the development of history textbooks. Textbooks cannot be changed rapidly when there is a change of a political system because of the necessary lead time for developing and because of the huge financial costs involved. In the 1980s the development of a textbook was at least a three-year long process (Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1988, p. 2). Therefore, a communist history textbook entitled *History 8. Poland and the world of our century* by Adam L. Szcześniak was used for teaching twentieth century history until 1992.

The textbook by Szcześniak was not simply a product of the communist system. Until 1981 the communist system allowed only one, Marxist-Leninist, interpretation of history in school textbooks. This interpretation was developed and guarded by the centralised education system, which was headed by the ministry of education and controlled directly by the Polish Communist Party PZPR. As one can expect, history textbooks from the period were used to legitimate the rule of the party and the so-called friendship with the Soviet Union (Osiński, 2008; Wojdon, 2012). Recent historical events, especially the strikes and demonstrations against the communist party, were not presented in the way that

the opposition remembered them. Thus, the Polish opposition movement, Solidarity, attached special importance to history teaching and the removal of the state control so that Polish society could become “the master of its own culture and education” (Solidarity, 1981, p. 354). As a result of the strikes in 1980 and subsequent negotiations between the communist government and the opposition in 1981, the Ministry of Education introduced the first changes to history teaching programmes (Parker, 2003, p. 156). To match these newly revised programmes, the ministry asked Szcześniak to prepare a new history textbook which was then first published in 1984 (Osiński, 2006, p.65). The author himself explains, however, that the textbook was not purely a communist vision of the past. The official version of history was not simply removed, as the book had to be accepted for publication by the office of censorship in 1982. However, when evaluating controversial historical events such as Warsaw Uprising, to show the opposition’s point of view, Szcześniak presented the arguments of communists and of the opposition (Tazbirowa, Meller, Paczkowski, Roszkowski, & Szcześniak, 1992, p. 9). The textbook, therefore, was a hybrid. Although it was produced by the centralised communist system, it was published at the time when Pandora’s box was already opened and the communist interpretations of twentieth century history were already challenged by the opposition.

Polish history textbooks introduced in 1999

In 1999, however, new history textbooks were introduced to Polish schools as a result of structural reform of education and the change of curricula. The first key characteristic of the new education system was that since 1999 there had been far more than one history textbook. For example, the ministry of education certified twelve textbooks for use in grade level 9¹ (Kiernożek, personal communication, 7 February 2014). Secondly, this increase in textbooks was accompanied by independence given to history teachers: they

¹ Author’s categorisation. When counting from 1st year of when children are legally obliged to enter school system, grade level 9 is when they are students of third year of gimnazjum.

were responsible for choosing a textbook for use in a classroom. Thirdly, since early 1990s there was more than one history teaching programme that history teachers could follow, and since 1999 they could even prepare their own programmes as long as they followed core curricula certified by the ministry of education (Kletke-Milejska, 2007, p. 85). It can be argued, therefore, that the system in which history textbook functioned became de-centralised and more pluralistic.

The reform was preceded by public debates. These debates centred on questions of how recent history should be taught, what the aims of history teaching should be and whether it should be patriotic and, in more general terms, what the nation is (Kozłowska, 1997, p. 109). The debates were linked to the movement against indoctrination and search for 'historical truth' that aimed at freeing education from the interpretations and structures developed under communism (Achmatowicz, 1981, p. 9).

At the same time, Poland, as other European countries, "obsessed with the disappearance of collective memory and its preservation" has become a "memoryland" (Macdonald, 2013, p. 1). The remembering of twentieth century history and especially of World War Two gained special importance. The obsession with memory was reinforced by the collapse of communism. The preservation of collective memories and embracing national history was an escape from socialist interpretation of history. Nevertheless, not all memories were preserved. In the 1990s an domestic debate to evaluate the Polish communist regime took place. The old system by many was perceived as an anti-national "instrument of subordination to a foreign and alien power"(Sakwa, 1999, p. 72). They believed that the system was not truly Polish: "The view prevailed that at long last Poland would have the opportunity of picking up where she had been forced to leave off in 1939, that is, to reconstruct the country along the lines that were however, broadly defined, recognisably as 'Polish' " (Stachura, 1993, p. 97).

Memory debates were accompanied by increased co-operation in history teaching. Bilateral textbook commissions and, in particular, Polish-German textbook commission, gained importance. Although the work of the Polish-German commission started in 1970s, only after the collapse of communism a real change could occur (Carlowitz, 2010, p. 55). In the meantime, the work of this commission has resulted in the coming up publication of the first Polish-German history textbook to come out in 2015 (Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej, 2012).

The reform of education aimed at improving education and reaching European standards to prepare Poland for accession to the EU in 2004 (A. Pery, personal communication, 18 August 2013). Jacek Piotrowski, a Polish historian specialising in history didactics, already in 1997 pointed out the importance of including European integration in history teaching curricula: “To fully prepare future citizens of our country them for new reality, when teaching we must clearly present the roots of the institution [EU] which soon may become our great European homeland”² (Piotrowski, 1997, p. 117). He also stressed that, in order to teach about the EU, revised teaching about Europe was needed: “Deeper historical analysis of relationships between different countries of Europe long before 1945 is necessary” (Piotrowski, 1997, p. 118). As a result of such thinking, the reform of education of 1999 introduced “European education” into school curricula as “obligatory cross-curricular educational path”, which meant that teaching about Europe was introduced into basic curricula of subjects such as history, civic education and geography (Taboń, 2006, p. 45).

Polish history textbooks introduced in 2009

In 2009 history teaching was reformed again. Krystyna Hall, the minister of education, decided to assign a whole year for the teaching of twentieth century history (Hall, 2011). As a result, old textbooks were discarded and eight new textbooks were certified for use in grade level 10³.

The changes in history education followed a national pattern of prioritising recent history and memory of World War Two. In 2000 the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, which specialises in twentieth century history of Poland, started its educational activities. These activities included a publication of a modern history textbook distributed free of charge in schools⁴. The same year the ministry of education carried out a competition for children and adolescents *Katyń - Golgotha of the East* to honour 60th anniversary of Katyń massacre (Masłoń, 2001). To support teaching and learning about the recent history, several institutions, including Warsaw Uprising Museum, the Institute of National Remembrance, European Solidarity Centre and the Centre for Civic Education, formed a Coalition for recent history in education, supported by the Ministry of Education. Collectively they prepared activities, conferences, competitions and designed educational materials (Hall, 2011). Finally, in 2008 the minister of education, Katarzyna Hall announced the school year 2009/2010 the *Year of Contemporary History* to support the teaching of recent history in schools (Fedyszak-Radziejowska, 2011).

Furthermore, since the accession to the EU Poland and the Baltic states have been demanding “the inclusion of their wartime experiences in the pan-European remembrance

³ Author’s categorisation. When counting from 1st year of when children are legally obliged to enter school system, grade level 10 is when they are students of first year of lyceum.

⁴ Their educational activities include publication of a history textbook that was distributed free of charge in schools. See <http://ipn.gov.pl/bep/publikacje/ksiazki/od-niepodleglosci-do-niepodleglosci.-historia-polski-19181989>

of this [Second World] war” (Mälksoo, 2009, p. 654). Especially significant was their effort to remind Britain alongside the US of their “betrayal” during Yalta, i.e. allegedly complying with Stalin’s demands at the post-war conference that eventually led to division of Europe and the enactment of iron curtain (Mälksoo, 2009).

Nevertheless, the reform of history teaching has been seen as highly controversial. It started as Polish-Polish war in education that is illustrated by debates in the newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* that have taken place between the authors of the new history curricula and their opponents. Among the opponents, Andrzej Nowak, a Polish historian, has argued that the reform is “the end of history” (author's translation, Nowak, 2008). He claims that Polish history is not represented in Europe as it should be and, therefore, history teaching should prepare young Polish people to challenge this incomplete representation:

“more important to me is that a young Polish spectator, confronted every day with mass culture in which the image of Poland in Europe looks like in Pottering’s museum⁵, will know that it is different. That story is more complicated. That there is not only Wałęsa and the witch at the stake (...) This is important. Important if Poland is to remain Polish.[...] And also important if we want to become mature participants of public debates - not only Polish debates, but also European” (author's translation, Nowak, 2008, p. a).

On the other hand, Choińska-Mika, one of the authors of the history basic curricula, has underlined that the reform “is no end to history” and that the pupil’s knowledge of twentieth century history will improve as a result of changes (author's translation, Choińska-Mika & Radziwiłł, 2008). However, both sides have agreed on one element:

⁵ Referring to the plans for a House of European History in Brussels initiated by the then President of the European Parliament in 2007

twentieth century forms the core of contemporary Polish identity (Choińska-Mika & Radziwiłł, 2008; Nowak, 2008).

Yalta and Potsdam conferences in Polish history textbooks

The Conference in Yalta was a meeting of Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, from 4 until 11 February 1945 where the discussion about the borders of Poland and the division of zones of occupation in Germany took place (Buchanan, 2011, p. 32). With regards to Polish case, the allied leaders “confirmed the Curzon line frontier agreed at Tehran, and approved in principle that Poland’s loss of territory in the East should be compensated by the award of former German territory in the West. They insisted that representatives of the parties supporting the Polish Government in London should join members of the Soviet-sponsored administration in Warsaw (...) to form a united Provisional Government of National Unity (...) As a result of this decision, the London Government was condemned to lose its accreditation, (...)” (Davies, 2001, p. 69).

Yalta was followed by Potsdam conference that took place in the second half of July until 2 August 1945. Although the conference was mostly dealing with the interim arrangements for the occupation of Germany, the decisions regarding the Polish case were also made. The ‘big three’ were this time Joseph Stalin, Harry Truman and Clement Attlee. They “fixed Poland’s western frontier on the Oder and western Neisse: approved the plan for the expulsion of Germans and made their famous declaration about ‘free and unfettered elections’” (...)” (Davies, 2001, p. 69).

As already suggested by the irony of the above quote, the decisions taken during Yalta and Potsdam conferences remain controversial. This is especially so with regards to Eastern Europe and Poland. For example Weinberg, an American historian specialising in the

history of Second World War, underlines that Western countries were not in a position to further negotiate about Eastern Europe. The decisions made at Yalta, he argues, were “effectively settled between Teheran and Yalta by the occupation or liberation of practically the whole of that area by the Red Army in the interim” (2005, p. 803). Likewise, Buchanan, a reader of modern history at Oxford University, argues that “by this point [Yalta conference] there was nothing that the Western powers could do to dislodge the Red Army from its dominant position in Eastern Europe” (Buchanan, 2011, p.32). However, a British historian and a specialist on Poland, sums up the conferences saying that: “they [western allies] left Poland to the mercy of the Soviets (Davies, 2001, p.69)”.

Yalta and Potsdam in the textbook used in 1989⁶

The textbook used in 1989 portrays Yalta and Potsdam as conferences when the US, the USSR and Great Britain united against Germany: “to destroy German militarism and national socialism and to create a guarantee to ensure that Germany would never again be able to disturb the peace of the world” (Szcześniak, 1986, p. 123). As the textbook was developed under communism, it depicts the US and capitalism as greedy for power: “industrial circles in the US issued proposals aimed against the German state and German national interests” (Szcześniak, 1986, p. 125); while the Soviet Union is represented as benevolent and moral: “All the plans of fragmentation of Germany met with strong opposition from the Soviet delegation, which took the position that Germany should be treated as a whole, and supported the rebirth of the German nation” (Szcześniak, 1986, p. 125).

The handling of the Polish case during the Potsdam conferences is portrayed as significant for the whole of Europe, as depicted by a quote from a speech made by Molotov during the

⁶ All quotations in this section and following sections were translated from Polish to English by the author

conference: “I believe that the issue of Polish borders is a matter of historical importance. It has a huge historical significance not only for Poland and its neighbors, but also for the whole of Europe. (Szcześniak, 1986, p. 126). Likewise, Polish territorial gain in the West is shown as Poland’s return to its original homeland, “to the old lands of Piast⁷ dynasty” (Szcześniak, 1986, p.127). Furthermore, the interpretation of the loss of its eastern territories to the USSR is represented as an act of friendship. This is portrayed by the Molotov’s speech quoted in the textbook: “The western part of Ukraine and Belarus was given to us [the USSR] by Poland” (Szcześniak, 1986, p.126). There is no indication of betrayal or abandonment. Nevertheless, Churchill’s iron curtain speech in 1946 is claimed to challenge the Polish Western border and to be a threat to the newly established Polish territory (Szcześniak, 1986, p. 153).

Europe in the textbook is treated only as a geographical category. Although the concept of Europe is used, it is not defined. Europe is mentioned when the Polish territorial gain in the west is discussed and it is argued that the gain was “in the interest of Europe and the world” (Szcześniak, 1986, p.126). However, the textbook does not mention the division of Europe, nor does it make any other references to what Europe was at the time. Instead, the politics between the USSR and the US are discussed in a Cold War setting (Szcześniak, 1986, p.153).

Yalta and Potsdam in the textbooks introduced in 1999⁸

The images of Yalta and Potsdam changed in history textbooks introduced in 1999. As one might expect, after the collapse of communism the evaluation of the position of Stalin became negative (Chmiel, Jagiełło, & Syta, 2002; Ćwikła, 2002; Jastrzębska & Żurawski,

⁷ The Piast dynasty was the first ruling dynasty of Poland. Their rule begun in c. 930.

⁸ All quotations in this section and following sections were translated from Polish to English by the author

2001; Małkowski & Rzeźniowiecki, 2001; Mędrzecki & Szuchta, 2001; Przybysz, Jakubowski, & Włodarczyk, 2001; Sobaś, 2001; Szcześniak, 2001; Tomalska, 2001; Tusiewicz, 2001; Wendt, 2001; Wojciechowski, 2001). A new edition of the textbook by Szcześniak is the best example of this: he discusses Yalta as “pleasing Stalin’s demands” (Szcześniak, 2001, p. 271) and talks about “the victory of Stalin” (Szcześniak, 2001, p. 272). Stalin and the USSR are shown as mostly responsible for the Polish situation as Stalin “did not agree to presence of western observers of the Polish elections” and “since the discovery of the graves of Katyń [by the German army during the Second World War] he accused the [Polish] government in London of co-operation with Germans”(Małkowski & Rzeźniowiecki, 2001, p. 224). Finally “the USSR did not obey the decisions agreed in Yalta and Potsdam” (Szcześniak, 2001, p.278).

Although in the textbooks introduced in 1999 Stalin is ultimately blamed for the situation of Poland after 1945, the ideas of Western abandonment and betrayal can also be found. Wendt in his textbook, for example, underlines that the Western allies were aware of the consequences of leaving Poland under Soviet influence: “When leaving solitary Poland in the sphere of influence of Stalin, the allies were aware that if any democratic system were established, it would be the Soviet edition of ‘democracy’” (2001, p. 150). Likewise Wojciechowski directly implies the betrayal by calling a chapter: “Forsaken by Allies” (2001, p. 160). Małkowski and Rzeźniowiecki in their textbook make Western countries responsible for not ensuring free and democratic elections in Poland: “Such [free elections in which the communists would inevitably have suffered a defeat] could have been held only under pressure from Western countries” (2001, p. 223).

Interestingly, in the textbook by Małkowski and Rzeźniowiecki the concept of abandonment is merged with the concept of Polish suffering and martyrdom: “All these provisions were made without the consent and knowledge of Poles. Poland, which was the

first to confront the Nazi and - Soviet! - aggression, as a result of the Yalta Conference, for nearly half a century was in the Soviet sphere of influence.” (2001, p. 224). The Polish victimhood during the Second World War can also be found in the textbook by Tusiewicz: ”Poland as a result of the war, of which she was the first victim, found itself in the new boundaries” (Tusiewicz, 2001, p. 134).

With regards to the concept of Europe, the majority of textbooks from 1999 still only talks about the division of Europe without defining the political and cultural consequences of this division. An exception is the textbook by Jastrzębska who offers a sense of nostalgia for the division of Europe and discusses the threat of communism across Europe:

“The leader of the Soviet Union treated countries liberated by his army as his own war trophies that he was not going to share with anyone. Europe was divided. The division as well as Soviet sphere of influence in Europe was already defined by Yalta. (...) Already in Yalta president F. D. Roosevelt called the coalition countries to adopt the Declaration of Liberated Europe, according to which all nations would have the right to an independent choice of system in which they would like to live. In the beginning Stalin supported the declaration, but eventually withdrew them. Within two years after the end of the war in all countries that depended on the Soviet Union communist parties came to power through an election-fraud and terror (...) Europe (and the world) began to be divided by so called iron curtain ” (2001, p.138).

Yalta and Potsdam in textbooks introduced in 2009

The textbooks adopted in 2009 offer new interpretations of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. Although the authors still show Stalin as mostly responsible for the situation

of Poland and Eastern Europe after the conferences, they evaluate the role of the US and the UK differently than in 1999 (Brzozowski & Szczepański, 2012; Burda, Halczak, Józefiak, Roszak, & Szymczak, 2012; Dolecki, Gutowski, & Smoleński, 2012; Kozłowska & Zając, 2012; Roszak & Kłaczko, 2012; Stoła, 2012; Ustrzycki, 2012; Zając, 2012).

The majority of textbooks used now portray the actions of the US president Roosevelt negatively. He is blamed for giving Poland away in order to reach an agreement with Stalin: "The great work of Roosevelt, UN, had to rely on the co-operation between two superpowers the United States and the Soviet Union, and Roosevelt, to reach this purpose, was willing to sacrifice everything, especially Poland" (Burda, et al., 2012, p. 173). The image of Roosevelt sacrificing Poland is also used in the textbook by Brzozowski and Szczepański when they discuss Yalta conference: "An illustration of the US policy of the time are the words of president Roosevelt, who said that the nations of Europe will simply have to withstand Soviet domination" (2012, p. 164).

In contrast, the position of Britain during the conferences of Yalta and Potsdam is evaluated more positively than before: "The British also wanted to guarantee the independence of Polish government from Moscow. They opposed the excessive territorial loss in the east (...) It turned out, however, that the weakened British Empire did not have too much to say, and the United States depended on Soviet co-operation." (Dolecki, 2012, p.256).

Despite these trends that can be found across textbooks from 2009, one of the textbooks puts an accusation of Western betrayal more bluntly than any other textbook from previous years: "decisions taken during the Yalta Conference, were recognized by Polish politicians and the Polish nation as a betrayal by the Western powers." (Ustrzycki, 2012, p. 208).

With regards to the meanings that the textbooks assigned to Europe, for the first time Europe is not used as a geographical term, but meanings are attached to it. The textbooks from 2009 state that Stalin and communism were a threat to the whole of Europe. Dolecki, for example, argues that: "Already at the end of World War II differences in the vision of postwar Europe were revealed more clearly among the members of the coalition. Joseph Stalin disguised his strategies and it became increasingly apparent that the Soviet Union was subjugating the liberated and occupied countries by supporting local communists organizationally and financially (...) Stalin was planning to expand its influence over Western countries" (Dolecki, 2013, p.258). Similarly Brzozowski and Szczepański stress that Europe was vulnerable to the external threat: "The British position was weakened over time and the post-war division of the world into spheres of influences was agreed between the United States and the Soviet Union.(...) In the case of the West this was caused by naivety and lack of understanding of the true intentions of Stalin, while in the case of the Soviet Union by cynicism and striving to extend its territory (...)" (2012, p. 164).

Towards Europe? Conclusions

In this paper I explored Polish history textbooks, their content and their institutional and political settings in three points in time: 1989, 1999 and 2009. By taking into consideration, Poland's 'return to Europe' in 1989 and the accession to the EU in 2004; and recent developments in memory politics and especially the agenda of adding Polish remembering of the war into the Western European "mnemonical map" (Mälksoo, 2009, p. 655) I have investigated whether Polish history textbooks have moved 'towards Europe' and what the meaning of 'Europe' is.

The analysis of the portrayal of the conferences in Yalta and Potsdam in Polish history textbooks from 1989, 1999 and 2009 shows the transformation of the images of the Soviet Union, Western betrayal, Europe and in more general sense, Poland.

First of all, not surprisingly with regards to the images of Stalin and the Soviet Union, the analysis shows that since 1999 Poland's loss of its eastern territories to the Soviet Union and the establishment of the Soviet Bloc has no longer been represented as just. Although the textbook by *Szcześniak* used in 1989 did not challenge the Polish relationship with the Soviet Union, this was done by textbooks in 1999 and 2009. In 1990s the ministry of education aimed at freeing education from the communist legacy. By certifying several history textbooks it allowed various narratives of the past to emerge. Among the new textbooks there was a new edition of the textbook by *Szcześniak*. This demonstrates a degree of continuity between communist and post-communist narratives. Nevertheless, all of the newly adopted textbooks condemned Stalin and portrayed him as fully responsible for the establishment of communism in Poland. The opening of Pandora's box meant a release of several voices within the society. Nevertheless, all of the voices coming from the textbooks agreed that Poland was communist because of Stalin's action during Yalta and the presence of Red Army in Eastern Europe. This, therefore, fits into the bigger picture of a strong rejection of the communist past in post-communist Poland.

Secondly, as for the concept of Western betrayal, the analysis shows that in the textbook used in 1989 the concept simply did not exist, as Poland found itself where it allegedly belonged, in the Soviet Bloc. The only 'traitor', as already discussed, was Churchill and his iron curtain speech that allegedly challenged the new western Polish border. Nevertheless, the concept of Western abandonment and betrayal emerged in the later textbooks. The majority of textbooks from 1999 blamed Western allies, the US and the UK, for not ensuring free elections and allowing Stalin to take control over Poland. In

textbooks from 2009, however, a distinction was made between the role of the US and the UK in establishing the post-war world order. The majority of textbooks moved towards a more positive image of the UK and a more negative image of the US. They blamed Roosevelt for sacrificing Poland in order to reach an agreement with Stalin. In contrast, the participation of the UK and its allegedly more “pro-Polish” positions in the decision-making during the conferences was justified. Churchill in the textbooks was portrayed as seeking to protect Europe against communism. Is this new image of the UK linked to the Polish accession to the EU, which the UK was already a member?

Thirdly, the concept of Europe in the textbook in 1989 was used merely as a geographical term. Nonetheless, over the years it has gained meaning and content. Namely, the textbooks in 1999 discussed the division of Europe. Later, in the textbooks introduced in 2009, Europe gained meaning: it was not only divided, but it faced a common threat: Stalin and communism. This can be argued to be linked to Polish politics of memory and efforts to insert Polish memories of World War Two in the European master narrative.

Fourthly, the analysis of Yalta and Potsdam portrayals suggests that the image of the Polish nation has also transformed. This is because the image of ‘Us’, the nation, is closely tied to the definition of ‘Others’: Europe, Western countries and communism, against whom the nation can define itself. The textbook definition of the nation in 1989 is built on Yalta allegedly (re-)establishing a natural world order and, consequently, Poland reclaiming its old lands and going back to its original territory. In the textbooks from 1999, however, the definition of the nation is adjusted. The decisions regarding Poland, Soviet control over its territory and the revision of Polish eastern border, are no longer considered just. Yalta is portrayed as Western abandonment and betrayal of the Polish nation. As a consequence, elements of Polish victimhood, martyrology and suffering after Yalta are embodied into the definition of the nation. This suffering of Polish nation can also be

found in textbooks from 1999 and 2009. Nonetheless, in 2009 the blame is not generally directed towards Western allies. In contrast, the distinction between the UK and the US is made. The US and especially president Roosevelt is becoming the 'Other' against whom Polish nation defines itself, while the new interpretation of the position of the UK at Yalta implies a move towards nations that Poland perceives as European.

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