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Seminar

“New Approaches to the Development of Textbooks on the history of 20th Century in secondary schools of the Russian Federation”

Kaluga, Russian Federation

23-25 September, 2002

Strasbourg

Seminar on

“New Approaches to the Development of Textbooks on the
history of 20th Century in secondary schools of the
Russian Federation”

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23-25 September, 2002

Valdimir BATSYN

Ministry for Education of the Russian Federation
Moscow
Russian Federation

The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many new school textbooks on the history of 20th Century have been distributed in Russia recently. However, in spite of this the problem remains urgent. The reason for this is explained firstly by the fact that we are still trying to understand the country's domestic history during the last century in the context of world history, as well as trying to understand the internal forces – be they economic, political, ideological or cultural – behind the most important events in the country, such as the 1917 Revolution and civil war, the creation of the communist totalitarian regime, the crisis and destruction of the Soviet power, the collapse of the USSR, the creation of the new Russian state system, etc.

No less important is the need to understand the combined effect, during these events, of the State and the social structure, which includes the role of historical personalities and the masses, the people as small communities and as a multinational state, each having their own cultural and historical heritage combined within the history of the country. The problem is made all the more complex by the fact that three different history courses are taught at the same time in schools: world history, Russian history and the history of every member country of the Russian Federation, each of which has had a very different percentage of input into and effect on the various periods and events of 20th Century. Finally, we cannot ignore the fact that Russian schools use many varieties of textbooks and manuals which are written by authors who employ very different methodological approaches to the selection and interpretation of processes, phenomena, events and people in history.

We should also emphasise the direct role played in the teaching of history today by the system of tests used to evaluate the level of knowledge acquired by students and, as a next step, the setting of standards for each subject. It is quite clear that this is a vast problem area and that what is needed is to set priorities, to work out a theoretical approach and, on this basis, to make practical recommendations to those who write the school programmes and to those who teach them.

Representatives on this seminar from the Council of Europe were:

- the project coordinator, Tatiana MILKO
- the expert from Great Britain, Chris CULPIN
- the expert from Germany, Haike MAETZING

Representatives from the Russian Federation were:

- Bodies responsible for education on federal and regional levels, and directly responsible for the determination of policy within the sphere of teaching history in schools (the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Karelia, the Department of Education for the Kaluga region);
- The heads of scientific institutions working within the field of teaching history in schools (the history laboratory of the Institute for General Education of the Russian Academy of Education);
- Institutions for professional pedagogical education (Kaluga State Pedagogical University named after K.E.Tsiolkovsky, the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A. I. Herzen (St Petersburg), Stavropol State University, Adygea Pedagogical College named after H. Arsanukaev, Nalchik);
- Institutions for the improvement of professional skills of history teachers (the Department of historical and socio-economic Education at the Academy for the Improvement of Professional Skills and Re-training of Workers in Education in the Russian Federation; the Department of History and Social Sciences of the University of Pedagogical Skills, St Petersburg);
- Bodies managing Education and Educational institutions in the regions of Kaluga, Tula and Oryol.

The students of the Kaluga Pedagogical College and a group of students from local schools also participated in this seminar.

On behalf of the Administration, the deputy governor, V. SAFRONOV, and the Head of the Department of Education and Science for the Kaluga region, G. I. LOVETSKY, addressed the participants. They emphasised the particular importance of this event for the host territory because the local educators, teachers and pupils who took part were given an invaluable opportunity to exchange opinions with leading education managers and experts in the field of teaching history in schools. They also explained the approach by the region of Kaluga to developing a regional component in the teaching of history in schools, and its correlation to courses of history taught throughout the Russian Federation.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education for the Russian Federation, the deputy Head of Department for Regional Educational Policy, V. BATSYN, welcomed the participants of the seminar. He briefly analysed the basic direction, tendencies and problems faced in the development of teaching history in schools, and emphasised the interest that the Federal Ministry had in the in-depth discussion of questions at the seminar. The importance of the cooperation between the Ministry of Education of Russia and the Council of Europe was especially underlined in the field of reforming the teaching of history in schools, covering such important issues as perfecting a system of preparing and re-training history teachers, publishing a new generation of textbooks, and developing recommendations on the use of opportunities within this topic for overcoming xenophobia, prejudice and a system of double standards, providing education of a tolerant and democratic people.

The speech of T. MILKO was devoted to the general areas of activity of the Council of Europe in the field of reforming the teaching of history in schools, and the most significant programmes and projects being carried out in this regard in the Russian Federation. The participants of the seminar listened with interest to the information concerning “the Tbilisi Initiative” and the series of seminars on history for teachers of North Caucasus, which are due to end this year. High value was given to holding thematic seminars in various regions of Russia and the real embodiment of which was this seminar in Kaluga.

II. PLENARY SESSIONS

The head of the history laboratory of the Institute for General Education of the Russian Academy of Education, L. ALEXASHKINA, gave the main report “The condition of the teaching-methodological base and new approaches to the development of textbooks on the History of 20th Century in secondary schools of the Russian Federation”.

The speaker noted that today for the first time since the break-up of the USSR, Russians schools can truly say that there is a new generation of history textbooks which can be analysed for their integrity. However, unfortunately, any analysis which has been done still shows unsatisfactory results. It is certainly true that the modern textbooks are much better in their presentation of history and as teaching aids than the “late Soviet” textbooks. On the whole, the new textbooks present well thought-out facts and views on history, and have moved away from offering only one opinion to offering pluralism, trying to rise above events and offer an unbiased viewpoint. Processes and events of modern history have been presented in the light of scientific data, and they have also updated the context of events and the materials used. Nowadays, the list of historical figures, especially in textbooks on domestic history, has been extended and improved. Authors today mostly try to avoid making unequivocal statements based on one particular ideology, but often offer alternative views on an event and the people involved in that event (revolutionaries and conservatives, “red” and “white”, etc.). Such positive changes can be seen in the way textbooks are presented – the overall information, additional information and reference material – and in that they include a variety of informative illustrations, interesting questionnaires and tasks.

Nevertheless, there remain a large number of problems which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In the opinion of the speaker, these are:

- The statement of the purpose of studying history of 20th Century (both for the course and also written in the textbook itself) and its fulfilment in practice;
- The persuasiveness of the methodological approach, the historical concepts and the views taken by the author of the textbook;

- The principles guiding the selection of facts describing the different parties and aspects of the historical process;
- The volume and way of presenting historical events;
- The problem of presenting too much material and of duplicating material, and of how to use the textbook to get the students to start thinking for themselves about what they are learning.

The speaker ascertained that the teaching of the history of 20th Century in schools (both world and domestic history) is not seen as an independent unit of specific purposes and tasks which are of special importance for a teenager growing to adulthood. In the introduction to a textbook, the author should, as a rule, say that the text will present a period of transition, that it will emphasise the role of Russia in world history, and the role of the State in the history of Russia. In some way or another, he should underline the complexity of, and the discrepancies between, the different viewpoints of crucial events of the 20th Century amongst their contemporaries and historians. In this regard, the author suggests the need to weigh up the different information presented on past controversies, avoiding ideological bias and taking into account the human element. What should also be emphasised is the fact that learning history promotes the development of patriotism and a sense of community.

The only solution to the existing problems cited above lies in how the textbook provides the opportunity for students to think independently about difficult questions of history, to work on primary sources and on different kinds of historical information. Many textbooks are dominated by the author's "dry" text which does not contain even a hint of other ways of treating the events in question; there are no documents or other materials included which would help to give a more expansive and expressive picture of the past events. The main tasks focus simply on students reproducing what the author himself has written. However, it is obvious that if the school pupil – and especially the senior pupil – is not involved in an active consideration and discussion of historical plots, then it cannot be said that he has had a significant personal and social cognitive and educational experience.

As for the methodological approaches, modern Russian textbooks on the history of 20th Century take the stand of so-called modernisation, the key concepts of which are “a traditional society”, “an industrial society”, “a civil society”, “modernisation”, etc.

When considering the ways of presenting a modern approach, special attention is given to the reforms and revolutions, and the most obvious point is that authors try to avoid using the terms "bourgeois-democratic revolution" or "socialist revolution", preferring to speak simply about the revolutions of 1905-07 or 1917-20. They list the different controversies which have occurred in a society, offer possible alternative ways of resolving such controversies, and only then try to clarify why revolution was used as a solution to the problem. The way followed by the Soviet State is seen as the only choice to avoid large-scale social crisis. In this way, the problem of isolating domestic history into different historical periods (i.e. before 1917, after 1917, etc.) is overcome.

This picture gives a better sense of the changes that have occurred, and at the same time enables us to see the elements of continuity in the history of our country in 20th Century. In particular, while the Soviet textbooks glorified the feats of the “reds” and exposed the crimes of the “whites”, the opposite picture re-emerged ten years ago: now authors speak about both the “red” and “white” terror, about fratricidal war and its tragic victims, and alongside the names and photographs of commanders of the Red Army are the names and photographs of the chiefs of the White Movement.

However, some modern textbooks still inevitably reflect the discrepancies that exist in the public consciousness regarding opinion of the Soviet period. There is a constant internal loyalty on the part of the authors to the slogan “Through thorns to the stars”, whereby each subsequent stage of Russian history should be presented in a better light than the previous one (the transformation of Russia into a “Great Power”, the performance of “great feats” by its people, etc.).

In many respects, the proportion given to showing the different parties and events in history in textbooks remains very traditional. At this turning point of 20th Century, as in the Soviet time, the main attention of the authors is given to political history. The

content is dominated by the history of the State and State authority. Events around internal politics take up no less than half of textbooks. Even such grandiose social and socio-cultural events as the revolutions are very much considered as a collision of political movements, parties and leaders. Over 20% of each textbook is taken up by internal politics and economic history. However, only 5-8% of the total educational material is given to topics concerning the history of society in its broadest sense, the history of man and the history of a spiritual and material culture.

The special problem – the exposure of the “human factor” in Russian history by referring to the life of the people – is “outstanding” and “usual”. It is true that authors do give their attention to an extended circle of historical figures (it is now possible to find information on both Nikolay II and Leo Trotsky in the same textbook). However, unfortunately, the necessary biographical information on such individuals is almost entirely absent from the textbooks of senior schools, where their lives should in fact be studied in more detail.

Such discrepancies result from the fact that textbooks are packed full of minor details, names, dates and geography. This is especially true regarding military events. The speaker cited examples where on one page eight large military operations were named, listing 14 battlefronts with the names of the commanders and more than 10 place names.

We have not yet overcome the problem of giving sparse detail on the same events within the contents of main courses for compulsory and high schools. At present, there is duplication of material, while it is clear that what is needed are elements of historiography, wide reference to sources and the discussion of the problems in history. These elements are not present in the majority of textbooks for senior schools. However, we know that to no small degree, and often to a much greater degree, what influences a pupil's outlook, image and beliefs on the world scene does not come from the author's narration but from the questions and tasks which allow the pupil independently to order the educational information, to analyse the reasons and consequences of events, to compare historical situations, and to consider different points of view of separate events.

The discussion on the basic report developed in the plenary session and continued in the working groups, has revealed some fundamental themes that were essentially important for all participants.

Firstly, as a matter of methodological-theoretical importance and practical urgency, there was the problem of setting the objective of teaching history in the context of the question "Why do pupils study history, and especially the history of 20th Century?".

To the absolute majority, the idea offered by one of the participants – according to whom the purpose of studying history was reduced to knowing the "truth" of a particular event, "as it actually was" – was unsatisfactory. The subsequent exchange of opinion concluded that any description of an event, even by an eye-witness, will always be subjective and tendentious, that is a free or involuntary interpretation of an event from the point of view of the individual giving the information. To an absolute degree, this also concerns the author of the textbook, who obviously uses sources created by other people and who himself becomes a "source of knowledge", influenced by certain principles to select material to prove the accuracy of his treatment of events, processes and phenomena. Therefore because "true" history textbooks cannot exist, it is important for all society to define and agree on common cultural, historical and welfare values and this is the "supertask" for which the school history textbook is written.

But even if these values are determined by a general consensus, they should not be fixed, and should not be perceived by the young generation as dogma but as resulting from their own research, and intellectual and spiritual efforts. It is therefore essentially unacceptable to return to the State textbook as the only correct textbook. It is necessary to maintain the principle of variety, according to which there should be a few educational books for each course. However, it is extremely important that the textbook gives the pupil the opportunity for "independent research", immerses him in a dialogue with the participants of the past events and enables him to reach socially positive conclusions.

In this extremely important and interesting context, came the reports of the experts of the Council of Europe from Great Britain and Germany, which illustrated the methodological

and methodical approaches to the selection and interpretation of educational material using some of the newest school textbooks and manuals on the history of 20th Century.

Mr Chris CULPIN, Director of the School History Project, made a particularly big impression on the seminar participants with his comparative analysis of sources from which the modern young Englishman receives information on history. Besides school textbooks, television programmes, guidebooks for museums and heritage sites are widely used as well as dramatic performances for schools and, more recently, website resources. From next year, the BBC will begin the programme “Curriculum on-line”, which will include not only illustrative material but also core teaching material for an entire curriculum.

Will the textbook thus be replaced in ten years’ time by website resources? This is not very likely, but textbooks themselves will need to change to provide the kind of resources and educational opportunities that cannot be provided by electronic media.

The speaker offered a convincing example to confirm this idea by showing two English textbooks on Modern History: the first one (very thick and almost completely without illustrations) was issued 20 years ago; the second (a richly illustrated booklet) was issued at the beginning of the year.

The first condition which determined such a substantial evolution was due to pedagogical changes. It is important to understand that textbooks are vehicles not only of *what* history should be learned, but also of *how* it should be learned. In this sense, textbook 1 is an authority: the pedagogy it suggests and supports is that the pupils’ task is to read and learn about these events. The teacher’s task is to help and explain, to elaborate. The book gives little assistance to the teacher as to how to structure the lesson, but the assumption is an uncritical one: history is about the memorising of key events and narratives. However, we now expect our textbooks – like textbook 2 – to support this kind of active learning, with Tasks outlining exactly what kinds of writing, talking and thinking pupils should do.

The UK only adopted a National Curriculum in 1991. Before that, the heads of school history departments could decide what history was taught. When the National Curriculum was introduced in 1991, many were very suspicious of the dangers of a government telling teachers what to teach, determining the history curriculum for purposes of indoctrination. To allay fears of this kind in the pedagogical community, the Government made clear that the National Curriculum should include alongside requirements to teach chronology, knowledge, causation, enquiries and source analysis such requirements as:

“Pupils should be taught:

- How and why historical events, situations and changes have been interpreted in different ways;
- To evaluate interpretations”.

Therefore, teachers are required to teach children that history is open to interpretation. But how can this be done in the textbooks?

As an example, the speaker took the manual “Modern Minds” in which there is a text about the delicate problems connected with racial prejudices amongst the citizens of the UK. Should history teachers ignore the discussion of this problem and stick to a safe topic from the Medieval period? Certainly not. After all, the very teenagers sitting in the classroom could several hours later begin to throw stones at the police or at other youngsters of a different skin colour.

Another example looks at the disappearance from textbooks of the traditional “historical heroes” which filled their pages two decades ago. Mr CULPIN noted that one reason for this was that history teachers are no longer content with a curriculum which focuses heavily on white, upper class men. However, pupils too are less at ease with simple heroes. Secondary age pupils read newspapers which reveal that many of the old-fashioned heroes – sportsmen, politicians, members of the Royal Family, film stars - are not so pure and wholesome. In this context, it can be very fruitful to discuss with pupils

the question why the English king, Alfred, was given the title “the Great” and, from the today’s point of view, whether he deserved it.

Speaking about the history of 20th Century, Mr CULPIN noted that in the National Curriculum there are three key events: the First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War. Therefore, in teaching history of 20th Century, it is necessary to ask pupils whether the importance of this century is exhausted by these three wars or whether the century was important for something else: “The 20th Century was the century of ... what?”

For the Russian participants of the seminar the section of the report speaking about the interpretation in textbooks of topics connected with the history of the British Empire was extremely important, especially considering the fact that while for many decades this was the dominant theme, today it causes extremely polar views: for one group of people the Empire was one of the greatest achievements of the nation and the greatest contribution that Britain made to the World, and they are very sad that it is now all over; for another group, it was brutal, exploitative and an unrelieved evil. Only now, some 50 years after it began to be dismantled, are we beginning to have a more rational discussion about it. A book for 13-year olds is being issued on it. Here is an example of some of the chapters from this book:

Empire Builders: Do heroes make history?

Empire and Slavery: How can we tell the story of Britain’s slave trade?

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (with a task for the pupils to decide what they would put in a museum of the British Empire).

Thus, the best way of handling differing views on history is not by giving pupils sterile and pre-defined views; it is much better to give them different interpretations and to set a question: how do the people differ? Why do they disagree?

The world of 21st Century promises to be complicated. The citizens of a democratic society should be well educated to effectively protect their rights. History has a tremendous contribution to make to this task.

The BBC online programme starting next year will bring new approaches to teaching history. The obvious evolution from the former thick, almost non illustrated textbooks to the rather thin textbooks or booklets which are easy on the eye, full of non-textual material and questions, stimulating thoughts and interest in history, convincingly testifies the benefit of such an approach. The presentations of the conference participants highlighted that domestic textbooks of the past decade have also progressed quite substantially in the same direction. However, the effectiveness of even the best of the newest editions is sharply reduced by the insuperable inclination of authors to stick to the principle of explanation and description: they continue to use non-textual aids only to illustrate exactly what they have already explained in the text and use a large number of questions simply to reproduce the text, rather than asking questions which will encourage pupils to think for themselves about the sources in the textbook.

What was particularly useful for the Russian participants was the verdict of Western colleagues regarding the special opportunities which have opened up for individualising teaching by using textbooks which have extensive non-textual (non-narrative) sources of information. Getting pupils to think about a political caricature, the text of songs or poems, memoirs or official documents, a photograph or a joke gives a much broader, deeper and more original response than simply re-telling the author's text (even if this is a personal account). A reasonable amount of material which provides an "alternative" view to that of the author is needed in textbooks to avoid monotony, tiresomeness and tendentiousness. By contrast, the textbook will be seen as appealing and interesting, and is no longer tiresome and heavy (in both the direct and literal sense).

The report of the Council of Europe expert, Heike MAETZING, devoted to a reflection on the history of the period of National Socialism in German school textbooks, was very useful.

In her opinion, the concept of domestic history in modern Germany is dominated to such a degree by the Third Reich and Holocaust that many history students are amazed to learn that German history actually begins in the Middle Ages. This view of history has been strongly influenced by education and history textbooks in school. But it was not always so. The picture changed essentially after 1949 when the theme of National Socialism appeared for the first time in the school programme. The evolution can be clearly seen by the importance given in textbooks to National Socialism, the Second World War and the Holocaust, and how the proportion given to each part varied in statements on the history of this period.

Some textbooks at the end of 1940's and beginning of 1950's only described history up to 1939. But even the books which dealt with National Socialism only mentioned briefly the terror and persecution of the regime, including the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust. The ultimate responsibility for this was exclusively associated with Hitler, and any other politicians of the regime or the SS were hardly mentioned. The German people were shown as victims who knew nothing about the Holocaust and who were unable to resist the regime of terror.

But this way of describing history was heavily criticized at the end of 1960's by those sons and daughters born immediately after the end of the war. They wanted to know what role their parents had played during the time of National Socialism and what their responsibilities were. Therefore from the 1970's onward, the time of dictatorship was given even more attention, thereby increasing the significance of National Socialism in the conception of history. The additional content deals mainly with the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, and some books summarize these events in special chapters. However, other victims of the regime who were unmentioned up to this point – for instance those in the Santi and Roma concentration camps and homosexuals – now appear in textbooks for the first time. The description of the various forms of resistance becomes more complete.

Until the 1960's, pupils only read texts on the assassination attempt carried out by the military on the 20 July 1944. Since the 1970's, and especially under the influence of the

new policy of Willy Brandt towards the East, textbooks now also deal with the large number of communists who were persecuted and murdered. Only 50 years after the end of the Nazi dictatorship, the grandchildren of Germans of those times can formulate clear opinions on the collective and individual guilt of their ancestors.

Thus, since the 1970's and during the following 20 years, these themes have gained increasing importance and have become the most extensive themes of German history in present textbooks. Today in German lessons, pupils are involved in literature dealing with the Holocaust instead of Goethe, Schiller and Lessing. What does this mean in relation to national self-consciousness? While genocide remains the main issue of history education, the feeling of national identity is expressed today by negation: it is a matter of shame to be German.

With regard to the theme "Dictatorship in GDR", the speaker noted that although the history of GDR was studied at schools in the Federal Republic of Germany, material about political repressions, Stasi and refugees was not covered. After 1990, the situation changed completely. The decision had to be taken on whether to study only the violation of human rights in the GDR, or to show along with this positive aspects of its history. This decision was of great importance from the point of view of the interests of the process of socio-cultural unification which has begun in united Germany.

In this connection, the seminar participants were offered two quite different textbooks to compare. The first had 127 pages: only one page was given to the GDR and half of that page was taken up by pictures illustrating the rebellion of workers on 17 June 1963 and the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961. The text summarized demonstrations in the GDR and the jubilation during the tearing down of the wall. The main idea was therefore "all's well that ends well", but the pupils learnt hardly anything about the GDR. In the second textbook, 50 pages out of 288 were devoted to German history after 1945, and the history of East and West Germany was dealt with in separate chapters.

Thus, the purposes of and the ways of presentation in the textbooks of two dictatorships in a history of Germany in 20th Century are quite different. With this background it is

difficult at present to accept the socialistic GDR as an integral and natural part of the common German past. In spite of that, both the National Socialist dictatorship and the history of the GDR are part of the common German past which is rooted in the Middle Ages. And it is only by their integration that the next generation can receive an historical consciousness which gives them an orientation in the past for the sake of the future.

Plenary reports became a basis and stimulus for discussion in two working groups of key questions on the agenda.

During the discussion of the question: "should current events be included in a school course of history, and what are the criteria for selecting facts and events in presenting history of recent years, all the participants agreed that current events certainly should be studied. One of the major arguments for the benefit of taking such a position was the fact that current events are unique historical reality, with which the pupils and teachers deal directly through personal experience, and which means that they can compare their interpretation and views to the opinions of various professional analysts and commentators from the mass media, further reinforcing the "here and now". This thus provides a unique educational situation, where it is possible to apply practically, and to check the efficiency of, the approaches to historical analysis which have been learnt during the years of studying a school history course.

At the same time it is obvious that textbooks cannot be totally up to date on current events: they are submitted to press at least one year prior to appearing in schools. However, this circumstance still provides an excellent means of testing the quality of the textbook: if the trends of historical events chosen by the author are understood correctly, the pupils will be prepared for what follows the events, which they themselves will witness, and will be able to analyse independently what happens.

However, in order for the pupils to be more culturally-historically competent, more than just the textbook needs to change; the training of teachers needs to be re-evaluated so that they are not just transferring knowledge to the students, but are also teaching them an historical way of thinking.

The urgency of this problem became especially obvious during the discussion of the second question on the agenda connected to the criteria for selecting material and documents for textbooks on domestic and world history. The need for careful re-examination of central events and phenomena "from both histories" was underlined and those selected to be studied first of all should be the events which would really promote the development of a critically thinking, democratic and tolerant person.

Taking into account that in Russia a traditional course of domestic history is concluded by examination and that when entering humanitarian higher education institutions in this subject entrance examinations are also conducted, the participants in the discussion offered to include in textbooks on the history of Russia modules (small concentrated sections) which include information on events in world history, without which the understanding of domestic history would be incomplete.

The idea of including in textbooks different versions and views that would exclude studying only the viewpoint of the author (the author's text in any case should be vivid, interesting, in a certain sense provoking, stimulating the pupils to form their own opinions) was actively encouraged. The different points of view to be included should be especially extensive and various in textbooks intended for so-called humanitarian "profile" classes.

This thesis also concerns the question of reflecting disputable and sensitive questions in textbooks. It is, in any case, impossible to avoid discussing them. However, in such cases as far as possible a number of various arguments and versions is needed so that the pupils can come to well balanced conclusions, can understand how very complex the problem really is and thus does not allow for a simplified approach to the decision.

It is especially important for the education of our youth that textbooks on a history of 20th Century contain contemporary events, even if they are disturbing. Considering such phenomena of our time as terrorism, totalitarianism, the formation of modern Western democracy, the development of other historically determined forms of social device of a

society (in the East), national liberation, pseudo-, and neo-fascist movements, etc. will show that their roots are found in the history of the last century.

At the same time, the seminar participants noted the well-known contradiction between the tendency to analyse many of the above phenomena critically in the light of domestic history, and the tendency to put a patriotic shading on these phenomena in school textbooks in order to preserve "the personality of the State" which must not be "slandered" in the eyes of its young citizens who should be taught through what they learn in history to be proud of the fatherland.

A suitable place in the discussion was given to the question of the difficulties of connecting the teaching of the above-described purposes, on the one hand, and on the other hand the need to prepare senior pupils for final and entrance examinations, and now to a so-called unified graduation examination conducted on a test basis.

APPENDIX I
PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Sunday 22 September 2002

Arrival of the participants

Monday 23 September 2002

09.30 - 11.00 **Opening Session**

Chair: Dr Gennady LOVETSKY, Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region;

Opening of the Seminar by:

- Dr Victor IGNATOV, Vice-Governor of the Kaluga Region;
- Dr Gennady LOVETSKY, Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region;
- Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Deputy Head of the Department of the Regional Policies, Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation;
- Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Programme Officer, Council of Europe.

Presentation on: “The present-day situation with textbooks on national and world history of the 20th Century in secondary schools in the Russian Federation”, by Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Institute of General Education, Russian Academy of Education, Moscow.

11.00 - 11.30 **Break**

11.30 – 13.00 **Round Table on:** “New approaches in the preparation of textbooks on world history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation ”.

Chair: Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Institute of General Education, Russian Academy of Education, Moscow.

Presentation on: “Further steps in the preparation of new textbooks on world history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation ”, by Dr Petr BARANOV, Head of the History Chair, Pedagogical University, St. Petersburg.

Presentation on: “New approaches in the preparation of textbooks on the history of the 20th Century for present-day secondary schools: the example of the United Kingdom”, by

Mr Chris CULPIN, United Kingdom.

Discussion with all the participants.

13.00 – 14.30 **Lunch**

14.30 – 16.00 **Round Table on:** “New approaches in the preparation of textbooks on national history for secondary schools in the Russian Federation ”.

Chair: Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Deputy Head of the Department of the Regional Policies, Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation

Presentation on: “New practical steps in the preparation of new textbooks on national history for present-day secondary schools in the Russian Federation and expected challenges”, by MR Vladimir BARABANOV, Head of the Chair of Teaching History, State Pedagogical University, St.Petersburg.

Presentation on: “How German history textbooks for secondary schools published during the period of 1949-2000 present the history of national socialism (1933-1945)”, by Dr Heike MÄTZING, Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany.

Discussion with all the participants.

16.00 – 16.30 **Break**

16.30 – 18.00 **Round Table on:** “How the history of the 20th Century is reflected in regional history textbooks for secondary schools in the Russian Federation ”.

Chair: Dr Alexei KRUGOV, Responsible for the International relations in the State Stavropoul University

One representative from each of the regions should give a 10-15 minute presentation on:

- advantages and disadvantages in the presentation of the history of the 20th Century in regional history textbooks;
- how does the information given in regional textbooks on the history of the 20th Century correspond to interpretations of facts presented in textbooks on national history;
- the way in which recent events are presented in regional history textbooks: facts and interpretations;
- practical steps in the development of new approaches in the presentation of the history of the 20th Century in regional textbooks.

Discussion with all the participants.

19.30

Official Dinner

Tuesday 24 September 2002

09.30 – 10.00 Information of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation on the reform of history teaching in secondary schools in the Russian Federation, by Ms Tamara TULIAEVA, Leading Specialist, Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation.

10.00 – 11.00 **Working group Session**

Working group N° 1

Chair: Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Institute of General Education, Russian Academy of Education, Moscow

Rapporteur:

Resource person: Mr Chris CULPIN, United Kingdom.

Working group N° 2

Chair: Dr Petr BARANOV, Head of the History Chair, Pedagogical University, St. Petersburg

Rapporteur:

Resource person: Dr Heike MÄTZING, Germany.

11.00 – 11.30 **Break**

11.30 – 13.00 **Continuation of the Working Group Session**

13.00 – 14.30 **Lunch**

14.30 – 16.00 **Continuation of the Working Group Session**

16.00 – 17.00 **Continuation of the Working Group Session**

17.00 – 18.00 The rapporteurs should report to the General Rapporteur and the Secretariat on the conclusions and recommendations of the round tables and working groups. They should all prepare their texts in writing and submit a copy to the Secretariat. These texts will be included in the report of the Seminar.

19.30

Dinner

Wednesday 25 September 2002

10.00 – 11.00 **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Gennady LOVETSKY, Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region

Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations by the rapporteurs of the round tables and working groups;

Presentation of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar by the General Rapporteur.

Comments by the participants.

11.00 – 11.30 **Break**

11.30 – 12.30 **Closing speeches:**

Chair: Dr Gennady LOVETSKY, Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region

- Ms Tatiana MILKO, Programme Officer, Council of Europe;
- Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Deputy Head of the Department of the Regional Policies, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation;
- Dr Victor IGNATOV, Vice-Governor of the Kaluga Region
- Dr Gennady LOVETSKY, Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region.

12.30 – 14.00 **Lunch**

15.00 **Departure of the participants**

APPENDIX II

PRESENTATION BY CHRIS CULPIN, Director Schools History Project

“New Approaches in the Preparation of textbooks on the History of the 20th Century for present-day secondary schools: the example of the United Kingdom”

I should like to start by thanking the Council of Europe and Directorate General IV of the Russian Federation for making this Seminar possible and for inviting me to Kaluga to join you all.

There is a free market in textbooks for schools in the UK and textbooks are chosen and bought by teachers. Until about 30 years ago, they were mostly written by academics. As part of the enormous changes that have happened in textbooks since then, which I am going to describe, they are now almost exclusively written by teachers.

I am part of that change. I was a history teacher in secondary schools for eighteen years. Towards the end of that time I wrote a textbook on 20th century history which was widely used in the 1980s. Since 1986 I have been a self-employed writer of textbooks and other resources for secondary history in schools. I have written, or partly-written, over 40 textbooks in the last 20 years.

Let me just say something about those “other resources”. I help with scripts and ideas for Schools TV programmes, guides to museums and heritage sites, dramatic performances for schools and, more recently, websites. It may be that the time will come when pupils will work from computers and website resources. The British Broadcasting Corporation are starting next year on the production of “curriculum online”. This will not just be supplementary material –pictures, news film, stories – but core teaching materials for an

entire curriculum. Will we see the replacement of textbooks by web materials in the next ten years? Will teachers instruct their pupils to log on at the beginning of the lesson, instead of opening their textbooks? Will our discussions here be made irrelevant by a totally new kind of learning resource in our schools?

In my opinion, the answers to my questions are no, maybe and no. No but...

But textbooks will have to change if they are to provide the kinds of resources for learning which electronic media cannot.

History is, in the UK, still a heavily book-based subject. This autumn I am finishing off the writing and editing of a new series of 12 books for the 11 to 14 age range. We are then writing four more new books for the 14-16 age range, then starting to plan an entirely new series which won't see publication until 2006. So textbooks are alive and well in the UK. Certainly my future is with books, at least for quite a while.

In this presentation I want to talk about three things in relation to textbooks in the UK: *Change; pedagogy and interpretations.*

Changes in textbooks in the UK in the last 20 years

I can best illustrate the enormous changes that have taken place in textbooks in the UK in the last 20 years by showing you two books. The first (1)¹ was published in 1980 and was a popular textbook in its day. You can see that it consists mainly of text, with some pictures, or maps to provide some visual variation and to try to keep the children awake.

Compare that with this (2)², published earlier this year.

What lies behind the great visual differences that you see at once? Because don't make the mistake of thinking that no. 1 is a serious book and no. 2 is a bit of bedtime reading for little children: it isn't. What you see is the visual result of deep changes in pedagogy.

¹ The Twentieth Century World, by John Martell, published by Harrap, 1980

² The Trenches, by Dale Banham, published by John Murray, 2002

Changes in pedagogy

I know and understand that much of our discussion today will be about the nature of the history which textbooks should record and transmit to young people. But textbooks are vehicles, not only of *what* history should be learned, but of *how* it should be learned. In “The Twentieth Century World” John Martell has taken great care to provide an accurate account of events as he saw them: the textbook is an authority. The pedagogy it suggests and supports is that the pupils’ task is to read and learn about these events. The teacher’s task is to help and explain, to elaborate. The book gives little assistance to the teacher as to how to structure the lesson, but the assumption is an uncritical one: history is about the memorising of key events and narratives.

What kinds of learning is Dale Banham attempting to encourage in his book? Quite a number, of which I will draw attention to just three:

(i) Sources

For some twenty years now, teachers in the UK have made heavy use of historical sources in their teaching. The Schools History Project, of which I am the current Director, played a big part in this development and I can supply references if you should want to read about this in the literature. For example, here on this page we have a photograph and a text from the time. Elsewhere in the book, which is about the First World War, you will find newspaper accounts, letters, diaries, poems, paintings, cartoons from the time.

They are there for two reasons. First, to show that history is constructed from the evidence historians derive from sources. It does not spring, fully and irrevocably formed from the pens of important people with university degrees. The textbook can therefore give pupils the flavour of what the historical sources for a period are like.

Second, to develop pupils’ skills in making critical judgements of all kinds of sources. History teachers are well aware that one of their roles in the wider education of their

pupils is to equip them with the skills necessary to handle the huge range and amount of information, often politically or commercially loaded information, that they will have to deal with as adults. This whole book (“The Trenches”) works on this level. In 1916 the British government made a film about the fighting on the Western Front in that part of the conflict we call the battle of the Somme. The film is therefore one of the very first wartime propaganda films, intended by the British government to boost the morale of the civilian population. The film is widely available on video and the book encourages pupils to assess its accuracy against all the other sources of information available: the diaries, photos etc. In so doing, of course, they find out a great deal, not only about the war itself, but about how it was perceived at home and on the Front.

(ii) Enquiry

Notice the difference between the two chapter headings: Martell has “Communism in eastern Europe”; Banham has “Does other evidence support or challenge the film?” If you think this is too much about learning process, not enough about History, can I quote the following chapter headings from my third textbook example (3), a book I shall be returning to again: “Why did a murder lead to war in 1914?” “Did the Paris peace conference make a sensible settlement?” “How did new thinking destroy the Soviet Union?” and “Why is it so important to remember the Holocaust?”

Using questions to start an enquiry is a very fertile device. First, it sharpens up the lesson: what are the pupils going to do? Not just find out more than they knew yesterday, but find out the answer to an important historical question; it is a motivator. For teachers (and authors), an enquiry question sets the shape for the writing of a section. It helps to deal with the terrible problem of what to leave out and the other terrible problem of what shape to give the text.

Look at that Holocaust question, for example: this is a highly-controversial issue, about which a great deal is available: how are we going to select the facts, to make sense of it to our pupils? It is also teachable in all kinds of ways, as my colleague Dr. Mätzing will explore fully for us this afternoon. But this question establishes the focus of this

particular study on issues of commemoration: its purpose, and so its writing and teaching are crystal-clear.

If you are unsure about the power of enquiry questions, all I can say, to any teachers or authors or curriculum-planners here is: try it.

(iii) Active Learning

Is it just in the UK that not every pupil comes to school eager and fully-prepared to work hard at learning? Perhaps. But I can be sure that in any school, anywhere, pupils who are engaged with the topic they are studying will learn more, and more effectively. We know a great deal more these days about how human beings learn than we did 20 years ago. For teachers, the most important is that pupils make new learning by inter-acting with new facts and ideas and fitting them with what they know. This is an active process: the model is not one of vases being filled with water.

That explains much of what we see on this page: Four boxes headed “Activity” as well as one headed “Discussion”. We now expect our textbooks to support this kind of active learning, with Tasks outlining exactly what kinds of writing, talking and thinking pupils should do. The textbook has now taken over much more of the task of the teacher: the teacher used John Martell’s book (1) however, he or she liked. A teacher uses Dale Banham’s book (2) more or less along the lines that the author has set up. This may not be to everyone’s taste, but do not fear that textbooks like this turn the teacher into just an assistant: lots of skilful teaching is required. You need to be a skilled teacher yourself to make use of the lessons planned by another skilled teacher –the teacher-author.

I conclude this section by simply noting that teachers in the UK do seem to prefer this kind of textbook and buy them in big amounts.

Interpretations

The UK only adopted a National Curriculum in 1991. Strange as it may seem, as a head of history department in a school before that, I could decide what history was taught; so

could heads of department in all other schools. When the National Curriculum was introduced, therefore, we were all very suspicious of the dangers of a government telling teachers what to teach, determining the history curriculum for purposes of indoctrination. To allay fears of this kind, therefore, the government made clear that the National Curriculum should include, alongside the requirement to teach chronology, knowledge, causation, enquiries, source analysis –the things we might expect to see – this section:

Pupils should be taught:

- *How and why historical events, people, situations and changes have been interpreted in different ways*
- *To evaluate interpretations (4)*

So we are required to teach pupils that History is open to interpretations. How do we do that, in our textbooks? Let me give some examples.

1. In “Modern Minds”, the authors want to deal with racial differences in the UK today. This is a hot issue: Britain is a country which is dealing with racial and skin-colour prejudices, but there were still race-riots in some of our cities last year. What should history teachers do? Ignore the issue and look for a safe topic in the medieval period? No, certainly not. Has history anything to say to teenagers about this issue? Yes – after all, it is the very teenagers who are sitting in your classroom who, several hours later, are throwing stones at the police, or at other youngsters of a different colour.

The chapter heading in “Modern Minds” is: How should we write the history of black communities in Britain? Firstly, it values black Britons by recording their history. Secondly, it acknowledges that there is more than one story to be told. In this case, the pupils examine three stories, three different narratives, that can be told about black communities in Britain.

2. Interpretations of “The Blitz”. The Blitz is the name we give to the bombing of British cities in 1940-1, during the Second World War. In one interpretation, the bombing had little effect on the British people: they remained cheerful, patriotic,

resolute: morale did not waver in what some still call “the Blitz spirit”. This is not a post-war interpretation either, it was a story deliberately fostered by the British government. It was important to give the impression, to the rest of the population, and to the USA, which had not yet joined the war, that Britain was surviving and capable of enduring. It is still a popular view of those events.

Another interpretation is that there was near panic, that people did everything they could to get out of the cities, that British leaders and the King were deeply unpopular, and that the so-called “Blitz spirit” was created by the censored press.

In a recent textbook, awaiting publication, I have tried to raise pupils awareness of these two interpretations. Clearly pupils have to be taken back to examine the sources, in ways I described earlier. But sources can be found to support both interpretations. For example:

The task for pupils is:

- a. What caption would you write for this picture to show “the Blitz Spirit” was alive?
- b. What caption would you write for this picture to show that the Blitz caused chaos and demoralisation.
- c. The caption the censor gave in 1941 was: “*ARE THEY DOWN-HEARTED? NO! Blitztown: a Liverpool family, bombed out of their home, rest outside a reception centre [where homeless people were housed and fed] and wonder what they will do next. But there is no sign of sinking spirits, just a good-natured acceptance of fate.*” What impression of the results of the Blitz was the censor trying to create?

So, here I am trying to use the textbook to explain and deconstruct the process of how interpretations are made.

3. Heroes. When I was a child much of the history taught to me was in the form of the lives of great heroes. In the last two decades heroes have largely disappeared from our textbooks – or at least the two-dimensional, all-powerful British heroes of past textbooks. There are several reasons for this. History teachers are not so happy with a curriculum which focusses heavily on white, upper class men. But pupils too are less at ease with simple heroes. Secondary age pupils read newspapers which reveal that many of the old-

fashioned heroes: sportsmen, politicians, members of the Royal Family, filmstars are not so pure and wholesome.

This gives scope for some interesting work on heroes. In a book published in 1988 (5) I looked at King Alfred, the only English king to be called “The Great”. (I am sorry this example has to be taken from an earlier period of history). The sources, the text and the tasks set the pupil up to consider the label, the interpretation “Great”, and whether Alfred deserved it.

4. The Twentieth Century. The National Curriculum requirement quoted above allows us to analyse even the National Curriculum itself. In England, most 13-14 year olds spend that year studying the Twentieth Century. But the events they are required to study are listed as: *The First World War, the Second World War and the Cold War*.

In this case the interpretation to open up to pupils is the selection: are these three wars really what we want British children to remember the 20th century for? In a book to be published in 2003 I have raised this in the conclusion: now that the Twentieth Century is over, what was it about? Pupils then examine various interpretations, under the title: “The Age of...what?”

As you can see, the Activity for the pupils – having been through the book, is to research the evidence for different interpretations of the Twentieth Century. At the end of that, they can examine the National Curriculum interpretation, that the three wars were the key events.

5. The British Empire. For most of my life, the British Empire has been one of the hardest topics to teach or write about. For one group of people the Empire was the greatest British achievement, the greatest contribution Britain made to the world, and a great sadness that it is all over. For another group, it was brutal, exploitative, racist and an unrelieved evil. Only now, some 50 years after it began to be dismantled, are we beginning to have a more rational discussion about it. One of our historians is doing a major TV series next month. We are publishing a book for 13-year olds on it. The ability

to deal openly with interpretations is the safeguard against doctrinal standpoints, and opens up these sensitive issues for pupils. Let me end therefore by giving some chapter headings from this book:

- Empire Builders: Do heroes make history?
(Find out why James Wolfe and Robert Clive are regarded as British Imperial heroes and decide if they deserve the title)
- Empire and Slavery: How can we tell the story of Britain's slave trade?
- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
(Decide what you would put in a museum of the British Empire)

I would argue, therefore, that the best way of handling differing views of history is not to get them sanitised and pre-judged before any pupils encounter them: give them the interpretations to analyse: what do people disagree about? Why do they disagree?

The world in the 21st century is a complex place. Citizens in a democracy have to be very well-educated in order to exercise their rights effectively. History has a tremendous contribution to make to this task and the textbooks should offer pathways to teachers in handling these difficult issues.

References

1. The Twentieth Century World, by John Martell, published by Harrap, 1980.
2. The Trenches, by Dale Banham, published by John Murray, 2002
3. Modern Minds, by Jamie Byrom, Christine Counsell, Michael Gorman, Derek Peaple and Michael Riley, published by Longmans, 1999.
4. The National Curriculum for England (revised 1999) p20. (www.nc.uk.net)
5. Past into Present 1, by Chris Culpin and David Linsell, published by Collins, 1988

APPENDIX III

PRESENTATION BY HAIKE MAETZING, University Lecturer, Technical University of Braunschweig

The presentation of dictatorship in German Textbooks since 1949 and after 1990

I Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If you were to ask today 100 young people who had just graduated from school which is the most prominent event in German history in the 20th Century, the reply would without doubt be “National Socialism”. And if you were to ask the same question about German History since its beginning, you would receive the same answer again.

The Third Reich and the Holocaust are the dominant events in the conception of history in present-day Germany beyond which nearly all other traces of the national past almost disappear completely. In a similar way, many history students look at me amazed if I explain that German history begins in the Middle Ages. We will see later how this thinking influences the national consciousness of young people. At any rate, this view of history has been strongly influenced by school education and history textbooks. However, the way of dealing with dictatorship and the way of remembrance has changed significantly since 1949.

I would like to demonstrate this according to the textbooks of West Germany. Textbooks of the DDR are not included in the survey. But if we deal with the conception of German history of the 20th Century, and especially since 1990 including the past of the DDR, then at least the question is being raised regarding how the Germans deal with this recent way of dictatorship.

Therefore, I have somehow widened the scope of my lecture, hoping that the comparative view of history textbooks of 1990's may be a clarifying contribution.

II The presentation of the National socialism

First let us deal with the National Socialism and its presentation in textbooks, which is always combined with the presentation of the history of the Second World War.

In this comparative survey, it is obvious that in the fifties the Second World War is dealt with to a greater extent, whereas the time of dictatorship is reserved to some few pages. Some books even described history only until 1939. But even books which dealt with National Socialism only briefly mentioned the terror and persecution of the regime, including the persecution of Jews and the Holocaust. The final responsibility was exclusively associated with Hitler, and any other politicians of the regime or the SS were hardly mentioned. The German people were shown as victims who didn't know anything about the holocaust and who were unable to resist the regime of terror. A similar identity was typical for the total society busy primarily with reconstruction from the ruins of the war and not asking questions concerning the recent past.

But this way of historical description was heavily criticized at the end of the 1960's by those sons and daughters born immediately after the end of the war. They wanted to know what role their parents played during the time of National Socialism and what their responsibilities were. In this context, the Eichmann-trial, which took place in 1961, played a significant role. But the questions and protests of the next generation were not directed only against the relation of history but instead against the political system.

Above all, the student generation felt the rupture from the Third Reich to be insufficient knowing for example that people in public service belonged to that category which carried responsibility before 1945. This resulted in the so-called 1968 Revolution which changed the political order of the Federal Republic of Germany decisively; these were years which also influenced the future conception of history.

Looking at the statistics, you will notice that since the 1970's the time of dictatorship was constantly increasing thereby raising the significance of National Socialism in the conception of history. The increased context deals mainly with the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, some books even summarize these events in special chapters.

But other victims of the regime, so far not mentioned – like for instance those of the Sinti and Roma concentration camps or homosexuals – also began to appear now in textbooks for the first time.

Likewise, the description of the Resistance is being differentiated. Until the 1960's, pupils only read the texts on the assassination attempt carried out by the military on 20 July 1944. Since the 1970s, and especially under the influence of the new policy of Willy Brandt towards the East, textbooks now also deal with the large number of persecuted and murdered communists. Due to political conditions, this information did not fit the scene of West Germany's conception of history in the years before.

The textbooks of the 1970's do not suppress anything, but in combination with a more explicit presentation of victims and the Resistance, the question of responsibility and guiltiness is being raised. Somehow the sole concentration on Hitler is lessened; now the names of other politicians are also being mentioned. However, only 50 years after the end of dictatorship and the Second World War, the grandchildren and great grandchildren formulate clear opinions on the collective and individual guiltiness of their ancestors.

In this way, the history of National Socialism and before all the genocide has gained increasing importance since the 1970's, thus becoming more or less the most extensive theme of the 20th Century in present textbooks. This implies, however, that German history as a whole is reflected less. The 12- year dictatorship and their crimes became the most prominent datum of national history not only in history lessons at school. In German lessons, the children are involved in literature dealing with the Holocaust instead of Goethe, Schiller and Lessing.

What does this mean in relation to national consciousness? While the genocide is the central point of historical tradition, the feeling of national identity is expressed today by negation. Even though for present day 20-year-olds, the time from 1933–1945 seems to be as far away as the First World War, they feel a certain discomfort in confessing their German descent. Reviewing the national past, they see rather the dark side and little positivism.

This assessment refers to West Germany not to the people of East Germany, because the GDR had different views on National Socialism. We will not deal with these differences here. Instead, as proposed before, I would rather like to describe briefly how the textbooks published after the reunion deal with the history of the GDR and the second German dictatorship in the 20th century.

III The role of the DDR dictatorship

Compared to the first years after 1949, no violation of human rights was suppressed after the reunion of the two parts of Germany; indeed, on the contrary. After the collapse of the regime in 1989, the citizens of the former Federal Republic in particular as well as the young generation of the former GDR were asking for those who were guilty and responsible. The extent of criminal actions was comparatively less intensive and in no way to be compared with the time of National Socialism. The Stasi was the focus of concern and interest while the media reports transmitted the impression that the majority of the East German population were engaged as undercover agents and spys. In this way, many West Germans increasingly felt as if they had been on the right side. Apart from this, the economic situation meant that they felt themselves to be the winners, whereas the people of the East were considered to be the losers. In my opinion, the splitting of the German population in such a way is the greatest difference compared to other post-communistic states. In addition, a change of the elite took place in East Germany. The leading persons of the former GDR were replaced by persons of the old Federal Republic of Germany. This is one of the reasons why we have hardly any authors left at publishers of textbooks for public schools in the former GDR. But what is the view of West German authors on the history of the GDR?

Also before the reunion of the two German states, the GDR was a subject of history lessons in schools, but the perspective changed consequently after 1990. Before 1989, the textbooks were reserved against the totalitarian system, but because the DDR had a sovereign status, repression, the Stasi, the order to kill, and refugees were simply not mentioned. After the reunion, there was no need to exclude these facts any more.

However, for publishing companies and authors of textbooks the question as to what role and significance the history of the GDR should play in different textbooks was essential. Should the time of two separated states only be interpreted as a period of transition or was it preferable to interpret the 40 years of GDR existence from its own development? The answer would determine the greater or lesser number of pages of the textbooks.

Related to the contents, it had to be decided whether the Stasi or the violation of human rights should play a central role, or whether positive aspects of the GDR regime should also be dealt with in the textbooks. These questions alone demonstrate the field of tensions that concerned the authors of textbooks. In this context, it is essential to stress their importance as a contribution to the process of inner unification.

Investigating these textbooks thoroughly, we encounter very different presentations of the history of the GDR. This is of course also related to the fact that each of the 16 German states has developed their own points of view. At present, approximately 300 books are available for teaching history at public schools. I would like to present two examples of opposite extremes. According to my experience, the first book is of low quality, whereas the second example is very well done. The quality of most other books is found somewhere in between.

Only one page from a total of 127 describes the history of the GDR: one half of the page deals with the constitution of the GDR, and the other half of the page is made up of pictures which illustrate the rebellion of workers on 17 June 1953 and the construction of the wall in 1961. Only the totalitarian character of the regime is depicted. A further page summarizes the demonstrations in the GDR and the jubilation during the tearing down of the wall. The main issue is consequently: All's well that ends well, although the pupils have learnt hardly anything of the GDR. Now let us look at the positive example which is however used in high schools.

Here we find a special chapter on the theory of socialism and its practice in the Soviet Union and in China. 50 out of 288 pages deal with German history after 1945.

The history of East and West Germany is dealt with in separate chapters as well as in the whole context. Subjects of common interest are for instance dwelling and youth. Eight pages are reserved for separate chapters on the FRG and the GDR, whereas the common history occupies 14 pages. Many subjects of everyday life are presented in this book. Its purpose is obviously to make the youths understand what happened in the GDR. Here, above all, the aim of the authors was to contribute to the process of inner unification of the German people. This is also shown by the following task and exercise:

“Experiences are often not mentioned in history textbooks. However, we should know them if we want to understand this time. Therefore, before you elaborate the following pages question your parents, grandparents and relatives. Ask their opinion on the three subjects depicted on the [...] page: The prostration of Willy Brandt in Warsaw, the state visit of Erich Honecker in Bonn and the peaceful revolution in the GDR. We will investigate how the people perceived these events.” (p. 217)

At the same time, we also find positive comments on the GDR, for instance in the case of social security. The construction of the wall and the Stasi are mentioned, but on 2 pages they are not dominating. Instead, one whole chapter describes “everyday life in the late GDR” and reports on the significance of family and friendship. This book is indeed an exception, because in the first years after the reunification, judgements on the DDR were rarely differentiated or not even positive. This was obviously prevented by the winner mentality.

IV Summary

The presentation of the dictatorship after 1949 and after 1990 was significantly different. This is obvious alone due to the unbelievable crimes of the NS Dictatorship. In spite of that, there also seem to be similarities. Initially the crimes of the NS Dictatorship were hidden, whereas later they became the dominant focus of the whole German History. The presentation of the GDR dictatorship concentrated in the beginning on the crimes as the centre of interest, and the remaining historical everyday context is hardly mentioned.

Consequently only negative events dominate the present historical consciousness of 20th century and therefore textbooks.

The NS-Dictatorship as well as the GDR-history are not embedded in the long duration of German History. The National Socialism appears to be the pivotal point of the history in total. The GDR is rather excluded from the actual historic consciousness. The latter originates not at least in the traditional rejection of the historical materialism by German historiography since the end of the 19th Century. With this background, it is difficult even at present to accept the socialistic GDR as part of the national past. In spite of that, both the NS-Dictatorship and the GDR history are parts of the common German past, which is rooted in the Middle Ages. Therefore, I plead for a historical consciousness which spans the total national past and which integrates both the positive and the negative sides of history. Only in this way will the next generation receive a historical consciousness which provides an orientation for the future.

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

GENERAL RAPPORTEUR

Dr Vladimir BATSYN, Deputy Head of the Department for Regional Policies, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, Chistiye Prudy, 5, MOSCOW, Russian Federation

Tel: + 7 095 923 87 12 Fax: + 7 095 925 72 75

SPEAKERS

Dr Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Head of the Laboratory of History, Russian Academy of Education, Pogodinskaya pl., 8, 19905 MOSCOW, Russian Federation

Tel: + 7 095 246 14 44 Fax: +7 095 246 21 11

Dr. Heike Christina MÄTZING, University Lecturer, Technical University of Braunschweig, Department of History, Pockelsstr.11, 38106 Braunschweig, Germany

Fax: + 49 531 391 82 16 h.maetzing@tu-bs.de

Mr Chris CULPIN, 1, Tuckers Lane, Castle Cary, GB – SOMERSET, BA7 7LH ,United Kingdom

Fax: + 44 1963 350 678 chris.culpin@tesco.net

MOSCOW

Dr Tatiana KOVAL, Associate Professor, History Department, State Pedagogical Institute

ST. PETERSBURG

Dr Petr BARANOV, Head of the History Chair, Pedagogical University

Mr Vladimir BARABANOV, Head of the Chair of Teaching History, State Pedagogical University.

THE REPUBLIC OF ADIGEYA

Dr Kazbek ACHMIZ, Director of the Pedagogical College

THE STAVROPOUL REGION

Dr Alexei KRUGOV, Responsible for the International relations in the State Stavropoul University

THE REPUBLIC OF KARELIA

Mr Anatoly KARMAZIN, Deputy Minister of Education

The BRYANSK REGION

Dr Victore LUPOYADOV, Head of the Chair, Institute for the Initial and In-service Training of Teachers of the Bryansk region

The KOSTROMA REGION

Ms Elena LUSHINA, Rector of the Institute for the Initial and In-service Training of Teachers of the Kostroma Region

THE TULA REGION

Dr Natalia ORLYHINA, Institute for the Initial and In-service Training of Teachers of the Tula Region

THE KALUGA REGION

Dr Victor IGNATOV, Vice-Governor of the Kaluga Region

Dr Gennady LOVETSKY, Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region

Ms Ludmila BYLENKO, Leading Specialist, the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region

Ms Tatiana BOYKO, Deputy Head of the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region

Mr Petr SYMONENKO, Head of the Section, the Education and Science Department of the Kaluga Region

Ms Lubov NEZNANOVA, Head of the Education Department of the Jukovsk Region

Dr Maksim KAZAK, Dean of the History Faculty, State Kaluga Pedagogical University

Dr Anatoly STYRIN, Head of World History Department, State Kaluga Pedagogical University

Ms Lubov FILATOVA, Associate Professor, State Kaluga Pedagogical University
Ms, Secondary school N° 4, Kodorovo
Ms Natalia KOLOBAEVA, History teacher, Secondary school N° 9, Kaluga
Ms Ludmila KPZLOVA, History teacher, Secondary school N° 15, Kaluga
Mr Alexander LOPUOKHOV, History teacher, Secondary school N° 24, Kaluga
Dr Vladimir KUORKOV, History teacher, Secondary school N° 48, Kaluga

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Ms Tatiana MILKO
Programme Officer
History Education Section
Directorate IV, Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport
Tel: + 333 88 41 36 97 Fax: + 333 88 41 27 50/56
E-mail: tatiana.milko@coe.int