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**ADDENDUM to the REPORT 1 on history and the learning of history in Europe**

**(Rapporteur: Mr de PUIG, Spain, Socialist Group)**

[Link to the Report](#)

**COLLOQUY on THE LEARNING OF HISTORY IN EUROPE**

Paris, 5-6 December 1994

**PROCEEDINGS**

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## A. PREFACE

The context of this colloquy was the changes in approaches to history consequent on the political readjustment of central and eastern Europe. In an information society the variety in the sources of historical appreciation is increasingly apparent. There is also a growing concern to encourage tolerance and understanding of the other.

Rather than another attempt at a common history of Europe, with all the negative attitudes this might perpetuate, the aim was to seek for schools and historians, but also for politicians and media professionals, a better understanding of the process of learning history.

## B. PROGRAMME

### Monday, 5 December

#### 09.30 - 10.30 **Opening of the Colloquy**

Statements by:

- **Leni Fischer** (Chairperson of the Committee on Culture and Education) Member of the Bundestag, Germany
- **Lluís Maria de Puig** (Rapporteur for the Committee on Culture and Education) Member of the Cortes, Spain

Introductory talk by **Bronislaw Geremek**, President of the Klub Parlamentarny Unia Demokratyczna, Warsaw

#### 10.30 - 12.30 First working session: **THE USE AND MISUSE OF HISTORY**

Panel:

- **Marc Ferro** (General Rapporteur for the colloquy) Director of Studies, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris
- **Yuri Afanasyev**, Director of the Russian Humanistic University, Moscow
- **Joaquim Nadal i Farreras**, Professor of contemporary history at Girona University and Mayor of Girona

General discussion

#### 14.30 - 16.00 Second working session: **THE DIFFERENT SOURCES OF NOTIONS OF HISTORY**

Panel:

- **Klaus Wenger**, Head of the Documentary Unit of ARTE (Franco-German cultural TV) Strasbourg
- **Roland Minnerath**, Professor of ecclesiastical history at Strasbourg University and Advisor to the Secretariat of State of the Holy See

General discussion

#### 16.00 - 18.00 Third working session: **THE SELECTION PROCESS IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY**

Panel:

- **Joaquim Prats i Cuevas**, Professor of modern history at Lleida University
- **David Harkness**, Professor of Irish History, Queen's University of Belfast
- **Hermann Schäfer**, Director of the House of History Museum, Bonn

General discussion

18.30 Visit to the exhibition on "The English as seen in 19th century Paris", Musée Carnavalet, 23 rue de Sévigné, 3ème

## Tuesday, 6 December

9.00 - 11.00 Fourth working session: **TOWARDS A BASIC CONCEPT OF HISTORICAL LITERACY**

Panel:

- **Maitland Stobart**, Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport, Council of Europe
- **David Lowenthal**, Historian and geographer

General discussion

11.00 - 12.30 **Concluding session**

Concluding remarks by **Marc Ferro**, General Rapporteur

Political conclusion by **Lluís Maria de Puig**, Committee Rapporteur

Closing of the Colloquy by **Leni Fischer**, President of the Committee on Culture and Education

## C. SUMMARY

### I. OPENING OF THE COLLOQUY

**Leni Fischer**, Chairperson of the Committee on Culture and Education, welcomed participants and opened the colloquy. She pointed out that the aim of the colloquy was discussion and not to formulate conclusions. The Committee rapporteur would prepare a report for Assembly debate later in 1995.

**Lluís Maria de Puig**, Rapporteur for the Committee on Culture and Education, explained that his aim was not another attempt at a supranational history of Europe. He was a politician and interested in the relationship between politics and history: political ideas had a historical basis, but also politics could manipulate history. He was interested in how people got their notions of history: rather than deal with the teaching of history, the present colloquy concentrated on learning history and the various sources (school and other) from which it could be learned. The colloquy was about how historical attitudes of tolerance or intolerance came about. It was therefore linked to the Council of Europe's concern for the promotion of human rights and the present action plan against intolerance and xenophobia.

**Bronislaw Geremek** described himself as a professional historian and a politician only by accident. He proposed a number of reflections on the nature of history.

Was history an obstacle to moving forward? He did not believe so. Memory was necessary for a sense of responsibility. The totalitarian régimes were part of the heritage of central and eastern Europe just as the Civil War was part of that of Spain. These memories were the present of the past. History was something more: it involved the critical dimension of research and the work of the historian. Teaching of history was necessary to understand the present and the future.

There were different national models. In Switzerland history was under-done, in the Balkans it was over-done. Western Europe tended to want to forget. The Poles were over-sensitive. This made history a privileged part of Polish politics and both sides in the system drew on history as an instrument of defence and legitimacy. He gave examples.

History was the search for truth, but was this necessary for Europe or for humanity? Napoleon III saw history as war; Unesco saw it as peace; he believed it was both war and peace.

The idea of a history of the 12 (European Union) was ridiculous as Europe was not the 12. History could not be artificially limited in this way. History was a search for identity, whether fatherland, nation, region or community.

He praised the work of the bilateral commissions working on history text books (Poland with Germany, the Baltic States and now Israel).

He stressed the role of the media and congratulated Marc Ferro on the exemplary critical spirit of the programme "Histoires parallèles" on ARTE.

He concluded with Marc Bloch's comparison of history to a knife that could kill or cut meat. In former Yugoslavia it had been used to foment hate and distrust; but used responsibly and with a critical attitude it could serve the cause of peace and humanity.

## II. THE USE AND MISUSE OF HISTORY

### Presentations

**Marc Ferro**, General Rapporteur for the colloquy, quoted Braudel's description of the brilliance of Polish historians; they had the unfair advantage of being both east and west European and of experiencing catholicism and communism.

He began by reviewing the state of historical knowledge. Almost every political system had used history for its own ends; had established its own historical facts and its own heroes and villains. These varying versions were multiplying. With television and the cinema they were becoming more dramatised.

Memories (false) and stereotypes risked replacing history. Hence the real need for systematic work to sort out different versions. The search for a non-national, European version of events had been the objective in setting up the "Annales" School of History in Strasbourg in 1929. The need continued.

He next discussed the taboos of history. Each country had its own catalogue of hidden war crimes or origins of power. Thus the Armenians tended to forget their riches of the 12th to 16th centuries or that they invented terrorism; the Arabs complained of the Crusades but hid the Turkish conquest; or the French history books concentrated on resistance rather than collaboration in the Second World War.

How should historical facts be chosen? He had been impressed by the methodology of the American historian Earl Bell who proposed as criteria: importance for the persons who experienced them, relevance for understanding the present, topicality. He gave examples of linking early policy towards Red Indians with control of arms today.

**Yuri Afanasyev** described the problems faced by his country (Russia) in the matters relating to history teaching (\*)<sup>2</sup>.

The past 80 years were those of a historic experiment that had had negative and sometimes tragic results. Teaching the history of this period involved looking objectively at the processes that had taken place and drawing out the necessary conclusions for a really new and democratic policy.

He pointed out that the present Russian Government was unfortunately not likely to use the lessons of the past or to put an end to the ways of thinking of the previous epoch. As long as the historical experience was not taken into consideration, there was no possibility of democratic policy-making.

**Joaquim Nadal i Farreras** as professional historian and mayor found it easy to agree with Lluís Maria de Puig and Bronisław Geremek on the close links between history and politics. He was rather more pessimistic however. He criticised the extent to which political figures were obsessed with their own histories and the degree of public amnesia when faced with the inventions or distortions of politicians. The history of historians was not the same as that produced by politicians. The situation in former Yugoslavia showed that learning had no place in political decision-making. (\*).

### Discussion

**Hallgrim Berg** had spoken with Russians on the shore of the Black Sea and agreed that completely different versions of history could result from the process of selecting facts and interpretations. He contrasted the WASP view of American history with that of a southerner. He also regretted the extensive part played by historical notions in the Norwegian referendum; the vote against the European Union had been influenced by such slogans as "democracy and self-rule or union".

He wondered if it would be possible to build up a data-bank of reliable historical facts.

**José Luis Lopez Henares** suggested that if history could be misused for political ends, it might also be used positively to train people in proper values. History was there to be interpreted according to what we might want to make of it. The nationalistic elements had to be put in their context; myths, stereotypes and confrontation had to be played down. He wondered about the European interpretation of history to which Marc Ferro had alluded.

**Mati Hint** recalled that Yuri Afanasyev, speaking at a rally in Tallinn before the independence of Estonia, had concluded that the USSR should apologise for the force used against the Baltic States were it not for the fact that these states were so closely integrated into the USSR. Now the Baltic States were not integrated and no apologies came from the Russians. On the contrary Russian history textbooks still (1993) revealed no Russian aggression against Finland, Poland or the Baltic states. Instead France and the UK were said to have started hostilities by using Finland as a tool against the USSR. If the Russians continued in this way, he very much supported the conclusions drawn by Yuri Afanasyev. History was necessary for the struggle for independent recognition of the Baltic States.

**Günther Müller** had found the same distorted views of history in speaking with Russian students in Leningrad in the 1950s who knew nothing of the Trotskyites. Such false images could even be believed by the authorities as the recently released archives were beginning to show. It was impossible to retrieve 100% of what had happened; for all but the specialists history was inevitably a matter of subjective interpretation, of opinions and counter-opinions. Increasing popularisation through historical novels and in particular television added the artificiality of dramatisation.

**Gyula Hegyi** agreed that politicians were tempted to misuse history to sell their own ideas. A distinction should however be drawn between the political history of states and rulers and the history of the church and the common people. This everyday history was made up of mixed marriages, integration and compromise. It offered a better future for Europe.

**Gloria Hooper** would rather talk about how to make the most positive use of history as represented by cultural achievements of the past: cathedrals, music, folklore, cinema. Nursery rhymes reflected historical reality (in "A ring a ring of roses" there was a direct reference to the symptoms of the plague); the history of foreign countries was often distorted for national reasons (such as the presentation of the Spanish Inquisition in English history); these points should be brought out in the media. At the same time safeguards should be established against the misinterpretation of history. The greatest weapon here was freedom and diversity of the press.

**Emanuelis Zingeris** pointed out that although a few years after the end of the Second World War the Nuremberg Trials had revealed the nature of Nazism, we still had no idea of the criminal ideology of communism, of collectivism, of Mao or of Pol Pot. Pressure should be maintained to pursue such historical clarification. The relevant archives had to be made accessible.

**Roman Serbyn** wondered how best to deal with historical myths as not all were necessarily bad. The myth of democracy had helped break up the USSR. How now were the Russians to decide between the myth of empire or nation state? The problem arose in the Ukraine of what days to celebrate as national holidays: there was an interesting choice to be made between Soviet, Communist and Ukrainian anniversaries.

**Jerzy Wisniewski**, Chairperson of the CDCC Education Committee, described himself as a former maths teacher and non politician. He wished to put greater emphasis on the importance of the role of the teacher in promoting history and an interest in history. Despite government pressure, the teachers in Poland had in general stood by their students and had refused to teach the official propaganda.

**Luis Maria de Puig** distinguished positive and negative uses of history. He agreed with Bronislaw Geremek's view that the history of Europe was a matter of identity and of civilisation. It was however necessary to be careful in developing such notions as fatherland, nation, state etc.

**Yuri Afanasyev** welcomed the fact that certain journalists (not historians) were beginning to explode a number of the myths of Soviet history: for example that the Second World War began on 22 June after Hitler invaded Russia, or that there was no Soviet-German pact.

He believed that the Council of Europe had a role to play in encouraging cooperation between historians in the preparation of text-books of 20th century history. If these drew on different experiences and different opinions, a more positive spirit might develop in Europe. He was himself involved in editing a 5-volume history of contemporary Russia.

**Bronislaw Geremek** distinguished historical "myths", which he believed were basically helpful, from lies that were not.

He noted the importance of the notion of "fear" in European history - whether of the Tartars, the Turks or of Communism.

He explained his notion of fatherland ("patria") as a matter of local identity and solidarity. He was essentially opposed to the degree of control exercised by the state in such matters as education and history.

**Leni Fischer** noted that the fear of communism was rapidly being replaced by that of Islam.

**Marc Ferro** tried to raise morale as he feared most speakers had emphasised the misuse of history. The successful conclusion of the work of the Polish-German bilateral history commission mentioned by Bronislaw Geremek was important news. In the past such exercises had simply involved cutting out anything unsavoury. The Council of Europe might be able to assist the exercise.

He also felt it was constructive that for perhaps the first time politicians and historians were talking together in an international conference on history.

He responded to other interventions. If the Soviets were masters at historiographical manipulation, other countries did the same thing (if less systematically). Examples should be collected and publicised.

He urged the Baltic States not to think of themselves as the sole victims of the USSR.

History had to be political. It was much more than a cultural supplement to what children might encounter. Communism, fascism etc had to be explained.

Opening archives might solve several problems but it would create many others. The question had to be asked who created the archives? and for what purpose? Again there were difficulties of interpretation.

He accepted that "myths" might be basically helpful. They should not be suppressed, but it was necessary for historians to check them out.

### III. THE DIFFERENT SOURCES OF NOTIONS OF HISTORY

**Russell Johnston**, *Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Culture and Education*, opened this session.

#### Presentations

**Klaus Wenger** presented his paper on television and history (\*). Television had established itself as a source and product of history. The audiovisual media (radio and subsequently television) were themselves agents of history.

But there was less and less political or ideological manipulation of images at national or state level. For a moment broadcasting, especially satellite, had allowed television to play a historical role: this had seen the end of the totalitarian régimes in Europe and the Gulf War. History was transformed into a global village reality show.

Technological progress now offered "virtual" reality. How could historians respond? With the flood of possible images, true false or distorted, selection and interpretation was again necessary. History was again becoming what it had always been: a virtual approach to the past.

**Roland Minnerath** addressed the question of the role of the Catholic Church in the transmission of history (\*). The biblical account of the intervention of God in history was Judaic and linear, it was continued by the Christian belief in the incarnation of God in Christ. This approach contrasted with other religions that tried to escape from history or saw it in terms of cycles.

There was an essential conflict between the ideas of God as master of history and of man as responsible for his own actions. The biblical concern for the sense of history invited consideration of history as not closed in itself. St Augustin deeply influenced the Christian conception of history through his work on *The two cities*. "History" was not only what was usually recorded as noteworthy (political history, cultural creations etc), but there was also a hidden and unobserved history in each person's life leading to a future accomplishment in God.

The Catholic Church was aware of its responsibility for transmitting the past and was fully cooperating with the scientific approach of contemporary historiography.

A common European history indeed involved each European citizen in as much as that person belonged simultaneously to multiple, concentric circles: family, cultural community, nation, or European civilisation, as had also been mentioned by Bronislaw Geremek.

#### Discussion

**Russell Johnston** wondered if what was not recorded on CNN might not have happened. He also noted that people on CNN behaved differently from those who were not. A watched kettle never boiled. He was not sure that we were yet out of the pre-virtual stage of the media manipulating real-reality.

**Marc Ferro** rejected the idea that television could show history in the making. A historical event was not like a football match with its rules and fixed time limits. The television, with all the people that were working on the production of the images shown, was by its very nature a screen against the reality it pretended to present.

To Roland Minnerath he pointed out that modern history tried to put questions as well as provide a narrative of events. The concentric identities should include those of the persons involved: denomination, party, profession and sex.

**Lluís Maria de Puig** felt that there was a real difference between the news and history, even if the news might subsequently become part of history. There was perhaps a need for a closer involvement of professional historians in the media.

He congratulated Roland Minnerath on the courage of his presentation of the complex relationship between faith and history. As the case of Galileo had shown, it was clearly difficult for the Church to claim objectivity.

**Hartmut Soell** rubbished docu-dramas, virtual stories and reality shows as sheer entertainment. As long as they were not presented as history they could not mislead people seriously.

**Gyula Hegyi** had been impressed by Roland Minnerath. It would be wrong however for the Catholic Church to feel that after 40 years of communism it could revert to the sharing of power with the state. The Church had to continue to transmit the original message of the Gospels; but it could not go back in history.

**Joyce Gould** was most concerned with the power of the visual image and the effect it had on ordinary people that might not understand the subtleties of virtual reality. Most people believed what they saw.

The problem was how to control the clever media people, and how to control those that controlled them.

She was concerned at the lack of come back in cases of misrepresentation. Perhaps a greater problem however was that of superficiality.

This problem could spread from live television transmissions to the CD-ROM that were destined to take over from school text-books. Were professional historians involved in the preparation of this material? Might governments exercise some degree of control?

**David Lowenthal** pointed out the difference between media reporting of on-going events and media presentation of history. This did not rule out the possibility of film-makers such as D.W. Griffiths in "Birth of a Nation" (1916) being taken in by their own production and leading the audience into the same delusion. The visual media could not handle the past-imperfect tense to show specific events happening within a framework of ongoing everyday life, as did narrative writers. If the media were to replace text-books entirely we would be in trouble.

**Klaus Wenger** wished indeed to stress the danger of using the media for the recording of history. The viewer could not tell the difference between the real and virtual image. The historian had now to take into consideration the danger of this artificial subliminal history. Unfortunately people were increasingly relying on the media for their understanding of politics and history.

**Marc Ferro** countered by saying that most people were now giving the same degree of belief to what they saw on television as was formally given to what they read in print. Was there much difference?

**Roland Minnerath** replied to the reference to Galileo that history had to take account of context (the notion of historicity). He agreed with Gyula Hegyi that there was no way of returning to the pre-communist situation in Hungary, and this had been clearly stated in Vatican II.

#### IV. THE SELECTION PROCESS IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

**Russell Johnston** opened the session by remarking that when a boy he had learnt that most things had been invented by the British. As he had grown older he had discovered that there were such people as Germans or French who had done it before.

#### Presentations

**Joaquim Prats i Cuevas** read his paper on the selection of syllabus content in the learning of history (\*). This first analysed the traditional approaches to history from the nationalistic to Marxist and the subsequent academic decline into anecdote or social values. History teachers in primary and secondary schools were now distancing themselves from the professional historians. If it was impossible to teach the whole of history, school might at least impart an awareness of things historical. Syllabus content should he suggested be selected with a view to the notions of timescale, key events, change and continuity and investigation of causes. The teaching approach he advocated was one of discovery learning.

**David Harkness** followed with his paper on the learning of history in Europe with special reference to the experience of Northern Ireland (\*). His conclusion was that while governments might well lay down broad guidelines, the actual choice of curriculum should be left to teaching professionals and be multifaceted. History could not cure the ills of the modern world but it could support the values that underpinned civilised society. It could also convey that there were many different and legitimate ways of looking at the past.

**Hermann Schäfer** concluded this series of presentations with his paper on the point of view of a national history museum based on the "House of History" in Bonn (\*). In Germany more people visited museums than went to football matches. Museums had therefore to cater for their interests and these were very varied. The behaviour of these visitors was well described as "cultural window shopping". The effectiveness of a museum of contemporary history lay in the extent to which it encouraged visitors to engage in dialogue and reflection.

## Discussion

**Russell Johnston** suggested that history was a matter of learning about people. It was essentially subjective.

**Katia Hadjidemetriou** was a secondary school teacher. Theories about how to promote understanding and the personality of children were all very well. What really counted was their social background. In addition the syllabus was so overburdened and the children were trying so hard for their examinations, that the teachers could hardly use any method to develop the personalities of those they taught.

**Hartmut Soell** did not believe that the "House of History" should be imagined as a sort of historical Disneyland. Disneyland was in place in America, but in Europe castles and cathedrals were real. The interest of the "House of History" was in objects that had played a real part in history.

**José Luis Lopez Henares** welcomed David Harkness' emphasis on teaching through history. Would it be possible to teach the history of Europe in a way that would encourage international understanding?

**Tanja Orel-Šturm**, acting Chairperson of the Council for Cultural Co-operation, welcomed the colloquy as history was important for democracy and combating xenophobia. It had for a long time been important for democracy and for combating xenophobia. It had for a long time been a priority area of European cooperation for the CDCC. Maitland Stobart would speak later about the various activities carried out and envisaged. She saw the problem in practical terms: how were all the recommendations to be implemented? who would train the teachers and produce the textbooks? In her own country (Slovenia) textbooks from before the Second World War were still in use and teachers were forced to improvise. It was also important for countries of central and eastern Europe that children should have the notion that the history of Europe was now their history.

**Emanuelis Zingeris** had been responsible for setting up under the communist régime a museum of Jewish history in Vilnius. Rather than show the bodies of the annihilated, he had felt it better to show their cultural and spiritual heritage. People who were suffering under communism found it difficult to criticise openly the Nazi period.

**Gloria Hooper** returned to the subject of the selection process. She felt that historical sources should be made available and people left to make their own selection. It was important for a tolerant society that people understood that there could be different points of view.

**Hermann Schäfer** based selection on the likely interest of visitors and on historical importance. Veracity had to be respected. He insisted that museums should do more to attract visitors' interest.

**David Harkness** wished to avoid any impression of social engineering. He did however feel that history teachers had to promote reasoned decision-making and uphold values. In more practical terms, they had to give children guidance in the selection and use of sources.

To those who doubted the European dimension of history he recommended the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council book "Thinking European".

He agreed that a major priority was to get up to date history material into the schools of central and eastern Europe.

**Joaquim Prats** stressed the importance of different approaches to history and different points of view.

**Lluís Maria de Puig** spoke of how useful history had been in appreciating the change from dictatorship in Spain. He could accept European history as a university discipline that looked at history across common borders; "European" should be understood in a very broad and undefined sense.

**Marc Ferro** welcomed the courage of David Harkness in tackling contemporary history; this was the difference between Herodotus who wrote on ancient history and Thucydides who wrote on contemporary times. Joaquim Prats had stressed syllabus rather more than historical content. Hermann Schäfer had referred to the popularity of



museums; this was a social phenomenon of the last 30 years.

## V. TOWARDS A BASIC CONCEPT OF HISTORICAL LITERACY

*Leni Fischer chaired the first part of this session.*

### Presentation

**Maitland Stobart**, Deputy Director of Education (Council of Europe), presented a paper on Council of Europe thinking on history with relation to content, skills and attitudes (\*). He stressed the complementarity of what was learnt in schools and what children picked up out of school, in particular from the media.

There was a new interest in local and national history, which he carefully distinguished from nationalistic history. The West had a lot to learn about the history of the countries of central and eastern Europe. He was critical however of attempts to write text-books or draw up a syllabus for a single European history.

Teaching history was not only a matter of facts, but it involved inculcating skills and attitudes. It should be enjoyable. It should be linked to extracurricular activities and not confined to the classroom.

### Discussion

**Bodo von Borries**, the Comparative European Project (Hamburg), saw history as a comparative exercise that combined interpretation of the past with understanding the present and anticipation of the future. He agreed with those who doubted the possibility of a common European history; facts needed interpretation and no two countries had the same view-point. The aim of history teaching was not so much content as to enable pupils make their own interpretations.

He hoped that the conclusions of the colloquy would include a recommendation for supporting a European network of research institutes working on such subjects as history text-books or children's attitudes to history.

**Katia Hadjimetriou** doubted if most history teachers had the skills to do what was being ascribed to them. Many for example were too insecure to take a class round a museum. The teaching profession did not attract the most brilliant people.

**Russell Johnston** recalled Lluís Maria de Puig's idea of looking at European history across common borders and thought it should be considered more seriously by the experts.

**Joke van der Leeuw-Roord**, President of Euroclio (European Association of History Teachers), pointed out that teachers did not find it easy to do all that was expected of them. Time available for history teaching varied greatly throughout Europe but the objectives were largely similar: to encourage young people to enjoy history, to become positive and critical citizens, to be aware that no one story was the whole truth. There was a great need for in-service teacher training.

**Roland Minnerath** agreed on the importance of contemporary history. It was wrong however to reject the Middle Ages as a time of darkness: there had been a common European civilisation, autonomous universities, free cities and trade.

**Jerzy Wisniewski** appreciated Maitland Stobart's functional approach to history as a matter of understanding, processing and using information. It was a creative activity. Media literacy was clearly an important part of historical literacy.

He insisted that history teachers should teach history, not just facts. This was preparation for responsible citizenship. The role of politicians was to create conditions in which history teachers could carry out this task. The example given by the colloquy of cooperation between the Assembly Committee on Culture and Education and the experts should be followed at national level as a means of avoiding misuse of history by politicians.

**Leni Fischer** recognised the need to be realistic and not overload the school curriculum. As new subjects were added, there was a risk of reducing history to one hour per week. This was clearly not enough.

**Emanuelis Zingeris** agreed with Russell Johnston's call for a more European approach. He spoke of Vilnius as a European symbol of resistance against the threat of foreign domination.

**Lester Borley**, Europa Nostra, believed it was wrong to treat history as a theoretical subject. The National Trust for Scotland used school visits to country houses or castles as a means of linking the classroom to reality. In many ways this was more useful than the artificial arrangement of objects in a museum. He also suggested that history teachers had a closer contact with those involved in making history.

**Roman Serbyn** pointed to the evident need for a new critical attitude to historical facts and interpretation in central and eastern Europe. Yet he had recently toured a number of these countries and had been amazed at the lack of up to date material. The West should urgently help with text-books and teacher training.

**David Harkness** drew attention to a project in Northern Ireland that involved a competition between schools across the religious divide on controversial topics from Ireland's past. The idea was to break down traditional viewpoints and through the children get at the adults of tomorrow.

**Tanja Orešturm** felt not enough had yet been said of the influence of the family in attitudes to history. This was certainly a highly significant factor in the promoting or combating of xenophobia in parts of Europe where there was conflict. It was also important that children enjoyed history; so they needed good text-books and teachers.

**Paul Vandepitte** appealed for funds to enable Euroclio to encourage history teachers and history teaching associations in central and eastern Europe.

**Nicole Tutiaux-Guillon**, teacher, spoke of the use of the imagination in history teaching; dramatisation helped memorise; dullness favoured stereotypes. She raised the question of the collective memory and of its intrusion in the classroom.

**Bernard Zamaron**, Centre Robert Schumann pour l'Europe, told of a dramatised reconstitution of the history of the European Union that was being prepared for performance with music in Minsk in 1995.

**Marc Ferro** found Maitland Stobart's presentation entirely consistent with the work of the "Annales" School of History. The colloquy had brought together very different sorts of experts, and it was reassuring to find them so much in agreement and with politicians.

He liked the notion of dynamic history. It had to tackle challenging issues such as Islam, the Jews or feminism.

If 85% of information came from out of school sources, much more attention should be given to them and more interaction developed.

**Maitland Stobart** responded to the calls for more communication and was trying to set up a data base of history projects in Europe. He looked forward to the results of the project on historical awareness among secondary school pupils. He noted with interest the emphasis several participants had placed on dramatisation in history teaching.

He recognised the problems faced by the history teachers and the particularly dramatic situation in central and eastern Europe where text-books were lacking and old teachers were being expected to teach new history. He welcomed the support of Euroclio.

Although still opposed to the idea of a single European history, he accepted the relevance of European subjects for history teaching. The European cultural routes developed by the Council of Europe were already being used in this way.

He concluded by suggesting that the responsibility of politicians lay in providing resources for history teaching and in protecting the history teacher against political attacks on controversial issues.

*Russell Johnston now replaced Leni Fischer in the chair.*

## Presentation

**David Lowenthal** feared that the idea of a charter to protect history teachers against politicians implied that history teachers might feel unduly threatened by the politicisation of their vocation. This would be a pity. History was perhaps not everything in life, yet we all had to be our own historian (remembering birthdays, paying bills, recalling what we did last year etc).

The ideal of history was a noble dream to which historians had long aspired, and he had developed this point in his written contribution (\*). But for many, like the educator John Dewey, history was of no use except for what was important to us here and now. It could be a useful form of civic education. It could be justifiably altered: such as by the Acts of Oblivion passed by the UK Parliament at the end of the 17th century to provide an amnesty for the community "to forget and forgive".

Historians knew that any history was partial. The general public did not know this and tended to believe what it was told. The main point about the teaching and learning of history was that young people should be aware that there was no perfect record, that history was not right or wrong like mathematics.

He gave some simple examples of how to teach historical criticism. How did one know when one was born? from

what point of view was the evidence being presented? the importance of questioning witnesses and of considering context; the effect of hindsight and how wrong it was to present the past like the present.

History he concluded was almost always viewed by the public as more than a boneyard of unrelated facts. As a Director of Disneyland might say, its interest lay as much in its fantasies as in its truths.

### Discussion

**Russell Johnston** picked up the point that everyone was in some way a historian. Young people could appreciate the difficulty of keeping a diary of the commonest of experiences. What did they imagine happened when this was a matter of writing political mémoires?

**Hermann Schäfer** believed that even the subjectivity of history could be approached on a scientific basis. In Germany there had clearly been two different views of history - East and West. In the former GDR, the influence of Marxist-Leninism had been strong and he was now working with contemporary teenagers and discussing with them the objects they found in their grandparents' houses.

History books should not be burned, but they had to be constantly updated. Greater use should be made of audio-visual material and the new possibilities offered by CD-ROM.

**Russell Johnston** wondered what would become of the 1800 Marxist-Leninist history teachers in the former GDR if even their books could not be burned.

**Rainer Riemenschneider** gave information on the international network of research workers on school textbooks sponsored by Unesco and run by the Georg-Eckert Institut in Braunschweig.

In the past, most work had concentrated on the *teaching* of history. The emphasis of the present colloquy on *learning* was therefore original and challenging. He had been impressed by the systematic approach of Joaquim Prats and was particularly interested in development of the "discovery learning" technique.

He welcomed treating the understanding of history as something central to society, to the development of citizenship and to the working of democracy as opposed to simply being a subject to be taught in a classroom.

**David Harkness** appreciated David Lowenthal's humane approach. Though everyone risked being biased, they had a duty to avoid prejudice which, by his definition, was bias accepted uncritically or unthinkingly, without regard to other possible viewpoints.

**Emanuelis Zingeris** sought to restore the authority of teachers that had been so much undermined in central and eastern Europe. On the other hand he insisted on including the history of the totalitarian era and the crimes of the past in the school curriculum. It was necessary to correct the perversions of the earlier education systems.

**David Lowenthal** firmly hoped that books would never be burned and especially history books that were in themselves a historical record of how past generations had seen themselves in relation to their own past. Continual updating was however also essential -we were unable to perceive our own bias and prejudices. The recent past was a specially problematic realm for teaching and learning and ought to be the subject perhaps of another colloquy.

### CONCLUDING SESSION

**Marc Ferro** drew certain preliminary conclusions. Progress had been made in identifying areas of learning history: through reconstructing one's personal past, through visiting museums or country houses, from the media, from comparing the record of others with one's own experiences.

He distinguished different forms of history: traditional, mémoires, analytical, news and fiction. For each facts were selected according to different criteria. Each had a different role. Official history could be totally misleading and fiction more real than reality: for example Eisenstein's film "Potemkin" might be totally false in its details yet remained an authentic record of the period.

The media remained an ambivalent antidote to the action of the state and the education system.

Given all this subjectivity could a "history for all" be imagined? At the expense of hurting some feelings, he felt so and suggested certain basic principles:

- avoid the French mistake of forgetting that Savoy might have existed
- hide no skeletons in cupboards

- present all points in any controversy
- allow every community to state its case (from the Jews to the Kurds and Armenians)
- include non-European viewpoints
- multiply entries
- provoke questions (role of women etc)

This would make history interesting and challenging. But for the historians to survive they would have to be better protected against politicians and lawyers. Historians were not an organised profession.

Marc Ferro submitted written conclusions subsequent to the colloquy (\*).

**Lluís Maria de Puig**, being both a politician and a historian, did not wish to be particularly critical of either. The colloquy had aimed to encourage the individual to interpret all sources of information in a critical spirit: school education, the media, museums, the written press, historical novels and the cinema. Each field called for further attention.

It was accepted that history had both a positive and negative message. Despite the arguments for subjectivity, he was himself inclined to believe that there was also an element of truth to be found in history. He was above all concerned to relate it to the problems of today and in a positive way to promote values such as tolerance, democracy and human rights.

He would develop a series of recommendations in the report he would now prepare for the Assembly.

**Russell Johnston** observed that the colloquy was now itself part of history. He thanked participants and hoped for some degree of historical accuracy if not truth in the resulting summary record by the committee secretariat.

#### **D. WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS**

##### **Statement**

by Yuri Afanasyev

Director of the Russian Humanistic University, Moscow

As far as Russia is concerned, the question of history as a science is complicated and even dramatic. It is not only a matter of the specific, unusual and even unique way of the social development of Russia. History teaching can be considered as a specific problem because the history of the Soviet period constitutes 80 years; in addition, this great experiment that lasted for 80 years had a negative result. The teacher when explaining this period to his students must be aware of this negative and in a sense even tragic outcome.

But this is not the only aspect that is complicated and unique in the work of the history teacher. We must also take into consideration that before 1917 we were always trying to reach somebody else's level of attainment. Probably since the times of Ivan the Terrible, or at least since the times of Peter I, we were trying to match somebody in order to be as strong as our model, to conquer.

Besides, Russian present-day society is a society in transition. Practically everybody agrees on this. We normally have great difficulties when we try to say what kind of transformation it is. No-one doubts that it is a transition from socialism to post-socialism. At the same time however it is a transformation from traditionalism into liberalism, although this point of view is not supported by many historians. To my mind the main feature of this period is the process of change from traditional to modern values. Only this may give the process of reform in Russia really positive results.

The problem of this traditionalism in Russian society is that the predominant notion is of the collectivity and not of the individual. That means that the individual is not seen as the basis of an economically free society. Transition from this traditionalism into modern society, creates not only a new social and economic system, but a new type of culture.

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century this transition was widely discussed by Russian philosophers and writers. They compared Russia with centaurs, in order to illustrate the dualism and the binary structure of Russian culture.

The way I have described things is very schematic, but if pupils and students are taught that nothing in our past was satisfactory, it could lead to the question: if our history is not a normal one, if it is uncertain, who are we? If we put the problem in such a way, it turns everything into dark, negative and problematic colours.

At the same time it is true that this binary nature of Russian culture contains not only problems and contradictions, but also serves as a sort of programmed capacity to accept alternatives, to choose between different directions of progress. However when it became clear that the unusual and artificial historical development of the last 80 years was not working out, it was also obvious that the problem affected not only the sphere of education but also that of society.

On this note, I would like to end this part of my statement and describe briefly another side of the problem.

This is not precisely the story of those who study, but is rather that of our politicians. Our society is living now a period of transformation, a stage of fundamental reforms. The question is how Russian history might help us to carry out successfully these reforms in Russia today.

Russian history has already been through a period of reformation when a lot of positive things were done. This was the period of the great reforms of the middle of the 19th century with such personalities as Alexander II, Stolypin and Witte. But even the reforms that were seriously formulated and took into consideration Russian traditions ended in disaster - I mean that of 1917.

The present-day reformers are in a more complicated situation because they seem to be deaf to the experience of the whole of Russian history. For example, our Prime Minister Tchernomyrdin proposed the following programme for the immediate future:

1. 1995 - the year of financial stabilisation
2. 1996 - the depression is overcome and the conditions for economic recovery are created
3. 1997 - stable economic growth is achieved

With such a programme Russian society and the rest of the world would create a new lie as we cannot find in our past or in our present any basis for such expectations.

If we consider the economic sector, we will find that the economy that was set up in the Soviet era has no possibilities to develop or to change by itself. It is controlled by the military and by heavy and basic industries. This sector is composed of giant enterprises and enormous complexes.

I do not want to bore you with statistics, but I shall nevertheless give a few examples. In 1989, 87% of heavy industrial goods were produced by monopoly enterprises. Now there are 2500 such enterprises. 80% of their production is destined to the army and not to the private customer.

These enterprises determine the functioning of the whole of industry and transport. They play no part in free market exchange and cannot be integrated into it. In this context if we look at the statement of the Prime Minister about stabilisation and economic growth in 1997, we should ask what kind of stabilisation this is. The structure of military production, hypercentralised and based on the principle of administrative distribution, has no real possibilities of natural development and can only work with the help of non-economic instruments and forced distribution of funds.

If we look at this problem in general we should ask ourselves the following question. Is it possible to reform the economic system and society as a whole while maintaining Russia as a superpower and predominant, if not in the whole world, at least in the zone of its present interests? This zone includes Central and Eastern Europe. This is not my point of view, but of those who declare it. We should point out that this zone includes of course the former Soviet republics.

In conclusion I would like to say that the above-mentioned project of Tchernomyrdin was presented at the All-Russian Economic Conference in the Kremlin a few days ago on 26 November. On that day the Russian Government declared that it was turning from evolutionary reform to one of "shock-therapy".

The President himself rejected populism and expressed his support for fundamental economic reforms. It is symptomatic that declaration of progress towards economic reform and democracy coincided with the aggression against Chechnya involving great military forces. All these projects together with such aggressive militarist behaviour show, as in previous periods, that the authorities and rulers of Russia do not take our history seriously. This makes their policy unpredictable. It is clearly seen in the position of our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kozyrev. Though it is not stated out loud, this policy is still based on perfidy and force.

In order to avoid this, there is no other possibility than to take into consideration the experience of history and

integrate it into present policy. There is no other way to make such policy-making democratic.

#### «Russia's eternal recurrence»

Written contribution of

Yuri Afanesyev

From a long-term point of view, Russian society provides a particularly interesting example for defining the different types of social and economic dynamics in history.

To give an example of some of the most well-known types of development, there are "inert" societies, followed by those with an "ancien régime" type of economic development, then those which have taken off to become societies with a growth economy, and finally, those with different types of post-industrial development.

Russia is a special case, however, and its own particular type of dynamic does not fit into those previously mentioned. It is all the more interesting in that it is not purely theoretical, as the existence of different types of social dynamic is giving rise to planetary contradictions, crises and dangers in today's world.

Merely listing the most well-known dangers emanating from Russia is frightening:

- conflicts and wars between ethnic groups (Chechens - Transcaucasia/Central Asia)
- crime: 2500 societies for organised crime exist in Russia today, forming 150 larger groups
- accidents and disasters: in 1993 there were 923 fatal accidents, in which 1050 people were killed, and during the first five months of 1994 there were 811 victims of 489 accidents. In addition to this, 40 million people live in areas that are ecologically at risk.
- the dilapidated state of industrial equipment, communications and transport: 60% of the equipment is worn out and has not been replaced for thirty years.

These are the consequences of socialist rule. However, there are also other more deep-seated reasons, which have their roots not only in the Soviet years but also in earlier centuries of Russian history. One specific point to be underlined is that the Soviet era did not abolish nor erase everything that existed before 1917. On the contrary, it accentuated and reinforced the centuries-old features of the Russian social dynamic. What are these features?

More than 150 years ago, the Russian philosopher Pyotr Chaadeyev wrote that the Russians were a lost people, wandering aimlessly through history, in other words in movement, but with no progression and no development. This is a phenomenon of an "end without a beginning" which inevitably leads Russia into deadlock and collapse. This unfortunate phenomenon of non-development is at the heart of Russia's destiny.

What facts today confirm this? First of all, the social foundations of Russia and its changes, not only in terms of its economy, laws and value system, but also the question of Russia's identity and that of an age-old way of life, passed down through forty generations, with features of community life, choalr singing, and "sobornost", or "togetherness". Russian society is in a state of transition. Private or state ownership? Individualism or collectivism? Free competition or monopolies? Who knows? Everything is in a state of confusion. I do not mean confusion in the sense of "a lack of clarity", but rather, confusion in the sense of "which of these choices will prevail? A prerequisite for answering this kind of question is the reality of each of the factors in of the choice. For the moment it is difficult to say with any certainty whether, in Russian society, all these tendencies will be present, equally, as forces able to compete with each other.

Even more concretely, during the Stolypin land reform (1907 - 1915), 2.5 million individual farms were set up on land which was previously collectively owned by the village communes. These holdings accounted for 27% of the total number of farms in 1916, yet it cannot be said that the Stolypin reforms were a success. The reason for this is that, although the figure seems high, even by today's standards, the reforms failed to diminish the importance and strength of the village communes.

Traditionalism and "sobornost" prevailed: of the 135 000 farming communities in European Russia in 1905, there were still 110 000 in 1917. After the failure of the Stolypin reforms, in the Russian countryside for about 80 years everything that was privately and individually owned was economically, physically and ideologically destroyed. As a result, 27 000 kolkhozes and sovkhoses still have their foundations in Russian traditionalism.

In the last five years about 270 000 farms have been created. Today their number is decreasing. The last farming community reform was abandoned.

One more figure, if you will forgive me. No more than 9% of the 222 million hectares of cultivable land belongs to private farms.

The transition from community to individualism has also been slow to start in towns. The "agroprom", or agro-industry, is replaced by the military-industrial complex and the kolkhoze by the factory collective. But socially it is the same as before: collectivism but no individualism.

Russia tried several times to break this circle of non-development; it tried to find a linear form of social dynamic, and to follow the European, or capitalist, path. Each time without success; There was Peter the Great, Alexander II, Witte and Stolypin, and the Bolsheviks, followed by today's democratic reformers, who have put capitalism back on the agenda. Each time these attempts have resulted in either reinforcement of the lack of freedom or, again, in non-development. Yet again, why is this? For me, the answer lies in the attempts by all the Russian reformers over the centuries to reconcile what is irreconcilable: releasing Russia's internal forces, yet at the same time remaining a great power. It is for this reason that, in Russia, this type of movement has taken hold; people feel they must try to catch up with those ahead, conquer, and spread outwards, building artificial edifices which prevent independent self-development.

This process of construction goes by different names: the Russian empire, a socialist society, a totalitarian regime, and, why not, democratic Russia?

What are the alternatives? Is there any way out of this vicious circle?

- Refusing the ideology and politics of a great power, which means transforming economic structures accordingly, not for the purposes of war but for the good of the people, something which has never been done in Russia's entire history.

- Granting more autonomy and freedom to the regions, not levelling down or stifling them but letting them breathe, and finally starting to build a federation, or a particular type of confederation.

- Shift the focus of political stability from external actions which are of no benefit to Russia to the constant encouragement of internal reform.

However, much as this strategy is desirable, it is almost utopian. In reality, the opposite is happening, in other words the same old circle continues: fulfilling the corporative interests of the military-industrial complex, "agroprom", bureaucracy, and the financial capital of profiteers.

### «The uses of history»

by Joaquim Nadal i Farreras

Professor of contemporary history at Girona University

and Mayor of Girona

Anyone who works in the social sciences field, whether exclusively in teaching or combining teaching and research, may often be assailed by doubts of all kinds. In a largely pragmatic society dominated by utilitarian concepts it is not easy to find a plausible use for history. Teachers and students of history alike have difficulty answering the question: what use is history? A large proportion of the population would be unable to give a coherent and convincing answer to the question. An inability to come up with an explicit reply, however, does not mean that there is not an undeniable sense of history, a decisive need for history, an urgent need to have and to dominate a historical debate in specific fields and evidence of tacit "consumption" of history by the majority of the population. Synchronic and atemporal visions of the world lack both significance and impact, giving the impression that humankind is devoid of character, profile and shape. Hence any aseptic, descriptive, narrative approach from a distance, in laboratory style, leads only to a tired, bored and indifferent reaction. A strictly academic approach to history, claiming to be neutral, merely becomes an instrument for the mechanical reproduction and transmission of a given amount of knowledge, the only benefit of which is that it guarantees that the same old facts are communicated and protected from alteration. With all the trouble it involves, this linear and limited approach is not the key to instilling a modicum of cultural background knowledge enabling people to benefit from reading the newspaper. Narrow presentations of facts have no interest, stifling people's historical awareness. They make people lethargic and send them to sleep. And it is possible that historians go beyond their historical awareness as they define specific projects in the broadest possible terms, intending to achieve precisely that effect, aiming that result. It is superfluous to state, in addition, that it is also possible to take a less devious view of these tendencies and simply justify these debates as being the easiest way of maintaining and perpetuating an insignificant academic purpose.

It is still possible, at the other extreme, to find doctrinaire, catechistic tendencies. Of dogmatic simplicity, almost "by order", operational schemes for providing mechanical responses to absolutely any situation. Attempts to indoctrinate explicitly acknowledged at least that history has some degree of usefulness. Perverted to their maximum extent, these schemes would provide absolute justification for forcibly imposed and aprioristic ideas. These positions

are not free from a certain redemptorist attitude, from the use of history as a pretext and as a vehicle to justify effectively imposing ideas and theories based upon the deprivation of elementary and fundamental rights. Rights both individual and collective.

In this field, too, history cannot really arouse much passion. Classes have their fill of plenty of other visions, their stupefied and distant brains incapable of taking in the travel offered to them. Thus scepticism spreads, the character of individuals and community alike is diminished, and the ultimate outcome is rebellion pure and simple in the face of such obviously meaningless material.

There is only one operational means, involving diverse and complex methods, of putting an end to this suffocating and self-destroying process. The use of considered debate. A contribution from a critical viewpoint, helping people to understand the motives and reasons for events and, in particular, for action, how and why they were as they were. Going beyond individuality and stimulating an ability to analyse the behaviour of society. Knowing how to ascertain who the members of a group are, and who it is that takes any given group in one direction or another. This is precisely the point at which the fundamental difficulty and essential attraction of history learning lie. Discovering, or helping others to discover, why society acted as it did is an undertaking on such a scale, having such a dimension, that enthusiasm and passion may be aroused. But it is by no means easy to achieve this in the sphere of education. Those who succeed find it not at all easy to maintain the necessary tone, keep their guard up and guarantee the methodological and ideological tension that a historical debate of this kind requires. Many of us have succumbed during our attempts, grown weary in the face of the constant contradiction between methodological expectations, ideological assumptions and results achieved, and sought alternative paths. Politics offers history a splendid field for testing the uses and abuses of history, the possibilities and perversions of the historical debate. I view this from two angles. Firstly as a historian with a political role to play, having drawn from my basic historical training the main elements for practical action in the political field. And secondly as a politician amazed to have to live with the simplifications, equivocations, manipulations, deviations and contradictions to which an irrepressible crowd of politicians resort when referring to history.

I placed a local subject, a very specific locality, namely a single city, under my historian's microscope. One city within its country and its surroundings, of course, but I did restrict myself quite clearly to that city. That may seem a parochial, provincial, limited approach. But my political approach upon the basis of history was intended to achieve exactly the opposite effect. The intention was to carry out an ongoing and critical review of the history of the city. A review, first and foremost, of the ideological debate inspired by all the historiographic visions of it. The spider's web had to be removed, the pitfalls eliminated, the overlying concepts separated and the relationships within society and the city's consequent advances and retreats analysed from a different angle. My city is a captive of history, trapped in its official history. The resulting single, unilateral view of its history has played a deterministic role from the viewpoint of both present and future. The future was a response to that past. Any future not reflected in its entirety in the past was a betrayal, a departure from the natural qualities and the soul of the city. It was not, however, difficult to put a halt to this tendency, which bore too heavy a burden of paralysing will, a will to go on in the same, sterile manner, an ominous acceptance of disasters and limitations, an exaltation of suicidal acts of heroism, a transformation into myth of the most destructive incidents throughout the locality. I used my own historical baggage to prepare a vision of, an all-embracing approach to, the complex social fabric of the city. How many material (physical) and social (human) realities remained hidden within the academic, media, social and official views of the city? How many neighbourhoods were unfamiliar to us, and how many were unknown to the centre, the historic centre of the city? Such a limited and inaccurate view of a broad reality! Even now, fifteen years (and four re-elections) later, I can report that my political opponents from similar social origins to my own (by which I mean from the same class), but holding different ideas, are still amazed that they lost elections they assumed they would win easily. They were ignorant of the city's history and were unwilling to dissect it precisely and thoroughly. They were blinkered by their vision of the community's history as its inheritance, an exclusive view of society, a sectarian tendency in the face of the reality.

Nevertheless I do not wish this contribution of mine to be thought of as a pedantic exaltation of history and of the use (usefulness) of a historical vision in the political sphere; I myself found it easy to quote history and did my audience's thinking for it when I converted the minor, insignificant episode of the year 785 (the submission of the citizens of Gerona to Charlemagne) into the 1,200 pompous years of a European mission. A real occurrence served as the basis for a fine, politically useful fantasy.

This is where we come to the vague, fatal meeting point of the use, misuse and abuse of history.

Most of the commemorations fuelling myths, diluting analysis and giving interpretations official status correspond to what we might call misuse of history. This misuse is cyclical and has immediate effect. Utilitarian, it functions briefly. But it is so transparently misuse that it seems possible that it may almost be innocuous. The use of history as an instrument is so obvious, so commonplace, so limited, that it becomes a part of folklore, doing very little harm. Anything which harms history also harms politics. Politics and politicians are searching for roots and justification, they project aspirations towards the past, move with impunity across frontiers and draw on contradictory sources. Anything goes, even if it interrupts the coherence of a more general debate. In Catalonia, for example, it is said that a national vision is being affirmed on the basis of a mythical claim to the glories and splendour of Mediterranean expansion (a country with its own state), or on that of the assertion of slavishly imitated political models of that splendour during the 16th and 17th centuries, with no mention of its agonies, its oligarchical nature and the rigidity that may result. This makes it easier to claim without embarrassment the economic achievements of Charles III at the height of the Bourbon period of centralisation. Hence simultaneous commemorations of Charles III's bicentenary based upon different viewpoints in Spain and Catalonia. Our 1992 ceremonies and the 1789 celebrations in France



would give rise to similar interpretations, which could lead to affirmations ranging from self-satisfaction to imbecility to national pedantry.

Abuse, with all its virulence, is present in more subtle areas. By which I mean less openly affirmed. When history is used as a pretext to justify the subordination or subsidiarity of people and territories, when rights are affirmed only at the expense of others' rights, or when we absurdly attempt to build new and/or important political edifices, with reference solely to history. A historical vision usually tailor-made. Not for the makers or recorders of history, but for those who make use of it and mock the values of culture, civilisation and the sacred empire of collective freedoms.

### «The tele-vision of History»

by Klaus Wenger

Head of Documentary Unit of ARTE

(Franco-German cultural TV), Strasbourg

#### A. Television, source and product of history

1. History and the transmission of history are really all about memory and more specifically images. The collective memory is made up of images, be they complementary or contradictory, true or false, authentic or modified, even doctored. The audiovisual media, and above all television, rank among this century's largest producers of images.
2. The mass media and audiovisual technology have permeated all spheres of public and private life, and it is increasingly television which decides on the images which go to make up memory. Already it has very largely replaced schools, archives and books as vehicles of history. Everywhere, the spoken and written word are giving way to the image as the primary component of history.
3. This dominant position in the presentation of history ought to be matched by a greater sense of responsibility on the part of the producers of these images, notably journalists and programme makers. They should realise this.
4. For television is no longer a mere bystander, a relatively faithful or credible witness of current events: it is becoming one of the main vectors of a "writing" of contemporary history (for example the pictures of the signing of the Israeli-Arab peace agreement).
5. At the same time, television is itself a product of history: its visual language, its thematic and creative resources reflect a culture, an ideology and hence a historical situation.
6. Television's workings, status, purpose and objectives, as well as its influence, depend on the prevailing political and historical climate. Take for example the differences between the French and German audiovisual systems which are due to the role of the media during the Second World War.

#### B. The audiovisual media, agents of history

1. A truism: the mass media contribute to the collective memory as much by their images as by what they do not show or tell.
2. Over the course of the 20th century, the written word has gradually been replaced first by the spoken word and later by images. Remember the power of the radio between the 1920s and 1950s: its mobilising role in propaganda broadcasts under the Nazi regime (*Der Führer spricht*) and the decisive role of radio in organising resistance activities in countries under *Wehrmacht* occupation, not to mention the panic triggered by Orson Welles' broadcast in the United States.
3. With radio, the audiovisual media also emerged as a cross-border historical protagonist, as in, for example, the appeals carried on Hungarian radio in 1956.
4. Technical progress, especially satellite broadcasting, means that pictures and hence their impact on individuals or social groups are no longer confined to a national or geopolitical area. At the same time it leads to the multiplication and globalisation of sources of information and pictures. The days when the mass media served to forge a national identity are over; there is no longer a "voice of France" but a France reverberating to a profusion of voices.
5. Consequently television can no longer serve as the rallying force behind a clear-cut view of history as was the case between the 1960s the 1980s.

6. Let us not forget that, at that time, television, more than any other media, helped impose a specific view of the history of nations, particularly by marking out taboo areas or by tackling them: hence French television's silence on Vichy as opposed to efforts in the Federal Republic of Germany to come to terms with the National Socialist past.
7. The control of images and hence of the historical imagination is thus out of the hands of the political authorities alone. The State loses its monopoly over a tool which is vital for imposing and propagating its view of history. But, does this spell the end of official histories?

### C. Images in the power of history?

1. There is less and less political or ideological manipulation of images at national or state level. It is therefore increasingly difficult to control or impose a consistent and calculated - political, religious, ideological - vision of history. The job of recounting and interpreting history thus gradually slips from the grasp of its traditional agents: historians, writers, politicians etc.
2. Technical progress in broadcasting, particularly satellite, has allowed television to play a major role in repartitioning Europe. The televised chronicle of the downfall of the communist empire is perhaps the finest example of television's role as an agent of history. These milestones illustrate the importance of television as an instrument and ingredient of intercultural dialogue in Europe.
3. At the same time, we witnessed television's worst excesses. The "death camps" in Romania, the staging of Ceaucescu's trial and the discovery of the video archives of Central Europe highlight the danger of manipulative television. And more recently, other "productions", - the Gulf War or the live relay of the American military's intervention in Somalia or Haiti - show us the dangers of a medium imposing its law on political and socio-cultural forces: history is transformed into a global village reality show.
4. Let us also be on our guard against technological progress in fabricating images: digital images and the computer make it possible to constantly manipulate what is being broadcast. Computer and digital editing blur the concepts of original and copy, of authenticity and reconstitution. The image is no longer the reflection of a tangible reality, since that "reality" can be created by virtual images.
5. The audiovisual media's penetration of all facets of our everyday lives - video-conferencing, video-surveillance - generates a proliferation of images and sounds, which will become sources for historical research by future generations. This raises certain questions: 1. how are we going to store this flood of material?, 2. how should the material be processed and interpreted?, 3. how can historians be trained to master these new sources?
6. The image will always serve to fuel our imaginations and therefore our visions of history. But its nature is changing: it is no longer a source, which can be checked, if only against other testimonies; it is no longer the subject matter for reading or writing history. The new technology of the image is changing our mastery over our imagination view and in so doing is transforming our relationship with history. History is again becoming what it always has been: a virtual approach to the past.

### «The Catholic Church and the teaching of history»

by Roland Minnerath

Professor of ecclesiastical history at Strasbourg University

and Advisor to the Secretariat of State of the Holy See

I. Christians believe that God intervenes in history, that he revealed himself and became incarnate in it, and that he is leading it towards fulfilment. He thus dignifies human history in a special way. A distinction needs to be made here between:

- *salvation history*: God's interventions in history (creation, covenant, prophets, incarnation, redemption, foundation of the Church, eschatology). This involves a theological approach to history, which is interested more in the deeper meaning than in the details of what happened.

- *empirical history* (which historians study with the appropriate methods). This attempts to reconstruct the events and the meaning which protagonists gave them with maximum objectivity.

All teachers of history interpret events as well as recounting them. Their interpretation of history is influenced by subjective elements - their cultural backgrounds, aims and own viewpoints. The meaning of history is never immanent in history itself, but is the product of a broader interpretation of events by the observer. Hence the need to look out for prejudices and ideologies which project artificial and inadequate interpretations onto the past.

II. 1) The Church's approach to the teaching of history operates on several levels:

- it focuses on the main themes of salvation history (the theology of history);

- at the same time, it applies critical methods to the study of sources, drawing on archaeology, linguistics and historical methods. Specifically, it relates biblical history to the literary form of the texts concerned (histories, the Prophets, the books of Wisdom, the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, etc.) and puts them in the historical context known from other sources.

2) The Church's own history is also part of the history it teaches. In certain periods, "church history" and "history" more or less coincide. Up to around 1945, "Church histories" were written either from national or narrowly denominational standpoints, with all the prejudices inherent in these approaches. In fact, the very concept of catholicity is inclusive, rather than exclusive, and the transnational, transcultural nature of church history offers a possible pattern for the writing of European or world history in a way that transcends partial interpretations.

The Catholic Church's teaching of history is not only religious in the strict sense of the term. In its social teaching, the Church also bases Christian ethics on its reading of economic, social, cultural, continental and, indeed, world history.

3) In Christianity, it is the Word of God, handed down by tradition - and not historically observable empirical behaviour - which sets the standards. The study of history can help us to develop a critical attitude towards events we have lived through ourselves, and detach ourselves from them when necessary .

In the view of history transmitted by the Church, God stands at the beginning and the end of human history. God is the criterion which gives us a proper perspective on the things which we are tempted to regard as absolutes, and which generate exclusion and conflict - power, nations, parties, money, etc.

If God is the judge of history, he also suggests the values which allow us to shape it in a manner worthy of humankind. The failures of the past must not have the last word. Hope is also part of the Christian view of history.

#### «Selection of syllabus content in the learning of history»

by Joaquim Prats i Cuevas

Professor of modern history at Lleida University

In recent years there have been numerous instances of governments changing curricula/syllabuses and the criteria for selecting curriculum/syllabus content, and there are just as many educationists working on curriculum/syllabus models. Traditionally there have been three approaches to this question, which have found varying degrees of political favour or have matched developments in educational thinking. I shall describe them very briefly, pointing out some of the problems they have posed and continue to pose. It should be noted that this paper is not concerned with questions of historiography but with the criteria or viewpoints on which history syllabuses have traditionally been based, both in primary and secondary education.

#### 1. Traditional criteria in curriculum/syllabus design

##### Emphasis on national history

This is perhaps the most traditional approach, originating in a 19th century and early 20th century outlook, and is still the commonest. Last century's triumphant middle classes saw history as an excellent means of shaping consciousness and underpinning the social and political structures of the state. For that reason "state" is perhaps a more accurate word than "nation" here. This tendency created an attitude to history, pervading all curricula and textbooks, that saw the main object as to hand down a one- nation concept of a country's history. In other words, history was regarded as serving the state. Nationalism has in fact been a frequent user and misuser of history. Early on, Topolsky was writing that "history and historical knowledge are the main ingredients of national consciousness and among the basic prerequisites for the existence of any nation". This view is still to be found today.

In France in the early 1980s, for example, there was great debate when Michel Debré and the Committee for the Independence and Unity of France pointed out the risks to French people's education of approving a history syllabus which was not centrally concerned with the study of French national history. Ranged against them were the advocates of education as discovery, who took a relativist view and argued that history was an excellent body of knowledge for developing intellectual capability and bringing critical faculties to bear on social messages and phenomena. There have been similar debates in many other countries. In the United States at present there is debate about a Californian university's suggestion to the authorities that history syllabuses should be changed to gain a more universal picture by devoting significant parts of them to the history of oriental civilisations and thereby reducing the present western and patriotic emphasis.

This phenomenon has been taken to dangerous extremes in pre-war periods, especially by totalitarian regimes. The previous regime in Spain was one example. While the patriotic slant was to be found in syllabuses at the

beginning of the century, the tendency became very marked during the Franco dictatorship, a regime that justified itself as the protector of Spain's distinctiveness from the "evil" of liberal or social ideas originating elsewhere, more particularly in Europe. The glories of imperial Spain and Spanish wars against foreign powers, such as the war of independence against revolutionary France, were thus reaffirmed. "Unity of destiny in the universal" was a slogan of the dictatorial system. Distortions of such an exaggerated kind have currently given way to a weakening of this approach in curricula, perhaps by way of a reaction, and the risk we now run is that of a glorification of regional or local history, with the attendant danger of promoting a new form of "chauvinism" coupled with isolationist attitudes caused by overestimating the importance of one's own heritage.

### History as a means of transforming the present versus "fragmented history"

In this approach the history of mankind is regarded as a process of continuous progress. The view of history as a central element in the education of the progressively-minded future citizen has been highly successful of late, or at least that has been the case in countries such as Spain. The saying of the Spanish historian, Josep Fontana, that "history is a weapon in today's struggles and a tool for building the future" perfectly sums up the role which history teaching should play according to this point of view. This approach involves deciding the methods and, indeed, the content of history teaching in terms of making it as scientific an instrument as possible for the rigorous analysis and potential transformation of society.

Here, subject content is not primarily geared to the study of a particular national or regional history but focuses on the structure of the particular social model, the different types of society and their implications for the various social groups and classes. National history could be a good testing ground, but the object is not to promote awareness of belonging to a distinctive national community but to teach how society functions and about the forces for changing it.

As a result of the crisis which history as an academic discipline seems to be going through, that approach is very much in decline. When Francis Fukuyama proclaims the end of history the permanence and immutability of the system is deified, and, whether on a conscious or unconscious level, that view has in fact met with a fairly sympathetic reception. If Fukuyama is right, history ceases to have educational value as an awareness-shaper for helping to bring about social change. There seem to be more and more teachers who believe that the syllabus should cover only narrow aspects of historical knowledge. In other words, François Dosse would appear to be right when he describes the present trend as being towards a fragmentation of historical knowledge and away from history in the round. Dosse sees history as the target for take-over bids by the social sciences and believes that history could cease to be a subject in its own right and turn into a miscellany of unrelated ingredients or a purely accessory body of knowledge. The signs here are of the emergence of a new, positivist, event-centred school of history concerned with the factual and the anecdotal and which does not think in terms of, or recognise, any overall social dynamic. This is the diametrical opposite of the broad-brush, social-transformation brand of history which was so popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Pierre Vilar's dictum that any modern approach to history was necessarily a macro approach seems to have gone out of fashion.

*History as a means to personal development and of propagating social attitudes and ideas.* History is undoubtedly the subject area the most inclined to ideology. It also lends itself to the treatment of ideas, attitudes and values. On occasions it has been used to fly the flag for antithetical political stances (racism-antiracism, belligerence-passivism, authoritarianism-liberalism etc). Some recent theorists, such as Rotheiv, indeed, see the history syllabus in terms of commemoration, no less of oppression, injustice and suffering than of the endeavours to put an end to them. History as thus conceived of, adopting neither a materialist or an out-and-out idealist approach, becomes an excellent means of cultivating particular ethical and social values.

There is also a school of thought that sees history solely as a means to cognitive or personality development. Even though this is a minority tendency, represented by educational psychologists and laymen rather than historians, there is a degree of receptiveness to it in some areas of primary teaching. Which is not to deny that such objectives are inherent in any intellectual activity and need drawing attention to in any discussion of education. But they cannot be made into the main criteria of syllabus design without discarding the central reference to historical knowledge, without which it ceases to be history that is being taught.

As I have mentioned none of these three brands of history is ever practised quite as described. History teaching tends to be much more eclectic and to combine the various emphases - development of communal identity with other much more academic considerations, inculcation of values and attitudes with the teaching of intellectual skills and procedures. What, then, are the items of historical knowledge that need incorporating into the learning process?

## **2. What type of historical knowledge should the learning process be concerned with?**

A quite separate development is that in recent decades some history teachers and history-teaching theorists have put forward new criteria for drawing up history syllabuses, increasingly distancing themselves from the concerns of practising historians of the day. One of the reasons for this is no doubt the difficulty of teaching history in primary and secondary school. Our view is that the syllabus needs to combine the teaching of subject-related skills with the teaching of European history. It has to be stressed that the emphasis is on providing pupils with genuine learning opportunities and that no particular regard is had to the requirements of the academic historian. Selection of syllabus content is based on two considerations: the impossibility, in primary and secondary school, of teaching the whole of history and the need to develop some knowledge and awareness of things "historical". The concern must be to

develop basic general skills relevant to the understanding of history, and for that purpose there are any number of historical topics - local, regional, national or universal - that can be used. Without seeking to be exhaustive, we can identify various types of syllabus content that can be presented differently, in terms both of events covered and periods of history selected.

These are some of them:

Firstly we have topics providing material for *the study of chronology and historical timescale*. The focus here is on one of the distinctive ingredients of history: time and rates of change. Pupils are brought to realise the conventional nature of units of time, are introduced to such complex questions as time/causality in history, develop an awareness of continuity through time, and acquire an understanding of different rates of historical development.

Secondly there is *study of events*, people and factors that have played a key role in history. The focus is on past occurrences. In recent years there has been some retreat from this approach, which tended to be confused with the kings-and-battles approach to history. However, this type of syllabus content needs reinstating and using in the context of a broader, more explanatory approach. There is room here for work on areas of local history and major past events providing it is geared to developing an overarching conceptual model and learning to apply a broad frame of reference.

Thirdly we have topics related to the *ideas of change and continuity*. Taking issue with more structuralist tendencies which advocate a compartmentalised treatment of the past, we recommend highlighting the concepts of continuity and change. There are four main aspects of these questions:

1. change takes time, and is sometimes very fast (see, for example, the present pace of change) and sometimes slow (eg changes in the rural way of life in the 14th and 15th centuries);
2. in any given historical period the rate of change varies from one society to another, and the pupil therefore has to learn to make a distinction between the continuum of historical time and the processes and events which occur within it;
3. change is not a continuous process and has not always been for the better or progressive. Pupils readily confuse change and progress, and when working with a class of adolescents in the throes of maturing into adults the teacher has to make it very clear that scales of value vary from one society to another. But attention needs paying to periods of rapid change during which events gathered pace and there was a social, political or cultural forward leap.

Lastly, there is *investigation of the causes of past events*. Concepts of historical causality are complex and historians do not always agree about them. For that reason it is advisable to choose syllabus items that bring out the difficulty and complexity of identifying the causes of particular events. In a democratic society it is educationally valuable to combat dogmatism and mechanistic explanations, and the study of history brings out the complexity of human affairs better than any other subject. Getting pupils to see history as a process of continuous change in which our present way of life has evolved leads on to teaching them to ask questions about the causes of change as well as about factors which have prevented or delayed it. And to understand the causes of a given historical occurrence they have to learn to consider what reasons people or social groups had for acting as they did.

### 3. The learning process

A syllabus of the kind described is unworkable where the learning process involves total pupil passivity and pupil role is confined to receiving chunks of evaluated, processed and pre-digested knowledge. The teaching approach we suggest - without dismissing the possibility of others equally effective - is one of discovery learning, involving pupils in the use of information sources and making it possible for the pupils to assemble their own knowledge of historical facts and concepts with the teacher's help and guidance. In accordance with this approach, we regard the pupil as the main actor in the education process and not as a mere receiver of instruction. The teacher's role mainly consists in steering, co-ordinating and initiating the learning process.

Another basic principle is the application of methodological categories, advancing from the concrete to the abstract. In this way learning will be slow but will progress from a solid basis and on a rising curve. Use and thorough mastery of some of the historian's techniques, such as observing, describing, analysing, relating, hypothesising, extrapolating, evaluating and generalising, will equip the pupils to handle historical facts and events properly.

Learning can be in two stages. In the first the pupil will acquire the knowledge and skills for using the historian's basic tools. The syllabus will have to cover the question of historical sources and the different types of historical source and the pupils will have to learn the conventions of chronology, learn how to extract information from sources, and develop the general skills of analysis, assessment and comparison necessary to an understanding of historical fact.

Once the content of the first stage has been adequately assimilated, pupils will be able to move on to the second stage and tackle actual items of history: explore a particular event in depth, study a society at a given moment, study historical processes, and investigate the historical roots of contemporary issues. The object is to provide a kind

of historiographical simulation exercise that gives pupils an insight into the nature of historical knowledge, without dispensing them, however, from studying school textbooks or listening to the teacher's explanations. This is also the point at which to administer a modicum of theory so as to introduce pupils to the problems of interpretation. This type of simulation exercise can be used from a very early stage. Its effectiveness depends on the basic subject matter, which the pupils have to find interesting, as well as on the information sources, which must be limited in number and the clarity of the aims and methods. It is for the teacher to direct the work and to supply narrative links and overall sense to what is being learned.

Clearly this approach to the teaching of history is not an easy one for the teacher to use at secondary level, and is even less so at primary level. However, if we set out to aid pupils' intellectual development and, through the study of history, equip them to analyse the present instead of emphasising rote learning historical fact or using history as an ideological instrument, there is no doubt that this approach gives pupils a better grasp of historical concepts and makes for more dynamic and more meaningful learning. Education is a basic factor in the harmonious development of adolescents, and we believe that it is important not just to know history but also to acquire civic attitudes, i.e. democratic, tolerant and responsible attitudes.

But going through the facts of history is no way to instil those attitudes. What is needed is a grasp of how historical knowledge is constructed, as a key to understanding history and analysing the present. This will facilitate the development of pupils' critical faculties, which are vital to education for freedom.

### «The learning of history in Europe»

by David Harkness

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#### Introduction

A history curriculum is too important in a democratic society to be chosen other than by a process of consultation. Ideally a professional working group will draw up a suggested curriculum and then offer its recommendations for wide consultation throughout the community, giving a specified time for responses to be received. The working group or another body created for the purpose will then lay out the curriculum having taken particular notice of responses from the teaching body as well as informed educational groups. In a pluralist society and in any society where divisions run deep, it will be essential to represent as many viewpoints as possible on the working group, and to ensure, where particular views are not so represented, that every opportunity is given for comment. In to-day's multi-ethnic, divided and multi-racial societies, it may be necessary to include separate opportunities for specific groups to present their own history within the framework laid down nationally. In this way 'selection' is both officially mapped and unofficially influenced in detail by many interested parties. I would like to illustrate my point by describing the process in Northern Ireland, both because I can speak from a position of close involvement and because Northern Ireland is a society divided deeply, not least on how it sees its own past.

#### The Northern Ireland History Working Group

In 1990, Northern Ireland, in line with the rest of the United Kingdom, set about establishing its version of the national history curriculum. A Working Group was convened, composed of eight senior teachers at both primary and secondary level, drawn from both the Protestant and Catholic sectors of our dual school system, plus a teacher trainer, three lay persons and two assessors, the latter drawn from the history inspectorate. In addition, I chaired the group, as an academic with responsibility in the sensitive area of Irish history. We began our work on 29 March and handed in our proposals on 6 July after a very hectic period. These were then published in August, offered for consultation to all interested parties, including schools at all levels, and higher education bodies and indeed any organisation or individual who cared to respond, and then another body, the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council (NICC), was charged with completing a Consultation Report, including final recommendations for the curriculum to the Education Minister, by the end of January 1991. The first stages of the new programmes of study and attainment targets were subsequently introduced in September 1991.

#### The Northern Ireland Curriculum

From this process there was constructed a curriculum which sought to ensure broad coverage in time and space, local, national and international. The curriculum commences in the primary school and runs from the age of 6 on into secondary school to age 16, though history becomes an optional subject at 14 (And a separate examination geared to university entrance operates for the ages 16-19). The new curriculum is organised into four 'Key Stages' but it is recognised that it is not possible to include everything that has happened. The selection made, therefore, is 'designed to expose pupils to the main events of man's remembered past and a broad variety of periods, locations and developments'. Key Stage 1 (Ages 6-8) deals with the recent past and utilises events in the pupils' own past and that of their families, local studies, traditional celebrations and ceremonies, and artifacts and visual material to develop in pupils and understanding of the past and to draw distinctions between fantasy and reality. Key Stage 2 (9-11) contains six study units comprising three compulsory core units:- Life in Early Times; The Vikings; and Life in Victorian Times; and three School-designed units, one to be a Study in Depth, one a Line of Development, one a Local Study. Key Stage 3 (12-14) contains seven study units comprising three compulsory core units: The Norman

impact on the Medieval World; Conflict in Britain, Ireland and Europe in the late 16th and 17th Centuries; and Ireland and British politics in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries; and four School-designed units, namely a Study in Depth, a Line of Development, a Local Study, and a Significant Aspect of European or World History in the 20th Century. Key Stage 4 (15-16) contains four study units comprising 2 compulsory core units: Northern Ireland and its neighbours since 1920; and Conflict and co-operation in Europe since 1919; and two Optional Study units: one, a Study in Depth drawn from the following list: Germany 1919-45; Russia 1905-49; Britain 1919-51; China 1919-66; the other, a Modern World Study drawn from a second list: Arab-Israeli relations; Africa South of the Sahara; The United States; Japan.

Considerable guidance is given on each of these study units, but text books are not prescribed, nor indeed is any textbook advice given. However, considerable efforts have been made to ensure that an appropriate range of teaching materials, including textbooks, are available. And other requirements and recommendations have been placed upon teachers, especially history teachers, in view of the divided nature of Northern Irish society. The principal extra official requirements are that attention be paid to two cross-curricular themes, namely Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage. An additional recommendation, contained in an imaginative NICC book entitled *Thinking European*, sets out ideas for 'integrating a European dimension into the curriculum', especially at Key Stages 3 and 4. All these require further comment. Before doing so, however, it should be observed that the framers of the curriculum included in their report their commitment to the values of democratic societies, including 'open-mindedness [and] respect for a range of possible interpretations based on evidence and objectivity'.

### **Textbooks**

The problem of ensuring sufficient teaching materials, especially textbooks, in a relatively small society where small printing runs may not be economically viable, is a problem not confined to Northern Ireland. Given the desirability of a choice of books, indeed the availability of several viewpoints on as many issues as possible, the problem becomes even more serious. To some extent in an established democratic society individual initiative and supply and demand may suffice. But in the circumstances of a new curriculum with some new areas of study, the government in Northern Ireland proved sympathetic to an initiative of private citizens who formed themselves into a Cultural Traditions Group (CTG) and gained public money to promote a general awareness of the cultural heritage of all the people of the province: an appreciation of the whole spectrum of the past in which the traditions of the 'other' would not seem threatening but, on the contrary, enriching. Faced with a lack of materials by which to realise this aim, the CTG established a publications committee and public money, amounting to around £150,000 per annum, has been channelled through a government-established Community Relations Council for the past four years. Much of this money has gone to local publishers to help the production of text books or material suitable for school use at a low purchase price. Some money has been put into commissioned publications of the 'how to' variety, such as 'How to teach local history'; some has gone to individual authors to enable them to bring their work to fruition. One notable innovation in this field should also be observed. Aware of the lack of a suitable textbook for the core Key Stage 4 course 'Northern Ireland and its neighbours since 1920', NICC commissioned such a book and this is currently being published, with some enthusiasm, by Cambridge University Press. It is deemed appropriate for wide use throughout the United Kingdom.

### **Cross-curricular Themes**

CTG initiatives have helped to service the cross-curricular theme of Cultural Heritage, which shares the objective of opening up the culture of each group to all, but the lack of teacher training in this area has also had to be recognised and 'in-service' courses have consequently been mounted each year for teachers by the Education Department of Queen's University in combination with that university's Institute of Irish Studies. In such ways have the 'selection' decisions been backed up to ensure that they can be delivered in practice.

Perhaps even more important in this regard has been the work of Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), a concept which has received considerable thought and development in Northern Ireland, through the initiative of individual educators since the early 1970s and with increasing government support during the 1980s. I believe it is a concept capable of application on a scale far beyond that of Northern Ireland.

Statutory requirement has been laid upon Northern Ireland's schools since 1992, not only to include this theme within the various elements of the curriculum, but to give evidence of practical steps taken each year to broaden pupil awareness of, and contact with, the 'other'. To this end many practical schemes have been developed between schools acting together across the religiously divided education system: joint excursions to historic sites; joint project work on aspects of history which have given rise to conflicting interpretations; a range of intellectual (eg debates) and social contacts hitherto deemed impossible (Even the sports fields of Northern Ireland are segregated, with two different codes operating, the Catholic schools following the Gaelic Athletic Association's rules for Football and Hurling). The climate of contact has begun to change for the better and the progress of EMU, now associated with broader concerns such as human relations and social justice, has begun to generate a literature of its own, including a recent evaluation report (A.Smith, *The EMU - Promoting School. Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster at Coleraine*). It is a concept worthy of attention.

Though not a compulsory cross-curricular theme, *Thinking European*, was introduced in the booklet of that name by NICC in 1992. Once again there is a recommendation to teachers, in this instance to make maximum use of European comparison at suitable points in the history syllabus. The purpose is clear but there is no prescription of selected material.

## Non-Governmental Initiatives

The first initiatives in this field, as indicated above, lay outside government, and the private sector continues to make its contribution. One of the earliest practical examples of encouragement of joint working across the schools divide was the Studying Our Past schools history competition, devised under the joint sponsorship of the Churches Central Committee for Community Work ( a committee supported by the main christian denominations in the province) and the Belfast Telegraph, the province's principal evening newspaper. It was this competition that pioneered project work in history, challenging schools, either on their own (such was the caution of the times) or, preferably, in conjunction with a school across the religious divide, to tackle a set topic of a controversial nature from Ireland's past. The competition was started at a time when Irish history tended to be avoided at school level as too controversial, or even , in some quarters, as an irrelevant distraction from the proper concern with British history, and its work at least began to counter what had tended to happen when scholars had neglected their local past: the surrender of the field to the abusers of history, the myth mongers or the deliberate distorters, anxious only to present an oversimplified, one-sided view of the past, with their side always right and the `other' always wrong. But the organisers of this competition were by no means alone in their concern to support the proper teaching of history in the schools

Others, recognising that it is important for the operation of democracy and the nurturing of diversity that opportunities are provided for pupils to hear a variety of voices, ensured the transfer to Northern Ireland in modified form of the UK Historical Association's Young Historian Scheme. This was funded for three years by the Department of Education but overseen by an independent management committee, and it brought welcome additional resources and organisation to school history teaching. A development officer, appointed under the scheme for three years, was able to organise school conferences to hear and to question leading historians, and to build clusters of co-operating schools of all sorts to continue this process thereafter. During his appointment the officer also led joint tours to historic places and engineered pupil exchange visits with communities in Liverpool. The excellent schools programmes of Irish history broadcast by the BBC and the occasional television output of both BBC and ITV should not be overlooked in the pattern of alternative perspectives provided for teachers and pupils alike. Thus is selection amplified and narrowness negated.

## Conclusion

In these brief remarks about the experience of a divided Northern Ireland seeking to provide for its pupils a broad understanding of the development of mankind, internationally, regionally , nationally and locally, and in the latter context to confront squarely those aspects of its history that have traditionally led to bitterness and perpetuated division, I have been conscious, despite the rather small market that Northern Ireland presents to publishers, that it has nevertheless been lucky in the access it has had to resources, both official and unofficial, and in the willingness that many people have shown to put their skills and ideas at the service of the community as a whole. Some of the issues raised may seem remote from the topic in hand `Selection', but the point to be emphasised is that while it is appropriate for governments to lay down the broad guidelines, the actual choice of curriculum content should be left to professionals in the field, and the `selection' of teaching material left as far as possible to the individual choice of school or teacher. There is, however, an obligation upon government to ensure that there is a range from which to choose, and that this range reflects as many elements as possible: not, it is to be hoped, just particular interest groups pushing their own restricted vision, but broadly-based, professionally researched contributions ensuring that a variety of emphases and perspectives are available. In this context the histories of minorities, or of immigrant communities will pose a special challenge.

What can be achieved through the teaching of history at school may be limited enough, and will depend on the time allocated in the weekly timetable, as well as the skill of the teachers, the availability of resources and the support given by parents and society at large. History teaching will not cure the ills of the modern world but it can and should support those values that underpin civilised society, and it can convey that there are many different and legitimate ways at looking at the past. I hope I have emphasised that in achieving these ends the process of selection should be multifaceted, and that it is important.

### «A museum's point of view»

by Hermann Schäfer

Director of the House of History Museum, Bonn

I.

I hope I'm not going to scare you off at the outset with this introductory talk dealing with the role of history - and by somebody who is a history teacher and museum director into the bargain. This will probably depend on your recollection of history lessons and your teachers at that time. Yes, teachers, who according to a book written in 1985 are "hinderers and destroyers" in just about everything. This is certainly no sociological analysis, but a sarcastic exaggeration by the Austrian playwright Thomas Bernhard. I am quoting from his "Old Masters" and he doesn't mean it all that seriously - sarcastic as he almost always is - because his book is subtitled "a Comedy":

"Teachers have always been on the whole hinderers of life and existence; instead of teaching young



people about life, explaining life to them, making it an inexhaustible treasure trove of their own nature, they stifle it, do everything to kill it off for them. The majority of our teachers are poor creatures, whose object in life appears to be to barricade life off for young people and finally make it something infinitely depressing. It is in fact only touchy and perverse petty minded people from the lower middle class who flock into teaching."

Did you have history teachers like that? The accusations are by no means new: a hundred years ago already the Italian historian Benedetto Croce reproached German historians for having too little imagination and being too pedantic and ponderous. He called instead for more lively and more accessible presentations.

Or did you prefer to go to a museum? How lively do you think German museums are? Already a hundred years ago German curators complained that their visitors looked for texts everywhere and even to some extent seemed to want to "read with their ears". There is still something in this reproach today. Allow me to quote Thomas Bernhard again, this time making a literarily very effective comparison of the different European nations with regard to their behaviour in museums:

"The Italians with their innate understanding of art always appear as if they were in the know since birth. The French go through the museum in a somewhat bored fashion, while the English act as if they know and understand everything. The Russians are full of wonder. The Poles look down on everything."

The Germans come off worst:

"The Germans spend all their time in the art museum looking in the catalogue as they go through the rooms, and scarcely glance at the originals hanging on the walls. As they advance through the museum they go ever deeper into the catalogue until they reach the last page and find themselves outside again."

Last year our German museums received a total of 100 million visitors, and not all of them behaved as we have just heard. On the whole this is satisfying, but these people make up only 30% of the population. My museum is therefore turning not so much to "museum freaks" as described by Thomas Bernhard, but rather towards ordinary people.

The school and the museum are two very different institutions, which therefor influence social reality in very different ways. From the school we expect a certain "basic equipment" for life, from the museum - especially the historical museum - an occasion for information and reflection.

## II.

Some years ago already Hermann Lübke drew attention to the relationship between the accelerated progress of civilisation, growing uncertainty among people and an increasing tendency to create museums. In other words, the faster our present life changes the greater is our desire to preserve the relics of our past life in museums and display them as points of reference for our thinking. Museums raise historical consciousness. They provide a retrospective of human culture and thus establish lines of tradition, stimulate memory which contributes in turn to the formation of a historic identity and self-reassurance. Seen in this way, the museum and its contents appear anything but fossilised and dusty, but are entirely constitutive of current thought and action. For only through confrontation with our history are we able to understand our present and shape our future in a responsible fashion. Thus the concept of "history" is a variable which can be partly replaced by life experience, personality, self-awareness or origin, and overlaps with these concepts.

Developments in Germany have confirmed this trend towards museum creation in a completely new and unexpected way. The West Germans were in the front seats when the iron curtain came down and - as the historian Theodor Mommsen said in 1966, "world history took a turn". A state does not collapse every day, and it is not only collectors and souvenir hunters who seize the opportunity to gather up the vestiges of a state, its civilisation and culture, but also museums. The placards and banners from the big demonstration of 4 November 1989 on Berlin Alexanderplatz were already being exhibited five months later in Berlin and Bonn. One of my favourite banners from this exhibition reads "No future without a past".

This slogan obviously also applies to museums themselves. While they may in the past have been places of learning or temples to the muses, in the future they will have to be understood much more as places of entertainment. The museum is one of the media. The basic advantage of this particular medium, and certainly a reason for its popularity, is that it is not dependent on a specific target group. Exhibitions, even poor ones, do not speak the language of experts, but are organised so that the visitors themselves can find words and concepts for what they see, and put their thoughts about the objects exhibited in their own terms.

"Historical awareness is a complex interplay between memory of the past, interpretation of the present and expectation of the future" (Jeismann). The social significance of historical memory is thus by no means easy to define: whether reflection on a common or partially separate history is capable of strengthening an identity, a feeling of community and mutual awareness leading to a consensus and an orientation, something required for the legitimacy of societies, is today very much disputed. There is therefore no museological dogmatism to regulate or

functionalise the use of the museum - and this is a good thing. The range of topics of historical museums is just as inexhaustible as are the historical perspectives and issues themselves. And the creativity of those designing exhibitions has long since evolved from the dry presentation of documents to the representation and symbolisation of history, positively extending the scope for both the conceptual and the instructional/didactic aspects.

III.

A question constantly asked of the historical museum is: can history - and hence an understanding of the present - be taught in the museum?

Here is must be said that:

1. A museum is not a school. It is not possible to mug up for an examination here. It is not a matter of teaching in the traditional sense of classes or a lectures. The museum is more concerned with providing the experience of communication between the generations.
2. So far as the expectations of visitors to exhibitions and museums are known, there seems to be a fairly even balance between information and entertainment, but the entertainment aspect is now gaining in importance. The behaviour of visitors has also been called - in the best sense - "cultural window shopping" (Heiner Treinen), gazing on the objects representing our art, culture and history. This is not meant in any negative sense, but expresses the museum visitor's need for something culturally stimulating, but "with no obligation", for the museum is now rightly considered to be part of the leisure society.
3. Serious learning comes from reading. The museum represents a different type of experience, here the exhibits are "vestiges" of history set out on display. Their physical environment acts to some extent as a metaphor for a historic situation and is intended to stimulate visual learning. "Visitors browse like sheep through the landscape of exhibits. We cannot be sure that they read systematically", as the well-known exhibition organiser Ralph Appelbaum put it. This means that the content of the exhibition should not be overburdened with texts likely to strain the visitor's eyes, feet and patience. Visitor-friendly texts should make a favourable visual impression, provide help with orientation, and introduce and complement the displays.
4. Anyone who observes the behaviour of museum visitors can see that the time spent before each object is very short. For this reason the exhibits need to be chosen with care. What are the criteria for this choice?

*Attracting power:* the exhibit must attract the visitor's attention.

*Holding power:* visitors must be able to decipher the "signs" emanating from the exhibit. It is thus a matter of integrating the object and the visitor's particular horizon in an associative or narrative framework.

*Communicating power:* visitors must be able to use structural and terminological concepts stemming from their particular background to "read" and understand the exhibits in appropriate fashion. Audiovisual aids can be used to place the object - whether isolated or part of a "scene" - in its context, thus allowing it to communicate its "message". This is how the process of communication specific to the museum is engaged.

These three terms - attracting power, holding power and communicating power - were coined by the American museum psychologist Harris Shettel. They succinctly and precisely describe what the magical power of an exhibit resides in.

5. Increased knowledge through a visit to a museum is to be expected in particular when two conditions are fulfilled: a basis of individual structural knowledge is present before the visit and there is an active personal interest in a particular aspect of the historical museum's many offerings.
6. The aim of a good exhibition must be to encourage visitors to engage in dialogue and reflection on history - and above all the present. Forms of communication about it are as important to a good exhibition as the choice of exhibits and the organisation of the exhibition itself.
7. Asking what visitors can learn about the foundations of the present in a historical museum is an oversimplification. Macro-historical developments are by nature complex and open to interpretation. Experienced history is no exception. As a result, any naive interpretation of history is likely to be excessively simplistic and thus to deform the truth.
8. Museums and exhibitions can inform and entertain, stimulate discussion, raise awareness of problems, broaden or correct ideas, encourage questions and lead to informed understanding. They thus facilitate the development of a critical and informed citizenship. Present day exhibitions are judged less on whether they faithfully reflect social reality than on whether they are "places of permanent conference" (Joseph Beuys). They thus provide an opportunity for debate, preserving open societies from becoming too complacent, as demanded by the communications theoretician Neil Postman. A person trained in historical reflection is much more capable of analysing

present and future complexities than a barbarian with no history.

#### IV.

Museums of contemporary history would appear particularly suited to incarnate modern museum design. The historical proximity of their subject matter and the "triviality" of the exhibits, sometimes thought to be a disadvantage or to diminish their attraction, are in fact advantages from the standpoint of communication. The possibility of being able to relive personal experiences and realistically compare past living conditions with those of today, the possibility of forming a positive or negative identification thanks to the immediately evident connections between present and past - all these are communicative processes which are particularly present in the museum of contemporary history.

The "staging" of naturalistic scenes and using forms of organisation which constitute an experience are ways of bringing an exhibition to life. User-friendly services, well-targeted pedagogic programmes and individual guide systems help ensure that visitors are neither out of their depth nor bored. A precondition for such a visitor-oriented approach is to determine the socio-demographic profile of the future visitors. It is necessary to know what they are interested in, their levels of knowledge and their expectations. An open and inviting museum building can attract to the exhibition people who had not planned to visit a museum as part of their look around the town. The museum as a provider of information and entertainment, and also as a forum for the experimental representation of history, can perfectly well occupy a position in public and cultural life no less attractive than that of the theatre, the political cabaret or the amusement park.

The *Haus der Geschichte* aspires to promote an understanding of the principles and operating machinery of the democratic state. It wants not just to provide information about the broad lines of German post-war history, but above all to encourage independent reflection on the history of our country. Different levels of information make appropriate communication possible with both the visitor in a hurry and one with plenty of time, with the visitor well-versed in history and one with little knowledge of the subject, with young people and the elderly.

#### «Towards a basic concept of historical literacy»

by Maitland Stobart

Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport,

Council of Europe

History has always occupied a special place in the Council of Europe's work because of its importance in establishing mutual understanding and confidence between the peoples of Europe. Our activities on history have concentrated on how to:

- make history a stimulating and relevant part of a young person's education;
- encourage the highest standards of honesty and fairness in history textbooks.

As this Colloquy shows, there has been a marked renewal of interest recently in the learning and teaching of history, and the Council of Europe has started a new series of activities on the subject.

I have been asked to indicate, in my presentation, whether the Council of Europe's recommendations on history can help to clarify the idea of a basic concept of historical literacy. Strictly speaking, of course, "literacy" is "the ability to read and write", and some purists strongly object to the use of the term in other contexts. Nevertheless, it can be used as a convenient label or shorthand term to cover the mastery of a body of content, skills and attitudes. Thus, people often speak of "political literacy", "computer literacy", "cultural literacy" and even "moral literacy". This is the way in which I will use the term in my presentation, and I will relate the Council of Europe's thinking on history to the three components which I have just mentioned: content, skills and attitudes. All three are important, and "historical literacy" is not synonymous with the rote learning of a set of facts.

The Council of Europe is, of course, aware that schools are not the only source of information, education and opinion and that other influential sources are: the family, the peer-group, the local and national community, the mass media, and tourism. Indeed, it has been calculated in a research project in England on the historical knowledge and understanding of pupils aged 7-9 that some 85% of their knowledge of the past came from outside the school and from sources other than their teachers. We should, therefore, not under-estimate the ideas, knowledge and experience that pupils bring with them to the classroom.

On the other hand, schools are important because they are the official agents of socialisation. They should, therefore,:

- provide young people with the skills and attitudes to use information in a rigorous and responsible way;

- help them to understand the complexity of political, social and economic issues and to appreciate cultural diversity;
- dispel stereotypes and avoid a simplistic "headline mentality".

### **The value and scope of history**

The Council of Europe's experts recommend that all pupils should study history at every level of their education because history has a value that cannot be provided by other subjects in the school curriculum. "History", they argue, "is a unique discipline, concerned with a special kind of training of the mind and imagination and with the imparting of an accurate body of knowledge which ensures that pupils understand other points of view".

History can help pupils to grasp the relationship of events in time so that they can appreciate such essential concepts as cause and effect, change and development.

With regard to the scope of history, the Council's experts propose that it should be the learning and teaching of a synthesis dealing not only with political, diplomatic and military history, but with all aspects - spiritual, social, economic, cultural, scientific and technological - of the societies of the past.

The learning and teaching of history in schools should be an active process, and it should stimulate individual research, reflection and expression by pupils. They should be given experience in the critical evaluation of different kinds of evidence, and they should be encouraged to adopt critical attitudes towards information, including that imparted by the mass media. For example, in history, pupils should learn to "read" films and television programmes as critically as they should read newspapers.

### **Content**

With regard to content, the Council of Europe's experts argue that there is no specific body of historical knowledge that every pupil ought to learn. Furthermore, all of our meetings have shown that there is a problem of finding a happy balance between local, national, European and world history in history curricula.

Local history lends itself to active methods and can help to train pupils in historical method and see larger problems in microcosm. For its part, national history should not be isolated from its European and world contexts, and pupils should be encouraged to see the European importance of, and the European influences on, events of national history.

In the present volatile situation in Europe, there is a new sensitivity about national and ethnic identity. Identity is a complex concept which covers: language; religion; and a shared memory and a sense of history, sometimes even of historical grievance and injustice. It is rich in symbols: heroes; battles lost and won; songs; poetry; paintings and memorials. Sometimes identity asserts itself in a destructive and violent way at the expense of the identity of others: migrants, immigrants, minorities, and peoples of other nationalities, religions and races. History should not encourage narrow chauvinistic, intolerant attitudes or lead to feelings of ethnic, national or racial superiority.

National history is not synonymous with nationalistic history, and there is an urgent need to explore new balanced approaches to the learning and teaching of national history.

We sometimes hear calls for a single European history syllabus or a single European history textbook for use in all our schools. Is this feasible in an area stretching from North Cape to Cyprus and Malta and from Reykjavik to Berlin, Warsaw and Vladivostok? Is it even desirable? Our experts have been adamant that there can be no question of trying to impose a uniform version of European history in schools throughout our continent.

On the other hand, certain elements are common to the history of part, or all, of Europe and, thus, lend themselves to a European presentation. A list of 25 such themes is given in the information document which I have prepared for this Colloquy (see p. \*). It includes such topics as the Great Migrations, Feudalism, the Renaissance, the Religious Reform Movements, European Expansion Overseas, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and Communism and Fascism.

In October 1993, the Vienna Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member States stressed the urgent need to strengthen "programmes aimed at eliminating prejudice in the teaching of history by emphasising positive mutual influences between countries, religions and ideas in the historical development of Europe". As a follow-up to this recommendation, we are now carrying out a project to identify innovative approaches to teaching the history of Europe in the spirit of the Vienna Declaration.

16 States in Central and Eastern Europe now participate in the Council of Europe's education programme, and politicians, educators and young people in our new partner countries are often dismayed by the ignorance in the older member States, of their history and culture. They argue that the Council of Europe has a duty to respond to this situation, eg. by publishing, for history teachers in other parts of the continent, a series of booklets or teaching

packs on the history of our new partner countries.

Whenever possible, national and European horizons should be widened to a world perspective, and other civilisations should be studied from the standpoint of their own original nature and not just in the context of European expansion and occupation. For its part, the Parliamentary Assembly has recommended that all of us should be aware of the distinctive contributions of Jewish culture and Islamic civilisation to the historical development of Europe.

The Council of Europe's experts are also convinced that all pupils should learn modern and contemporary history. This opinion is shared by the Parliamentary Assembly which has called for "the adequate teaching of modern history so that young people will be better prepared to promote democracy".

### **Skills and attitudes**

Among the skills associated with the learning of history, the Council of Europe's experts attach special importance to:

- the ability to locate, handle and analyse different forms of information and evidence;
- the ability to frame relevant questions and arrive at responsible and balanced conclusions;
- the ability to express oneself clearly, both orally and in writing;
- the ability to see other points of view and to recognise and accept differences;
- the ability to detect error, bias and prejudice.

The learning and teaching of history should also lead to the development of several important attitudes, in particular curiosity, open-mindedness, tolerance, empathy and civil courage. The learning of history should stimulate the imagination and provide both pleasure and enjoyment.

Both the Parliamentary Assembly and the Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education have stressed the special contribution which extra-curricular activities can make to formal teaching about other countries and cultures. In particular, school links and exchanges can help to develop understanding and friendship between young people from different linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious traditions both within and between countries. In its new work on history, the Council of Europe is examining how the learning of history outside the classroom - through school links and exchanges, visits to museums, and field trips - can further mutual understanding and confidence in Europe.

### **Questions for reflection**

In themselves, the Council of Europe's recommendations do not constitute a ready-made, common "basic concept of historical literacy". On the other hand, they do indicate many of the questions and elements which have to be faced in the daunting task of defining this challenging concept.

In particular, we should apply - to our curricula, textbooks and the practices of our teachers - the criteria which were suggested by our recent Symposium in Sofia on "History, Democratic Values and Tolerance in Europe". Do they:

- respect historical truth?
- uphold democratic institutions?
- promote human rights, tolerance, understanding and multi-perspectivity?
- develop critical thinking and the ability to recognise bias, prejudice and stereotypes?
- encourage such attitudes as open-mindedness, acceptance of diversity, empathy and civil courage?

### **Information document**

#### **on the Council of Europe's**

#### **work on history textbooks and history teaching**

by Maitland Stobart

## Introduction

History and history teaching have always occupied a special place in the Council of Europe's work on education because of their importance in establishing mutual understanding and confidence between the peoples of Europe. The improvement of history textbooks was the subject of the Council's first activity on education, and the importance of history is stressed in the European Cultural Convention of 1954.

This Convention sets the framework for the Council of Europe's work on education, culture, heritage, sport and youth. All Contracting Parties undertake to encourage the study, by their nationals, of the history of the other Contracting Parties. They also agree to promote the study of their own history in the territory of the other Contracting Parties and to grant facilities to the nationals of those Parties to pursue such studies in their territory. To date, 43 States have acceded to the Convention<sup>3</sup>.

The Council of Europe's work on history has been carried out in two stages. The first was an attempt, mainly in the 1950s, to encourage the highest standards of honesty and fairness in history textbooks, and to eradicate bias and prejudice. In the second stage, the Council studied the place of history in secondary schools and drew up recommendations on how to make history a stimulating and relevant part of a young person's education.

In the past five years, there has been a significant revival of interest in history teaching in Europe, and the Council of Europe has started a new series of activities on the subject.

## The improvement of history textbooks

Between 1953-58, the Council of Europe organised six major international conferences on the way in which European history was presented in some 900 of the 2000 textbooks then in use in schools in member States. From the outset, the Council's experts emphasised that the purpose of these textbook conferences was "not to use history as propaganda for European unity but to try to eliminate the traditional mistakes and prejudices and to establish the facts".

By the fifth conference, there was general agreement that almost all of the authors had done their best to be fair. On the other hand, not unnaturally, most of them had failed "to detach themselves completely from the mental habits and attitudes of a lifetime. For this reason, there is often a tendency to say too much about the authors' own nations and too little about others - especially when the others are the smaller nations of Scandinavia or Eastern and South-East Europe. Usually, the Great Powers are allowed to hold the stage, except that Russia scarcely receives its fair share of space".

This cycle was followed by two further conferences on:

- "Religion in school history textbooks in Europe" (Louvain, 1972);
- "Co-operation in Europe since 1945, as presented in resources for the teaching of history, geography and civics in secondary schools" (Braunschweig, 1979).

## History teaching in schools

The conferences on history textbooks raised many fundamental questions about the aims and content of history teaching itself.

The CDCC, therefore, organised four intergovernmental symposia on history teaching:

- "History teaching in secondary schools" (Elsinor, 1965);
- "History teaching in lower secondary education" (Braunschweig, 1969);
- "History teaching in upper secondary education" (Strasbourg, 1971);
- "Teaching about the Portuguese Discoveries in secondary schools in Western Europe" (Lisbon, 1983). This Symposium was organised on the occasion of the 17th Council of Europe Art Exhibition.

In the second half of the 1970s, the CDCC carried out less work on history because member States were interested in the programmes of interdisciplinary work in secondary schools. During this period, the CDCC collected information on how schools in member States were seeking to establish links between subjects in two areas of the curriculum:

- the so-called "human sciences" (usually involving history, geography, economics, sociology and civic education);

- the so-called "natural sciences" (usually involving physics, chemistry and biology).

From the beginning of the 1980s, the importance of history was stressed in the CDCC's work on primary and secondary education, as well as in its activities on such wider topics as: the European dimension of education; human rights education in schools; intercultural education; and education for life in an interdependent world.

Furthermore, the importance of history was acknowledged in several recommendations of the Committee of Ministers. For example, in Recommendation No. R (83) 13 on "The role of the secondary school in preparing young people for life", the Committee of Ministers proposed that education systems should provide all young people with "an introduction to the cultural, spiritual, historical and scientific heritage ...". For its part, the Parliamentary Assembly called for "the adequate teaching of modern history so that young people will be better prepared to promote democracy" (Resolution 743/1980) on "The need to combat resurgent fascist propaganda and its racist aspects").

Since the early 1980s, the CDCC has organised, within the framework of its In-Service Training Programme for Teachers, 22 seminars for history teachers. These seminars have focused on questions of methodology or on important movements or encounters of peoples or ideas in European history, eg. "The Viking Age in Europe"; "The Hanse in Norway and in Europe"; "Europe and the US Constitution" and "Teaching about the French Revolution in schools in Europe". They have involved over 1000 history teachers and teacher trainers from member States.

Towards the end of the 1980s, there was a marked renewal of interest in history teaching in member States, and this movement gained considerable impetus after the dramatic changes in Central and Eastern Europe.

In September 1990, the CDCC organised, in co-operation with the Georg Eckert Institute, a European Educational Research Workshop on "History and social studies -methodologies of textbook analysis" in Braunschweig. This was followed by Symposia on:

- "History teaching in the New Europe (Brugge, December 1991);
- "The teaching of history since 1815 with special reference to changing borders" (Leeuwarden, April 1993);
- "History teaching and European awareness" (Delphi, May 1994);
- "History, democratic values and tolerance in Europe" (Sofia, October 1994).

The Brugge Symposium was the first pan-European meeting on history teaching to be organised by the Council of Europe, and the participants asked the organisation to draw up a European Charter for History Teaching. Its aim would be to guarantee the integrity of history teaching and history teachers and to protect them from political manipulation.

The Sofia Symposium recommended that the following criteria be applied to history curricula, textbooks and the practices of teachers:

- do they uphold democratic institutions?
- do they respect human rights, enshrine tolerance, promote understanding and reflect multiperspectivity?
- is critical thinking one of their desired outcomes, together with the ability to recognise bias, prejudice and stereotypes?
- are such attitudes as open-mindedness, empathy and acceptance of diversity encouraged?

The ideas put forward at the Sofia Symposium will be summarised in a booklet for history teachers. It will be a contribution to the European Youth Campaign against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-semitism and Intolerance.

Because of the importance of history in improving understanding and confidence between the peoples of Europe, the CDCC's Education Committee has decided to undertake an ambitious new project on history as from 1996. It will draw on the ideas put forward during the recent Symposia and the present Colloquy, and its aims and content will be defined in 1995.

### **The situation in countries in transition**

16 States in Central and Eastern Europe now take part in the CDCC's work on education, and all of them are rebuilding their education systems on democratic lines. This includes:

- the preparation of new legislation, new curricula, and new textbooks and teaching resources;
- the renewal of teacher training and educational administration.

The situation is particularly serious in history, and, from 27 November - 1 December 1994, the Council of Europe will organise, in Graz, in co-operation with the Austrian authorities, a Seminar on "The reform of history teaching in schools in European countries in democratic transition". Its aim is to allow the officials and experts, who are in charge of this reform, to exchange information and experience.

Politicians, educators and young people in the Council of Europe's new partner countries are often dismayed by the ignorance, in the older member States, of the history and culture of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe and the Russian Federation. They argue that the Council of Europe should promote understanding within Europe by commissioning and publishing - for history teachers in other parts of the continent - a series of booklets or teaching packs on the history of the Council's new partner countries.

### **Important partners**

An important partner in the Council of Europe's work on history has been the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. In 1965, the Institute, which has the largest international library of history and geography textbooks in Europe, accepted an invitation from the Council of Europe to act as a clearing-house for the exchange of information on history and geography textbooks.

At the suggestion of the CDCC, the Committee of Ministers adopted, in 1988, Recommendation No. R (88) 17 on "Co-operation with the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research" which invites member States to:

- help to make textbook authors and teachers aware of the Institute's work;
- encourage publishers of educational material and publishers' associations to send, free of charge, copies of their main history, geography and social studies textbooks to the Institute's library.

The Council of Europe helped to facilitate the establishment of two international non-governmental organisations on history: the International Society for History Didactics; and the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations (EUROCLIO). The Council also co-operates with the International Students of History Association, which is an organisation of university students. These INGOs are important sources of information and advice, and they also act as effective relays for the dissemination of the results of the Council of Europe's work.

### **A unique discipline**

The Council of Europe's experts have argued that all pupils should study history, at every level of their education, because it has a value that cannot be provided by other subjects.

History, they claimed, "is a unique discipline, concerned with a special kind of training of the mind and imagination and with the imparting of an accurate body of knowledge which ensures that pupils understand other points of view". It helps young people to understand the relationship of events in time so that they can appreciate cause and effect, change and development.

With regard to the scope of history teaching, the Council's experts have recommended that it should be the teaching of a synthesis, dealing not only with political and military history but with all aspects - spiritual, cultural, social, economic and scientific - of the societies of the past. The experts recognised the difficulty of striking a happy balance in the syllabus between local, national, European and world history. They thought that local history should not be seen as a subject in its own right but rather as a means of training pupils in historical method and of seeing large problems in microcosm.

The Council's experts have also recommended that full use should be made of active methods in history teaching. These should stimulate individual research, reflection and expression by pupils. In particular, they should be given experience in the critical evaluation of different kinds of evidence, and it was felt that the history teacher should encourage pupils to adopt critical attitudes towards information imparted by the mass media. For example, in history lessons, they should learn to "read films and television" as critically as newspapers.

### **The teaching of european history**

Inevitably, there has been considerable discussion on the place and nature of European history in school curricula during the Council of Europe's meetings on history.

At the Elsinor Symposium in 1965, the participants agreed that there could be no question of trying to adopt a uniform version of history throughout the member States of the CDCC. On the other hand, they suggested that "whenever opportunity arises, teachers ought to show their pupils the European importance of, and the European



influence on, events of national history". The participants noted certain elements are common to the history of part, or all, of Europe and, thus lend themselves to a European presentation. To illustrate what they meant, they prepared a list of 25 themes which could form the basis of a European history syllabus. The list is given in the Appendix to the present document (see page 65).

The main theme of the 17th Session of the Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education (Vienna, October 1991) was "The European Dimension of Education", and the Ministers recommended that, in history, young people should study "the origins of the European peoples and States and the social, political, ideological and religious movements, power struggles, ideas, cultural works, mobility and migrations which have shaped their development".

At the Vienna Summit in October 1993, the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member States stressed the urgent need to strengthen "programmes aimed at eliminating prejudice in the teaching of history by emphasising positive mutual influences between countries, religions and ideas in the historical development of Europe". As a follow-up to this recommendation, the Council of Europe is carrying out a project to identify innovatory approaches to the teaching of the history of Europe in the spirit of the Vienna Declaration and to provide curriculum developers and teachers with practical advice. The results will be available at the end of 1995.

The Parliamentary Assembly has called for a more balanced analysis of the distinctive contributions of Jewish culture and Islamic civilisation to the historical development of Europe. All too frequently, it is the negative aspects of these relationships that are emphasised.

Extra-curricular activities can reinforce, in a significant way, formal teaching about the history of other countries and cultures, and the Council of Europe has set up a European Network on School Links and Exchanges. It consists of ministry representatives and official agencies, and its task is to encourage the sharing of information, experience and good practice. The Network has already produced a "Practical Guide to School Links and Exchanges in Europe", by Roger SAVAGE, and work is under way on the preparation of a training unit or module for teachers involved in exchanges. The Network believes that the CDCC's European Cultural Routes could serve as the focus for new forms of school links and exchanges and joint projects between schools in member States. Through extra-curricular activities, the learning of history in schools could take on "a living European dimension".

Schemes to promote the European dimension of education (eg. through history) should not, in turn, promote selfish or Eurocentric attitudes, and the Committee of Ministers has recommended that education systems in member States should encourage young Europeans to see themselves as "citizens not only of their own region and country but also as citizens of Europe and of the wider world".

## **Appendix**

### **Basic themes of european history**

#### 1. Recommendations of the Elsinor Symposium, Denmark, 1965

What Europe owes to civilisations past and present, notably Greek, Roman, Byzantine civilisations; to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc

The Great Migrations, in so far as they concern the history of Europe

Feudalism

The Church

Rural Conditions and Towns in the Middle Ages

The Crusades

Representative Institutions and Legal Principles

Medieval Thought and Art

Humanism: the Renaissance

The Religious Reform Movements

The Voyages of Discovery and Expansion Overseas

The Development of Capitalism

The Rise of Modern States

Absolute Government and Representative Government

Classicism and Baroque

The Age of Enlightenment

The Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions

The Revolutions of the 18th and 19th Centuries. Liberalism and Nationalism

Socialism

Intellectual and Artistic, Scientific and Technical Developments in the 19th and 20th Centuries

European Expansion in the World and the formation of Colonial Empires

The two World Wars

Democracy, Communism, and Fascism

Europe in the World Today

Trends towards European Unity in the Different Periods of the History of Europe

## 2. Additional themes suggested at the Brugge Symposium 1991:

The three orders of feudal society

Medieval towns, their development and local law

The birth of Parliaments (differences and common problems)

Trade between European regions (the Vikings, the Hanse, Italy)

The role of the Church in written language and material culture

Central Europe: the dual influence of Rome and Byzantium

Central Europe: the birth of the Nations

Biographies of leading intellectuals

Constituents of national consciousness during the Renaissance

Science and humanism in Europe (16th and 17th Centuries)

The Wars of Religion and efforts at toleration

The Enlightenment in political and material life

Liberalism and Nationalism in Europe

The Industrial Revolution

Europe between two totalitarian systems. The reaction of States and Parties

Resistance movements during the Second World War

Fascism and its forms in Europe

Yalta as seen by both sides

Europe as seen by others

Europe: controversy over an idea.

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A bibliography containing information on the Council of Europe's studies, reports and texts on history is available on request from:

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#### «Toward historical literacy»

by David Lowenthal

Historian and geographer

The perversions of history are not easily overcome. One reason is that they are pervasive. So engrained is our traditional view that history should be an impartial, objective, openly accessible record of the past -- an ideal espoused by historians since Herodotus, Thucydides, and Lucian -- that we either overlook or are aghast to learn that history is seldom so written, even by ardent devotees of its purity.

This colloquy's laudable collaborative enterprise has precursors. Well into the 18th century history was a *speculum vitae humanae*, an 'impartial mirror' of men's actions and duties. The recording angel's detached neutrality was the Enlightenment vision. Aspiring to be 'disengaged from all passions and prejudices', the Abbé Raynal claimed that future readers would find in his *Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes* (1781) no clue to his country, his profession, or his religion. Diderot held detachment essential to understanding; only an 'historian raised above all human concerns' could make sense of the protean past. Of course, no such historian existed, then or now.

In 1900 Lord Acton exhorted Britons to interpret European history with lofty impartiality; our account of 'Waterloo must be one that satisfies French and English, Germans and Dutch alike'. Acton's Cambridge Modern History, whatever its virtues, signally failed in this respect. Ethnocentrism and historical chauvinism are no less common today; and we are all constantly tempted to use history to inflate reputations, to deny past cruelties, to dispense comfort, and to rationalize bias.

Rewriting the past to accommodate group pride is too human to be viewed as part of a conspiracy. Nor is it necessarily sinister to manipulate national history, as each of us always does with our personal life story. Indeed, it is all but unavoidable. The real issue historians face is how objective truth can be produced by deeply subjective people.

History as actually written is usually moral code as well as past record. In the words of Fustel de Coulanges, 'the historian of the city told the citizen what he must believe and what he must adore' -- or despise; the gallery of mythical royal rogues limned by the 17th-century Swedish historian Johannes Magnus called to readers' minds the evils of Gustavus Vasa. Chroniclers shaped accounts to please patrons, to praise compatriots, and to aggrandize their own repute. Early annalists unabashedly puffed sponsors; later historians promoted patriotism, which shapes history teaching to this day.

Histories stressing the innate superiority of ancestral forebears served 19th-century nationalism. 'History is above all the science of national self-awareness', a Russian historian bluntly put it. Universal schooling aided this sacred function. A century ago 80% of French baccalaureates held history's main purpose was to exalt patriotism; history teachers in 1919 saw making French citizens their chief role; French history is still the touchstone of civilization. Three-fourths of England's school history concerns British deeds and characters.

Profits and patriotism sway school histories to expunge the infamous, the awkward, even the debatable: one

American publisher would omit not only 'controversial' past notables like Roosevelt and Nixon, but any 'living people who might possibly become infamous'. The dubious future is consigned to oblivion along with the discreditable past. No historical event or figure must offend any minority's self-esteem.

Those who condemn patriotic or feel-good history are often its unwitting practitioners. Insisting that 'disinterested intellectual inquiry' is the only valid approach, the historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., denounces those who exploit history as an instrument of social cohesion. But no sooner are these words out of his mouth than he claims that 'above all, history can give us a sense of national identity'.

Civic goals are not necessarily compatible with good scholarship. 'Accurate history may teach us to get along together, but then again, it may not', writes a critic. Does our desire for an inclusive European vision ineluctably emerge from a cold, dispassionate examination of our chequered past? Is it forced on us by the overwhelming weight of evidence? No; is it projected into the past by our current desire to make it true.

Some historians reject parti-pris history. Myth and invention may be needed for people to say 'We are different from and better than the Others'. Memories of past oppression persist as signs of allegiance; unless you share the myths that breed suspicion of others, you are a traitor to your own group. But those who promote this view are bad historians, holds Eric Hobsbawm. 'History is not ancient memory or collective tradition.' Historians should 'stand aside from the passions of identity politics -- even if they also feel them.'

But many renowned historians openly promote myth for the sake of some higher truth. 'Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation', Renan warned the French against excessive zeal for historical accuracy. English historians praise their precursors' muddled thinking as a national virtue. 'We made our peace with the Middle Ages by misconstruing them; "wrong" history was one of our assets', exulted Butterfield. 'Precisely because they did not know the Middle Ages, the historians of the time gave the 17th century just the type of anachronism that it required' -- mistaking the new English Constitution for a restoration of ancient liberties. Useful **because** mistaken, this version became a cornerstone of the national heritage. It buttresses self-esteem to this day. Unfazed by its exposure as a tissue of errors, the British revel in unreason. Opposing a 1993 bill in the House of Lords to allow daughters to inherit titles, the historian Trevor-Roper acclaimed male primogeniture for its traditional 'irrationality'.

Swiss heritage likewise favoured received myth over precise truth. Texts should be rectified only with great caution, warned an educator in 1872, for the Swiss saw history as 'a school of patriotism'. To destroy faith in traditions 'that in their eyes symbolize liberty, independence, and republican virtues' would corrode that patriotism. Besides, historical subtleties were 'not the affair of the masses'. William Tell's defiance of the Hapsburg oppressor is a notorious fiction, but the tale is too pivotal to Swiss identity to be given up.

Irish celebratory chronicle is also held 'a beneficial legacy, its wrongness notwithstanding'. Past myths were punctured at the cost of their 'positive dynamic thrust', warns the historian Brendan Bradshaw; to depopulate Irish history of heroes of national liberation would forfeit an immemorial treasure and 'make the modern Irish aliens in their own land'. When Ireland 'has come of age', supposes revisionist Roy Foster, 'history need no longer be a matter of guarding sacred mysteries'; but until then the grand celebratory narrative is essential. 'They all know it's not true', says Brieger Duffaud's Belfast Catholic of the received mythos, 'but that won't stop them believing it'.

Fiction resists historical fact to persist as heritage. Daniel Boone's repeated disclaimers never dented the spurious antisocial legends spread of him. Parson Weems' fabrications of George Washington have been 'shattered again and again', historians note, 'but they live on in the popular mind, and nothing can extirpate them'. Maori origin myths known to derive from European missionaries and traders are nonetheless accepted as ancestral because now embedded within Maori tradition. The 'ancient' Breton folklore classic *Barzaz-Breiz*, though long surmised and now exposed as a 19th-century pastiche, is still accepted as the authentic voice of the Breton people because six generations have used it to express that voice. Breton identity 'is not what history bequeathed them', writes Jean-Yves Guimar, 'but what romantic reconstruction or evolutionary progressivism has led them to build'.

It is a sacrosanct Greek credo that underground schools kept Hellenic culture alive under Turkish oppressors, yet it is well known that Greek schooling in fact enjoyed widespread autonomy during Ottoman rule. When a 1960s schoolteacher was pilloried for questioning the legend, a prominent Greek explained that 'even if the *krypha skholeia* was a myth, none the less it should still continue to be propagated, for such myths were an essential element in the national identity'.

Commending error for history's sake is the theme of Joseph Roth's *Radetsky March*, whose Slovene protagonist is ennobled for rescuing the Emperor Franz Joseph at the battle of Solferino. Years later, in his son's first primer, he reads a grotesquely inflated version of the episode. 'It's a pack of lies', he yells, throwing down the book. 'It's for children', his wife replies. 'Captain, you're taking it too seriously', says a friend; 'all historical events are modified for consumption in schools. And quite right, too. Children need examples which they can understand, which impress them. They can learn later what actually occurred.' The Minister of Culture and Education reiterates the point: 'Without sacrificing veracity', school readers must provide 'imaginative stimulus' to patriotism. The Emperor himself rejects the literal truth. 'It's a bit awkward', he admits, 'but...neither of us shows up too badly in the story. Forget it.'

Historians realize that history always attenuates truth. But this deficiency is little known to and largely denied by

the rest of us. Bereaved by the loss of the past, we take comfort in trusting it can be discerned without error or bias. But only by professional expertise: faithful retrieval is supposedly reserved to objective, dispassionate, infallible historians.

That historians are not such paragons most of them well know. Indeed, they repeatedly disclaim perfection. New-found evidence, revisionist criticism, stubborn bias, simple obsolescence remind historians they are inescapably fallible. But their disavowals fail to dispel popular faith that history, and history alone, can unearth and narrate the real Truth. Yet self-interest suffuses history like other enterprises. In theory, 'historians are not allowed to use the past for their own ends', reflects a writer whose fictional historian (like most real ones) has just done so. How then, she asks, do historians differ from 'politicians, house agents, antique dealers, autobiographers or any other category of person that does so most of the time?'

Perhaps historians bend the past to private ends more rarely and less blatantly. No doubt they are more conscious of doing so. Almost certainly, historians better recognize the gulf between precept and practice. More than house agents or antique dealers, they rate the truth of the past above its material benefits to themselves. But in choosing and conveying that 'truth' they are bound to alter and update it according to their own lights. Historians do aim higher than they can reach. They know they cannot retrieve or recount the past in unbiased entirety or shorn of anachronism, yet they strive to do so as far as they can. Aware such effort is inherently imperfect, they nonetheless cleave to what seems honest and impartial.

Historical truth is praiseworthy. But public faith that historians can realize this goal taxes the task with delusive hopes. How can the public at large be encouraged to view history as neither a perfect record of the past nor a conspiracy to deprive them of their rightful heritage?

That children know too little history and get much of it wrong is a plaint re-echoed each generation. But the primary problem is not students' lack of canonical facts; it is that they do not know what history is in the first place. High marks depend on regurgitating historical facts and giving them the 'correct' gloss; alternatives are only good or bad, right or wrong: honest differences are not an option. Asked to decide between two versions of an event, a student says, 'It was cool to hear both sides of the story and choose who you think was telling the truth.' 'Both sides!' 'truth!' History becomes only a law court; every story has just two sides; whoever was wrong must have lied.

Three insights are integral to historical understanding: that history is never completely nor finally known; that its witnesses are never impartial; and that we must avoid presentist anachronism as far as we can.

First, let us stress the contingency of history. At present, schools instil faith in historical truth. History is taught like mathematics -- 'as a finite subject with definite right or wrong answers'. Most history texts are 'written as if their authors did not exist, as if they were simply instruments of a divine intelligence transcribing official truths' -- 18th-century recording angels. Students learn to accept these texts as authoritative vehicles whose sources are not to be questioned. Most of us learnt history as did Simone de Beauvoir, never dreaming there could be more than one view of past events. We should instead be trained to realize 'there are no free-floating details -- only details tied to witnesses'.

To show 'that history and the way we interpret it is not carved in granite,...that the past can never be totally reconstructed, that the study of history is always unfinished', one history museum stresses how provisional its findings are.

We're not saying, 'This is the past. Believe it!'...We're saying, 'Given what we know, this is our best interpretation of the past.' [Children should] find out we're constantly finding out things that change our perception of the past. They'll learn that what we know about the past today is not what we'll know about the past in the future. They'll also learn that there are some things we can never find out.

This laudable lesson is too seldom taught or accepted.

Secondly, we should teach that history is **inevitably** biased because authored by fallible, partisan humans beings, show how to assess and compare the voices of eye-witnesses, commentators, and authors. Historians who plead for awareness of bias seldom explain how to recognize it. The ability to see texts as slippery, cagey, protean, as instruments crafted for social ends, as reflections of manifold contexts and authors' concerns, is a skill unheard of in school and, indeed, much university history. To those lacking such insight, bias seems simply inexcusable and truth a clear-cut goal. This is why so many mistake historians' professed ideals for working realities.

Thirdly, awareness of anachronism. We may enjoy replacing fable and error with truth, but historians' main aim is not to debunk but to understand the past, to realize why people acted as they did. We must remember that the past is truly a foreign country, a congeries of mental worlds we have lost. Only thus can we avoid judging past actors as praiseworthy or perfidious, inconsistent or hypocritical by today's standards, yet retain faith in history as a continuous nourishing tradition.

In the end, we can only partially affect how history is learned. In his classic 'Everyman His Own Historian', Carl Becker showed how most of us fashion patterns of the past

from things learned at home and in school, from knowledge gained in business and profession, from newspapers glanced at, from books...read or heard of, from remembered scraps of newsreels or educational films or *ex-cathedra* utterances of presidents and kings, from fifteen-minute discourses on the history of civilization broadcast by Pepsodent.

From such heterogeneous sources Everyman chronicles more or less adequate impressions of the past.

The usual historical pastiche is as incoherent in 1990s Britain as in 1930s America. Neal Ascherson finds a mélange of

ill-remembered lessons, what father did in the war, television documentaries with half the instalments missed, bodice-ripper historical novels, fragments of local folklore, the general idea of what that French man seems to be saying on the train, what we saw of Edinburgh Castle before the wee boy got sick, several jokes about Henry VIII and that oil painting of the king lying dead on the battlefield with his face all green.

Formal history is at once overlain, undermined, and fructified by other apprehensions of times gone by. To discern these connections is a goal well begun in France by Pierre Nora and his collaborators. Let it animate history throughout Europe.

## Conclusions

by Marc Ferro, General Rapporteur for the Colloquy

The colloquy on the learning of history in Europe, held in Paris on 5 and 6 December 1994, provided a forum for exchanging many different points of view and formulating a number of proposals taking into account the views expressed by the different rapporteurs.

Many contributors were pessimistic on the subject of the uses of history (Nadal), particularly the way in which it was used as an instrument (Lopez Henarès), and wondered about the ways in which it was taught and learned. How could history be taught and knowledge of it be spread in the spirit of human rights? Of course, the rapporteurs from eastern Europe (Afanesyev) were able to give an example of "historical knowledge" distorted by its dependency on an ideology encompassing the full range of social theory. Everybody recognised the need to make history autonomous, especially those who were aware of its frequently national, if not nationalistic connotations (Prats). One might wonder whether it was possible to write a history of Europe at all, or if this history should not be seen from the outsider's point of view, i.e. by the peoples of former colonies, or by Americans. These questions were commonly asked, and one wondered what the content of this history might be, or what forms it could take.

The problem was that one could never completely wipe out the past, and the link between that past and the present needed to be understood, if only to guard against the repetition of certain tragic events. The same went for myths and their survival (Serbyn): should they be reproduced, analysed, and criticised? The same also applied to "facts" that were acknowledged, constructed, or imaginary; did they not have an effect on the history that was in the process of being made? How should these facts be dealt with?

Another problem lay in the uncertainties of history, the analysis of societies and their past. The failure of ideologies, of comprehensive systems for explanation and meaning, and the use that had been made of them had proved that each system chose its own facts, its heroes, its own way of dividing up history into periods, and its methods of classification. In addition, the increase in the number of history's "breeding grounds" as a result of decolonisation and the rebirth of nationalism in different areas, had created an additional variable. Finally, the discrediting of "official" history had served to enhance the value of memory, and the associated places, without it necessarily being realised that making memory sacred was also excessive, and that analysis often showed that this kind of memory was just as illusory as other kinds of history.

In addition to this, the result of widespread cinema viewing, and to an even greater extent, television viewing, was that most young people's knowledge of history is gained outside school (Loewenthal), with as yet poorly understood consequences. It was clear, though, that television and cinema had the effect of modifying one's vision of history more than novels or the theatre: programmes altered the chronological order of events, chose situations that were likely to please, and dramatised the telling of facts. This last point was essential: a CRDP4 survey showed that it was this dramatisation that people remembered, although it did not necessarily correspond to "what really happened", nor to the results of investigations.

One's knowledge of the past also depended on several variables. First, the choice of one's source of information, or rather the hierarchical principle governing this choice, as some sources were considered to be of greater value than others. State archives were more highly valued than private archives; a letter written by Churchill was taken more seriously than an anonymous account, and secret documents were judged, rightly or wrongly, to be more reliable than published documents such as the press reports. This was a questionable attitude, which took Bukharin's confessions at face value and reduced historical analysis to the reproduction of the speeches of political or economic leaders, even if this was done in a critical manner. The result was that an easily digestible "official" history was served up, or history seen through the eyes of those at the top, in which the voice of society was expressed only

through those who spoke on its behalf.

Historical texts were generally organised chronologically, with dating of the text and knowledge of it remaining one of the criteria for establishing its veracity and the professionalism of the practitioners involved. They were presented in the form of narrative accounts, which reconstituted or, better still, reconstructed the past and its links with the present. However, this kind of account had the disadvantage of not justifying its choice of facts and arguments; it willingly revealed its sources but not the principle behind the secret of its manufacture. It might be suspected of succumbing to several excesses, especially rhetorical, not to mention its potential partiality. Imagine how many different versions of the French Revolution could be written using the same documents, and the same eye-witness accounts.

It was as a reaction to these modes of production, and to these uncertainties, that the *Annales* school was founded in Strasbourg in 1929, in a place where several different versions of history existed side by side: French and German, Catholic and Protestant, religious and non-religious, regionalist and national. The school was founded by Lucien Fèbvre and Marc Bloch, and its aim was to replace chronological narrative accounts with the analysis of problems, explaining one's choice of documentation, justifying one's working method, and giving priority to working out a method of analysis, modelled on procedure in the social sciences or sociology, economics, experimental medicine, or geography.

Over the last few decades, some of these principles had been incorporated into history teaching methods in order to boost the autonomy of the subject, and to improve the understanding of the relationship between known facts, family, data about work, the environment, etc. and the outside world. However, by questioning all non-constructed knowledge, this method of teaching had had the effect of stripping subjects of their cultural context and removing them from the collective memory, i.e. from one's knowledge of a past which, although perhaps not authenticated, functional nevertheless as an agent of history in that it moulded attitudes.

Several suggestions were made (Prats, Bell quoted by Marc Ferro) for redesigning history teaching on the basis of several criteria: chronology, continuity and breaks, slow change, awareness of phenomena, their extent, their topicality, etc. But emphasis was also placed on the need to improve the management of the audiovisual media for history, teaching purposes, and not to allow image professionals to think they could set themselves up as historians. As for the rest, it was increasingly difficult, on television, to impose a consistent and voluntarist vision of history, as the job of recounting and interpreting history increasingly slipped from the grasp of its traditional agents: historians, writers, politicians, etc. (Wenger). This may have sometimes resulted in the worst excesses (Romania, the Gulf war, etc.), but it had also brought about - and television had helped here - the removal of numerous taboos buried deep in traditional institutions.

It remains for us to list the different places and institutions where societies' collective knowledge takes shape and develops memory. Firstly, textbooks, which, paradoxically, all the participants in the colloquy were busy examining and criticising, although they admitted themselves that adolescents obtained most of their knowledge from other sources. Television and cinema were also mentioned, but museums, where the visitor is relatively free to move and look around (which accounts for their current revival) should not be forgotten. Similarly, visiting towns or castles has the advantage of showing different stages in history, instead of just displaying, similar exhibits (paintings, furniture, etc.) in different rooms (Schäfer). Stobart insisted on the need to combine all these sources of knowledge, yet they are not governed by the same principles of classification: they reflect the principles of the State in the press (political or economic events, etc.), those of the sciences in universities (according to discipline) and the different types of programme on television (news, short features, documentary dramas, fiction).

After this stocktaking exercise, the following recommendations were agreed on:

1. Knowledge of audiovisual texts must be created or developed, as a matter of urgency: the ability to read and decode them, and integrate them into more general knowledge gained from other sources of history;
2. Thought should be given to producing a history of Europe which, in one way or another, takes into account the collective memory of societies (minorities, outcasts, etc.), not forgetting to include the different taboos and prohibitions and analyse them, together with "revisionist" theories (seeking to deny the existence of the gas chambers, the massacres in Armenia, and the tragedies of Africa, etc.) which can then be properly denounced. Cooperation on an international level is called for, which does not necessarily imply international drafting;
3. The exclusive use of one form of history learning, such as visiting museums, reading textbooks or watching television, should be discouraged, and learning to combine these forms encouraged;
4. While history should not serve a state or an ideology, it should help in the protection of human rights and citizen's rights. To this end, historians should be given protection, and the Council of Europe should help provide this protection.

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1 <sup>1</sup>by the Committee on Culture and Education

2 <sup>1</sup> An asterisk denotes papers or contributions reproduced in extenso

3 <sup>1</sup> The Council of Europe's 33 member States and Albania, Belarus, Croatia, the Holy See, Latvia, Moldova, Monaco, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. Bosnia-Herzegovina has been invited to accede to the Convention.

4 <sup>1</sup> National Centre for Pedagogical Research and Documentation