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Seminar on

“New approaches in teaching about conflicts in school
history”

Moscow, Russian Federation

25 – 26 April 2006

Strasbourg

Seminar on

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in school history”**

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Report by

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

CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	7
II.	SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSIONS	9
III.	SUMMARY OF ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS	20
IV.	SEMINAR RECOMMENDATIONS	27

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I	Programme	29
APPENDIX II	Round Table discussions and list of questions.....	33
APPENDIX III	List of participants.....	35

I. INTRODUCTION

The seminar “**New approaches in teaching about conflicts in school history**” was held in Moscow in the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia on 25–26 April 2006 and was jointly organised by the Council of Europe, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, and the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia in the framework of the Joint Programme of Cooperation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the Russian Federation

The aims of the seminar were as follows:

- look at how conflicts are currently being taught in schools in the Russian Federation;
- analyse how to improve teaching about conflicts in school history using new methods and approaches;
- discuss the ways in which new methods could help pupils to acquire conflict resolution skills.

The seminar participants were the Heads of Educational boards, university professors, school teachers, school textbook authors, and practising psychologists from eight Russian regions (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Republic of Karelia, Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, Stavropol, Tver, Khabarovsk and Kaliningrad), Council of Europe representatives (Ms Tatiana Minkina-Milko, History Education Division, Administrator, Ms Fiona Kennedy, History Education Division, Administrative Assistant; expert Ms Cheryl Stafford, Advisory Officer for History, South Eastern Education and Library Board, Northern Ireland; and Dr Ljudmila Hoppe, Humboldt University, Germany). The total number of participants was 32.

Three plenary sessions with presentations and round table discussions on the seminar programme allowed the participants to fully express their points of view and exchange opinions.

The seminar was opened on 25 April 2006 with opening addresses from representatives of the organising bodies. Academician Vladimir Filipov, Rector of the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia opened the seminar. He stressed the importance of cooperation with the Council of Europe in the domain of school education and crossnational relationships which are, to a large extent, shaped by society. Academician Filipov stressed the significance of the choice of the seminar’s location, made by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and the Council of Europe, as Moscow is a city that has always been multicultural. The Peoples’ Friendship

University of Russia is a spectacular example of international cooperation and has wide experience in using intercultural dialogue in young people's education. He also mentioned that the seminar addressed issues of great importance, not only to Russia and Moscow, but also to the world as a whole, as the problem of tolerance towards nations and confessions can be both sensitive and painful. He noted that in addition to different forms of national cultural organisations, general knowledge about international relationships is equally essential.

Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Head of the Department for International Relations, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, also welcomed the participants and underlined the paramount importance of the issues to be discussed. She also pointed out that the cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian education system had reached a new level, having moved from specialised seminars to diverse work, not only with teachers but also sociologists, psychologists and special needs teachers. The main point that Ms Efremova made was that a teacher has a fundamental role in the world of globalisation as school history courses promote consolidation among peoples in the Russian Federation, social interests and harmonisation in dialogue and tolerance in a broader context.

Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Administrator, History Education Division, Council of Europe, spoke about Council of Europe international cooperation programmes and implementation of initiatives in history education, and teaching conflicts in school history and laid down the seminar's goals and objectives. She stressed the teacher's role in preventing conflicts among pupils, accurate treatment of conflicts in school history and development of dialogue forms in teaching history. Ms Tatiana Minkina-Milko also noted the need for history teachers to have necessary competences and pointed out the role of initial and in-service teacher training systems in this process.

II. SUMMARY OF PLENARY SESSIONS

Four presentations were made at the plenary sessions.

The presentation on **“New approaches in teaching about conflicts through history: an example of Northern Ireland”** was made by Council of Europe expert, **Ms Cheryl STAFFORD, the United Kingdom**. The speaker began by pointing out the difficulties in teaching history in Northern Ireland. For 30 years, Northern Ireland has lived through a period known as the “Troubles”, during which the IRA tried to gain independence from Britain through terrorism. The IRA wanted to unite the whole of Ireland and remove the British occupation of the North. In contrast, half of the population of Northern Ireland see themselves as British and do not want reunification with the rest of Ireland and, as a result, some Unionists also resorted to terrorism during the 30 years to fight against the IRA. In such circumstances, teachers have to compete with powerful forces in the family, community and beyond for the minds and hearts of the young people.

The speaker then made the point that teaching about conflict should not become merely an academic examination of the past. The following suggestions illustrate this:

Approaches

We have pictures painted on our streets by terrorist groups. Our young people get a street history which is distorted by different groups presenting stereotypical views and this is used to fuel hatred between the two communities.

By analysing historical pictures we can teach students to work with illustrations.

Pupils discuss the emotional impact of pictures from both sides of the conflict. Both the feelings that the pictures instil, and the historical reliability of street art, are reviewed. Working with pictures, it is important that students make the connection with how history is being used today for a political purpose. The questions asked of sources are very important to ensure that pupils examine the sources correctly.

Living graphs

Young people see historical events as just another boring story about the past and living graphs is a way of engaging them.

Using the Internet

There has recently been a huge development of Internet resources for pupils studying conflicts in school history. It has, however, highlighted the need for the development of critical thinking in using sources in history. Students are asked to analyse an Irish

website commemorating the Irish struggle for Independence and are encouraged to think about the language used to determine whether or not this interpretation is valid.

Films

In Ms Stafford's opinion, the current generation of students is a video generation. This makes films and video a powerful pedagogical tool when looking at conflicts in the past. She also made the point that films can reinforce the passive viewing and unquestioning acceptance of received material that goes hand-in-hand with growing up in a video environment. History teachers need to promote critical viewing skills amongst their pupils.

Circle time

Ms Stafford said that she and her colleagues have recently developed a circle time method for history class. Circle time is when the desks are pushed to side of the room and pupils sit in a circle. They are given some stimulus material such as cartoons and are asked to share with the group their response to these cartoons and what they are saying about the past and society today. This methodology is aimed at helping to address hearts as well as minds of students as they study the history of conflict in Ireland, Britain, Europe and the world. Circle time is a useful methodology for teachers to use after a controversial issue has been studied.

Exit cards

Not all young people express their opinion during discussion of controversial and sensitive issues in a history class. Exit cards allow a teacher to make adjustments in content or methodology that will better meet the needs of the group. It is also an important opportunity for teachers to hear from some of the less vocal members of the class. Students respond to the following three questions on an index card:

1. What did you hear, feel, or experience today that affirmed your thinking?
2. What do you wish you had heard, felt or experienced today?
3. What questions or thoughts are you left with today?

Reflective journaling

In order to make connections between the past and present, a reflective journal is a powerful tool for young people to process what they are learning and how it will make a difference in how they will act in their society. The journal is like a diary which is

private to a student. After a controversial issue has been studied, a teacher can ask young people to consider how learning about this event has impacted them, what have they learned about how other people felt and what small steps are they going to take to make Northern Ireland a better place.

Teaching about conflicts in school history is problematic but an absolute necessity. If teachers avoid these controversial and sensitive areas then pupils will receive distorted views in their community about the past. A full range of methodologies which places a young person at the centre of their own enquiry about the past is much more successful than pupils passively receiving a narrative.

The presentation on “**How training special needs teachers in Humboldt University in Berlin can help them to handle crossnational conflicts amongst pupils**” was made by **Dr Ljudmila HOPPE, Humboldt University, Germany**. In her presentation, Dr Hoppe suggested that the following aspects of special needs training be reviewed in crossnational conflict resolution:

The purpose of acculturalisation in present-day society in Germany

Dr Hoppe remarked that people with different ethnic, national, social and economic background and cultural and ethical values living together represent a “dormant volcano” that can become active and erupt into a conflict at any time.

Different conflicts can occur not only between the local population majority and the migrant minority but also between different minorities.

The purpose of the **acculturalisation** of the modern Federal Republic of Germany can be represented in the following forms: integration, inclusion, segregation, assimilation or separation, marginalisation, exclusion and discrimination. The global objective of acculturalisation is the **integration** of immigrants.

This goal can be reached by the politics of inclusion (insertion), segregation (meaning differentiation) and assimilation (adaptation) but by no means separation (detachment), marginalisation (edging to the outskirts of society), exclusion (expulsion) and discrimination (separation and derogation).

External and internal conflict resolution in the education process in multicultural society in Germany

This part of Dr Hoppe’s presentation dealt with intercultural conflicts that start at the conflict of interests, needs and ambitions of one or several individuals or groups and can be resolved by peaceful or non-violent methods.

The cross-cultural conflict between the majority of Germans and minorities of other nations is about political equality, legal status, forms and possibilities for cultural development.

Intercultural conflicts can be associated with social discrimination, nationalism, xenophobia and religious disputes. There is always a basis for conflicts arising and escalating in a multinational and multiconfessional society.

The speaker then reviewed the types of conflicts both within groups and those concerning behavioural differences.

Facts that influence pedagogical strategies for crosscultural conflict resolution

Dr Hoppe reported on the results from research carried out on factors influencing pedagogical strategies for crosscultural conflict resolution. Students studying to become special education teachers in Berlin and students who are doing their two-year internship in different types of schools after the first state exam in Hamburg, and primary school teachers in Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfallen and in Berlin participated in this research.

The study showed that pedagogical strategies of teachers and interns depend on:

- sociodemographic characteristics (age, sex, nationality: German or not, etc.),
- education;
- pedagogical and real life experience of German population contacts;
- knowledge about other cultures;
- beliefs and readiness for acculturalisation;
- nationalism and chauvinism aptitude;
- liability to authoritarianism;
- competence and control of the teaching process;
- social support;
- teaching load;
- classroom atmosphere and pupils' attitude to cultural differences.

Possible inter-ethnic conflict resolution and prevention methods in the social pedagogical process

Analysis of causes and motives of ethnic conflicts

In this part of the presentation Dr Hoppe cited a well-known Russian conflictologist, G. I. Kozyrev: "Cross-ethnic conflicts go through the same development stages as any other conflict but with specific features. They can become a part of other conflicts embracing social conflicts. If the subject of antagonism, despite causes of a conflict, belongs to a

different ethnic group, the conflict will acquire an ethnic tone and become dominantly ethnical at a particular stage”.

The speaker then gave characteristics of cross-ethnic conflict development and the types of intercultural conflict. According to Dr Hoppe, the sociocultural conflicts are the most common.

Conditions for acquiring conflict-resolution skills

Dr Hoppe considered that the following is required in order to acquire conflict-resolution skills:

- suppression of influences;
- knowing the causes for a particular behaviour of those from other cultures;
- analysing one's own thoughts and actions;
- respecting, recognising and accepting the beliefs of other cultures;
- improving conflict prevention competences.

Cross-ethnic conflict resolution

The speaker listed the steps towards conflict resolution:

- detecting the degree to which parties are involved in creating a conflict;
- understanding the role played by, and the power of, each party in a conflict;
- identifying misunderstandings;
- defining the limits of mutual claims;
- foreseeing the consequences of a conflict;
- changing the behaviour of parties in a conflict.
- preventing further exacerbation of a conflict and occurrence of new conflicts;
- resolving a conflict.

The speaker then focused on intercultural conflict prevention and resolution methods.

Dr Hoppe noted that an important step towards conflict resolution is the willingness to resolve a conflict. She provided an overview of common intercultural conflict resolution methods: “an authoritative third” and “a mediator”.

Dr Hoppe said that there are two universities in Germany in Hagen (Fern Universität in Hagen) and Frankfurt an der Oder (Universität in Frankfurt am Oder), that offer degrees in mediation (Master of Mediation). She explained that there is a tendency in Germany towards peaceful cross-ethnic conflict resolution. A non-violent cross-ethnic and

interreligious conflict resolution movement has recently been created for high school students.

The presentation on **“Conflicts in history versus conflicts in their interpretation consequences”** was made by **Dr Yury TROYTSKY, Deputy Director, Institute of History and Philology, Moscow.**

The speaker noted that the topic of this seminar is becoming increasingly relevant; one only has to turn on the radio or TV to see evidence of this. Most conflicts have deep roots that may or may not be included in national history textbooks.

The conflict as such is an inevitable outcome of any multiethnic and multicultural community; all areas of human life contain conflicts. Moreover, conflict is a source for development with one condition: the limits and forms of conflict must not exceed the extreme and must be resolved in a timely fashion. There is a specialised area of science called conflictology which studies conflict situations.

The speaker then noted that, if we analyse types of conflicts (including historical) we can identify the following categories: economic, social, political, confessional, cultural and spiritual. Needless to say, this is not a strict typology because a real conflict is a multifaceted phenomenon which usually combines several of the above-mentioned categories. It is more important to separate the elements of facts and myths which are characteristic of all controversial events. Myths influence the mass consciousness of many generations and even professional historians. Events such as the battle of the Neva, Ivan the Terrible's Oprichnina and the Decembrist movement are much better represented in historiography than other equally important events in the history of Russia. The famous French historian Pierre Nora referred to such events as “memory sites”.

Dr Troytsky underlined the fact that a history textbook is the space where facts and historical mythology are in conflict and, unfortunately, many school textbook authors assume that mythology has the leading role in youth education.

There is an isomorphism (likeness in form) between a real conflict and a narrative conflict. In Dr Troytsky's opinion, the notion of narrative understanding, introduced by Paul Ricoeur, works well. The narrative understanding was defined by this researcher as “the more detailed the story, the better the understanding”. This definition could be amended as follows “the more detailed and diversified the story, the better the understanding”. The addition of the word “diversified” means different viewpoints are introduced into the narrative not by simply recounting the story, which always causes distortion, but by using citations. It allows students to use different approaches and styles.

If the sources from both sides are equally represented when describing a historical conflict, it will encourage pupils to take an active position and to develop their individual attitude towards an event.

Even the most controversial events are portrayed in textbooks by focusing on the faultlessness of political decisions and practices, such as the Chechen problem.

The speaker considered that the assumption of political authorities that their decisions are infallible and impartial does them a disservice; we are well aware how present-day textbooks are written.

Dr Troytsky then asked the question: what possible solutions can be found?

1. Developed societies solve many problems with the use of rhetoric;
2. How can conflicts be represented in textbooks? Dr Troytsky believes that there are four levels to a description of a conflict:
 - (i) an empirical description, i.e. a concise historical reconstruction of a conflict. Here we can be guided by the notion of narrative understanding (P. Ricœur);
 - (ii) a logical description, i.e. a generalisation of a conflict situation using categories, notions and terms;
 - (iii) an ethnical description, i.e. the reconstruction of values and intentions of those involved in a conflict – customs, traditions, habits, mentality, etc.;
 - (iv) a psychological description, i.e. presupposing the individual and group psychological orientations of the parties to a conflict. The emotional sphere of a conflict is analysed at this level.

From the point of view of the speaker, these four analytical levels can provide a comprehensive description of any conflict.

3. School textbooks need to become a space for interpreting conflicts (Paul Ricœur's expression);
4. School history should become an "egohistory", i.e. an author's history;
5. The new type of textbooks does not contain dominating opinions of historians or methodologists; it is a developing educational environment that provides a space for current as well as future development (Lev Vygotsky).

The team headed by Dr Troytsky has created a series of new egohistorical textbooks which meet promote tolerance and, at the same time, are in line with the latest

achievements of history as a science. An electronic history education environment has also been created.

A presentation on “**How inter-confessional conflicts are reflected in school world history**” was made by **Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH, Head of the Department of History of Religions, St. Petersburg State University**. She noted that it is very complicated to create religious and national tolerance as well as inter-confessional and intercultural dialogue in a society. Consequently, what is of key importance is the study of the historical and cultural basis of world religions in the framework of humanities. History plays a leading role in this process, in particular, when regional history is taught in the context of world history.

Compulsory secondary education standards aim to develop a notion of citizenship, shape national identity and the general outlook on the basis of reasoning about historically acquired cultural, religious, ethnical and national traditions, ethnical and social orientations and an ideological doctrine. In learning history, pupils not only gain knowledge about the historical and cultural basis of world religions but also an understanding of their values and ethnical practices. This knowledge allows students to understand how religion is an indispensable element of world culture, as it is the basis for national and confessional tolerance, and can help to prevent religious and national conflicts, extremism, fanaticism and xenophobia.

Teaching history and history of world religions in schools calls for a focus on presentation and interpretation, not only of controversial and debatable events, but also issues connected with interconfessional relations and relations between believers and non-believers.

Professor Shakhnovich touched upon theoretical and methodological difficulties of school history, both in general terms and concerning teaching about history of religions.

Firstly, we live in a world of cultural diversity, with mentalities, beliefs and practices which differ from our own.

Secondly, the problem of choice is very important. The words to which we give a particular meaning in our culture can be perceived differently in a different culture, and can consequently cause misunderstanding and even a conflict.

Thirdly, existing religions not only consist of religious representations documented in sacred texts and dogmas, but also of everyday traditions of life with their particular logic which is, at times, unlike these dogmas or may even contradict them.

Fourthly, many researchers suggest that a “we and others” dichotomy is one of the most fundamental in the history of human thinking. A Russian ethnologist A. K. Baiburin

studied this phenomenon and came to the conclusion that it can be found in any crisis. An understanding of ourselves and others in fact forms an integral system.

One of the key humanistic objectives in teaching history of world religions is dissemination of unbiased information about world religions. This knowledge will help pupils understand why E. Chudinova's book "The Paris Virgin Mosque" provokes extremism and leads to conflict, and why Jerusalem is the city of three religions and, at the same time, the Middle East a political discord apple.

Teaching history and history of world religions should become an important means to develop tolerance, communicative culture and cross-cultural dialogue. It is important to note that teaching history and history of world religions does not exclude religious education, which can still exist in parallel and can even be propaedeutic.

Courses on learning history and culture of world religions can be included in the overall teaching of literature, geography, social sciences and, of course, history.

The most important challenge in introducing history and culture of world religions into school curricula is the creation of manuals using the latest technologies, as well as improving initial and in-service teacher training.

In conclusion, Professor Shakhnovich stressed that present-day schools in a multicultural society face new challenges that require not only the preservation, accrual and further development of national cultures and the culture of Russia as a whole, but also positive intercultural dialogue, including interconfessional and international dialogue based on mutual respect and tolerance.

Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow, made a presentation on **"How history teaching could help to resolve social conflicts in present-day society"**. She noted that society today focuses on solving crucial problems, in particular those concerned with youth education, the relations between youth and society, and their social behaviour. In this context, the issue of tolerance, which requires intercultural communication in the educational process takes on a special meaning.

In order to promote conditions, methods and forms of tolerance, one needs to understand that youths today live in a new multilingual information space, with different cultural channels which are not always regulated by parents, school, or society, and where they are in contact with their peers who speak different languages, etc.

To enable young people to learn, understand and value one's own culture, and to respect cultures of other peoples, educational content needs to be changed at all levels. The Russian educational system is becoming increasingly multinational; learning about other

nations inside and outside a classroom, and by communicating with children of different nationalities, one can help to create an unprejudiced outlook. Seeing a multicultural environment as an enriching factor can provide development in ethnocultural interaction, and can promote respect and harmonisation of interests and aspirations. In this regard, constructive and conflict-free dialogue can take place. Dialogue is not only a tool for gaining knowledge, but it also determines a creative combination of meanings and ideas. Social, racial, national, age-related and religious diversity influence relationships and may lead to misunderstanding, irreconcilability and intolerance. Intolerance leads to a conflict which in turn results in bloodshed. Solutions to this problem require proper teacher training.

The speaker then defined methods of resolving social conflicts through the history teaching.

Today, according to the speaker, one of the main elements of world socio-pedagogical philosophy is that of “peace culture”. Thus, in some schools in different cultures courses on “peace education” have been introduced to teach about the colossal damage caused by the arms race, the incompatibility of wars with the respect of human rights and interests, the danger in resolving conflicts by force. However, the idea of peace education cannot be limited to one course.

Professor Volosovets placed special focus on the role of youth education in schools, namely, its most important objectives and functions.

The speaker then addressed the issue of social conflicts in the context of the history of Russia.

It is important to remember that stagnant psychic tension is the most unbearable as it leads to intolerance and an incidental release of tension - the “loaded gun” theory. Psychic tension also forms prompts the individual to search for ways to change the psychological state, and this can lead to different forms of negative behaviour.

Consequently, a key objective of tolerant upbringing is not only the definition of tolerance and intolerance but also helping to correctly expend excess energy.

In conclusion, the speaker noted that teaching about history and culture of world religions is a key element in resolving social conflicts, fostering tolerance, developing a culture of communication, and interconfessional and intercultural dialogue.

For many years now, there has been a need to create new history teaching programmes, aiming at fighting prejudices and promoting positive interaction between different countries, religions and ideas in the historical development of civilisation, by removing ideological falsifications and manipulations that previously occurred in history textbooks.

The speaker also expressed concern about a lack of solutions to the above-mentioned problems in special needs education. In remedial schools, the idea of fostering tolerance is almost non-existent. We may be informed about the absence of special courses in the so-called regular schools, but there is even less done in special (remedial) schools.

Consequently, there is an acute need for development of pluralistic and tolerant history teaching concepts which use the latest pedagogical and technological advances and teaching materials. Thus, there is a problem of change in scientific and methodological approaches to teaching history in different educational establishments and teacher training. Moreover, the approach to the writing of textbooks and teaching materials needs to be reviewed for tolerance fostering.

III. SUMMARY OF ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

The presentations made during the plenary sessions created a solid basis for broad discussions on the effectiveness of history teacher training when working in a multicultural environment, including new approaches to teaching about conflicts in history courses.

Round Table 1 on “Teaching about conflicts through school history”

Chair: Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Administrator, Council of Europe.

Rapporteur: Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH, Head of the Department of History of Religions, St. Petersburg State University.

Ms Tatiana Agarkova, Director of Petrozavodsk State University Educational Innovation Centre, Ms Cheryl Stafford, Council of Europe expert, Professor Evgeny Vyazemsky, In-service Teacher Training Academy of the Russian Federation, Mr Vladimir Batsyn, Education Consultant, Dr Sergey Golubev, Deputy Head of the Committee of Self-Governance of the Tver Region, Dr Alexey Krugov, Vice-Rector of International Relations, Stavropol State University, and others took part in the discussion.

The following issues concerning the teaching of conflicts in a multicultural environment (classroom) were discussed:

- How conflicts are currently being taught in schools in the Russian Federation?
- All participants are invited to share their experiences and difficulties in teaching about conflicts in world, national and regional histories, including conflicts from ancient and modern histories and, in particular, when teaching about recent conflicts.
- How could the methodological basis be improved upon when teaching about conflicts through history?
- What new methods could be integrated into classroom practice to enable teachers to avoid creating all kinds of confrontation when teaching about conflicts in a multicultural context?

Discussions on methodology used in teaching conflicts revealed several points of view. The importance of an educational strategy was stressed by Ms Tatiana Agarkova. She remarked that passive strategies are inefficient and suggested opting for active and interactive strategies that develop pupils' independent thinking, dialogue skills and project activity.

Professor ErgenyVyazemsky expressed concern that the modern pedagogical higher educational establishments do not provide young teachers with enough practical skills to work in schools. According to him, higher educational establishments prepare scientific historians instead of focusing on history teaching methods. Dr Yury Troytsky stated that lectures on pedagogical technologies do not guarantee the acquisition of practical skills. He suggested resource packs for history lessons, which are a simple but effective interactive teaching method. Pupils build their own version of history based on authentic historical documents. It is important to differentiate between historical facts and myths about history when using this method. He suggested the following differentiation criteria: knowledge (facts), opinion (arguments) and conviction (the weakest criterion).

Professor Olga Strelova (Khabarovsk) underlined that the teacher community needs methodology rather than technology, which is why this seminar is so important to her. She raised the question of why armed conflicts are studied in schools. The participants agreed that wars are portrayed positively in school textbooks:

- there are only heroes in wars;
- patriotism develops during wars.

Thus, wars and conflicts are perceived positively; conflicts are heroised which is extremely dangerous. Seminar participants stressed that such an approach is wrong and harmful; it is important in fact to teach more about the value of human life in history lessons.

One of the major methodological problems in teaching about conflicts in school history is the difficulty of converting a conflict into a conflict-free situation.

The seminar participants supported Mr Vladimir Batsyn who expressed the opinion that pupils today should overcome the temptation to identify themselves with characters from the past, and should get rid of the “us and them” oppositions, such as “the white army – the red army”, “our forces – the fascists”, etc.

Round Table 2 on “Initial training of history teachers and how it could help in teaching about conflicts”

Chair: Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH, Head of the Department of History of Religions, St. Petersburg State University.

Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana AGARKOVA, Director of Petrozavodsk State University Educational Innovation Centre.

Ms Tatiana Agarkova, Director of Petrozavodsk State University Educational Innovation Centre, Mr Vladimir Batsyn, Education Consultant, Dr Alexey Krugov, Vice Rector for International Relations Stavropol State University, Dr Ludmila Kuznetsova, Head of the Department of Specialised Psychology, Moscow State Pedagogical University and others took part in the discussion.

The round table participants agreed that teacher training leaves much to be desired. Young teachers do not always understand that teaching school history differs from teaching history in universities. They need to see that the objectives of school history differ from those of university history. In school, an academic research of the past is a means, whereas pupils and the development of their identity are the objectives.

Learning about conflicts in school should have a practical aspect for pupils' lives.

School history can be seen as a simulation (adaptation) of science in the school curriculum. In this regard, conflicts are studied by using examples of modern conflicts and re-modeling them to provide solutions.

Dr Ludmila Kuznetsova noted that teenagers transfer any conflict on themselves that is why a special educational environment is important when teaching about conflicts. Professor Olga Strelova suggested creating a community of history methodologists that could help young teachers; creation of a website with a discussion forum was also proposed. Ms Tatiana Agarkova suggested improving advanced programmes with master-classes for young teachers who often need advice from more experienced teachers. Dr Alexey Krugov mentioned the principles of teaching activity that promote conflict resolution in multicultural societies. A teacher should aim to overcome national and religious disputes and encourage communication and tolerant relations between pupils, which is one of the main conditions for strengthening civil society in Russia.

Round Table 3 on “Teaching about conflicts in specialised schools”

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

Rapporteur: Dr Vasily MOZGOVOJ, Moscow State Open Pedagogical University named after M. A. Sholokhov.

The basic competences of history teachers from special (remedial) schools were discussed, as well as suggestions for improvement of training in pedagogical colleges and universities. University professors and the leading scientists in this area, Dr V. Mozgovoj, Professor T. B. Filichev, Professor O. S. Orlova, Dr S. D. Zabramnaya, Dr L.V. Kuznetsova and also young researchers E. A. Savina, N. M. Putkova, E. G. Dementieva and special (remedial) schools teachers addressed the following issues:

- whether the pedagogical higher educational institutions and remedial departments meet the teacher training requirements of special (remedial) schools;
- whether the modern educational system allows for the teaching of controversial events in special (remedial) schools;
- tolerance dissemination skills for the training of remedial pupils;
- development of history resources.

Professor Tatiana Volosovets remarked that this topic has not yet been discussed and that today's discussion could be the start for new research. She then spoke about the modern educational system for children with special educational needs. Professor Volosovets also pointed out that three publications have just been circulated about teaching history in special (remedial) schools over 17 years, which indicates that the researchers have a vague idea about teaching history to children with limited abilities, including mentally retarded students.

Dr Vasily Mozgovoj voiced his opinion on the training of students studying to become history teachers in remedial schools. Some suggested improvements could be: the creation of a permanent seminar for young teachers; substitution of history with stories from Russian history using visual aids adapted for use in special (remedial) schools, including videos; creation of modern history study packs for different types of special (remedial) schools.

Professor T. B. Filicheva and Professor O. S. Orlova stated that mainstream schools have to admit children with special educational needs because of a lack of specialised schools for mentally retarded children, which is absolutely unacceptable.

Dr N. V Babkina and Dr O. E. Gromova from the Correctional Pedagogics Institute of the Russian Educational Academy stated that there is insufficient training in history methodology for correctional education teachers.

The round table revealed an understanding of tolerance-related problems: a dominance of Eurocentric thinking in history as a science, and the problem of nationalism among children, which is connected not only with state policy but also with family upbringing and the basic problem of limited vocabulary in mentally retarded children. It was concluded that a teacher should not only have a knowledge of facts but also be able to master different approaches and skills, and refrain from showing personal emotions about controversial historical events in history classes.

Round Table 4 on “Psychological aspects in teaching about conflicts: the role of a school psychologist”

Chair: Dr Ludmila KUZNETSOVA, Head of the Department of Specialised Psychology, Moscow State Pedagogical University

Rapporteur: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia

The round table participants acknowledged that economic and social conditions represent risk factors for young people, which leads to a number of problems requiring immediate action at federal and regional levels.

Dr Ludmila Kuznetsova showed a video on interconfessional and intercultural pupil communication, and the role of a psychologist acting as an arbitrator when any conflict arises in school. The video was followed by a discussion.

Dr L. Kuznetsova and Dr N. V. Mazurova remarked that the number of homeless children is alarming. They move from region to region and find themselves each time in a different sociocultural environment.

Mr Akhmet Shogenov, Minister of Kabardino-Balkariya pointed out that psychological support is a means of guaranteeing support for any child who is in a difficult situation. The modern educational environment, according to Dr Sergey Golubev, Tver State University, is showing an increase in polyethnicity, which requires the help of psychologists in the prevention of conflicts due to misunderstandings, rejection of others, and especially of diversity of other nationalities and religions. Mr Vladimir Batsyn remarked that children are not naturally xenophobic, but they can often become as such under the influence of adults, thus the importance of prevention. What needs to be done to stop a little angel turning into “a devil” in the future? Mr Vladimir Batsyn suggested introducing a child to a multicultural world from an early age; it is advisable to note how a child communicates and discuss it later.

Round table participants from all over Russia: Ms V. P. Stakhovskaya (Kaliningrad), Mr V. M. Monakhov (St. Petersburg), and Ms T. I. Agarkova (Petrozabodsk) noted that the increase in violence towards people of other nations is undoubtedly caused by children’s innocence and a lack of positive examples to follow.

Another major contemporary problem, according to Dr Alexey Krugov (Stavropol), is the increase of migration because of armed conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters. As Professor Eugeny Vyazemsky added, the school psychological support service’s strategic objective is an effective integration of migrants.

The representative from the Ministry of Education from Ingushetia, Ms F. M. Tankieva, said that the migration policy is closely connected with the education of ethnical minorities, and that the quality of education for migrant children can lead to problems in connection with this issue. The tendency towards actively helping integration of migrants, including the introduction of language studies, and education and assistance in seeking employment is recognised in many countries.

Ms Tatiana Agarkova noted that the main difficulties in working with migrant children stem from the problem of extra workload for schools and consequently, pressure on regional budgets. Migrant children need individual programmes; special social integration programmes on learning the Russian language and about Russian culture need to be developed.

According to Ms V. V. Emelianova, the Deputy Head of the Educational Board of the Pskov Region, it is also important to broaden the ethnocultural attitude of teachers, and to provide further education on ethnical issues and multinationality of modern schools for school principals, teachers of humanities, and school psychologists.

The round table participants agreed that practical psychologists should coordinate their work taking into account modern trends in education.

IV. SEMINAR RECOMMENDATIONS

The seminar participants recognised that a person living in the 21st Century communicates daily on a intercultural level, both in person and via the Internet, TV, cinema, joint business ventures, studies, and purchase of goods and services. The skills of such dialogue guarantee a successful self-realisation in the modern world with a conflict-free existence in one's multicultural environment, Russia and the world as a whole, which is shaping a positive attitude towards reality.

The new sociocultural situation requires groundbreaking approaches from the educational system, including in-service teacher training.

According to the educational standard requirements, school leavers should be able to define their social affiliation and their way of thinking, which is created by the civil ethnocultural and multiconfessional society.

The seminar revealed that the work of teachers and methodologists is complicated by the lack of federal textbooks on social, economic and cultural history with a content based on a dialogue approach. The dominating topics are still political and armed conflicts and textbooks are for the most part "militarised".

Regional history textbooks are also full of conflicts and confrontation between peoples who, in the past, were enemies and who are now citizens of the same state. The textbooks are focused on historical, cultural and ethnographical issues, and this methodological gap does not allow federal and regional coursebooks to integrate regional history into Russian and world history. Intercultural dialogue issues concern national minorities that feel uncomfortable because their history is not reflected in federal and regional textbooks.

In this respect, there is a theory that diversity of nations and cultures in any society should be regarded as being beneficial and of great value whilst, at the same time, a challenge.

Thus, the seminar recommendations are addressed to a wide audience of state policy makers, heads of educational publishing houses, staff of special (remedial) schools, school textbooks authors (especially those on history, history of culture, languages and ethnocultural aspects) and teachers of the above-mentioned subjects.

The seminar participants made general recommendations and did not separate them according to whom they were addressed. The recommendations could be applicable to any highly qualified person in education: from ministers to teachers and from authors to publishers. Each person can review his or her approach according to the fundamental priorities of these recommendations and can see one's own objective as a part of the joint

activity for the benefit of the intellectual development of the future generation of new Europeans.

1. The seminar participants indicated the need to analyse the existing educational standards, textbooks and teaching materials to define how school history reflects the variety of conflicts and the means of conflict resolution.
2. In order to meet the need for improving methodological support in teaching conflicts in school history, the seminar participants recommended:
 - developing the concept and structure of historical educational and methodological sources (textbooks, handbooks, teacher's manuals) for integrated and specialised (correctional) schools of the 8th grade with diverse illustrations in electronic form;
 - studying a possibility of creating a manual and audiovisual materials in electronic form for mainstream secondary schools to promote conflict resolution process in a multicultural society.
3. The seminar participants remarked that in-service teacher training institutions could do the following to improve teacher training:
 - introduce psychology courses into the existing in-service teacher training programmes so as to reduce aggression, create favourable psychological conditions for learning, and ensure proper teaching of conflicts in school history;
 - organise master-classes for young teachers on new methods of teaching conflicts in school history.
4. The participants recommended further analysis of the existing experience and development of new methodological approaches, and it was suggested that the seminars on the following topics be organised:
 - solving problems of education through history in primary schools in multicultural societies;
 - the role and place of art in school history;
 - influence of the media on school history teaching.
5. In order to coordinate teaching conflicts in history and the implementation of new methodological approaches, the seminar participants suggested creating a webpage on the website of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia entitled "Current problems of methodological and scientific support for school history". This webpage would include methodological materials, programmes for special courses, examples of good practice, articles, etc.

APPENDIX I

PROGRAMME

Monday 24 April 2006

Arrival of the participants

Tuesday 25 April 2006

10.00 - 11.00

Plenary Session

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Head of the Department for International Relations, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- ii. Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Administrator, Council of Europe;
- iii. Professor Vladimir FILIPPOV, Rector, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

11.00 - 11.30

Break

11.30 - 13.00

Plenary Session

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow

Presentation on: "New approaches in teaching about conflicts through history: an example of Northern Ireland", by Ms Cheryl STAFFORD, United Kingdom.

Presentation on: “How training special needs teachers in Humboldt University in Berlin can help them to handle crossnational conflicts amongst pupils”, by Dr Ljudmila HOPPE, Humboldt University, Germany.

Presentation on: “Conflicts in history versus conflicts in their interpretation”, by Dr Yury TROYTSKY, Deputy Director, Institute of History and Philology, Moscow.

Discussion of the presentations with all the participants.

13.00 - 14.00

Lunch

14.00 - 15.30

Plenary session

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow

Presentation on: “How inter-confessional conflicts are reflected in school world history”, by Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH Head of the Department of History of Religions, St.Petersburg State University, Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St.Petersburg.

Presentation on: “How history teaching could help to resolve social conflicts in present-day society”, Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

Discussion of the presentations with all the participants.

15.30 - 16.00

Break

16.30 - 18.00

Round table 1 on “Teaching about conflicts thought school history ”

Chair: Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Administrator, Council of Europe

Rapporteur: Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH Head of the Department of History of Religions, St.Petersburg State University, Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St.Petersburg.

18.30 Official Dinner

Wednesday 26 April 2006

10.00 – 11.30 **Round Table 2 on “Initial training of history teachers and how it could help in teaching about conflicts”**

Chair: Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH, Head of the Department of History of Religions, St.Petersburg State University, Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana AGARKOVA, Director of the Educational Innovation Centre, Petrozavodsk State University

11.30 – 12.00 Break

12.00 – 13.30 **Round Table 3 on “Teaching about conflicts in specialised schools”**

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

Rapporteur: Professor Vasily MOSGOVOJ, Institute of Remedial Education Russian Pedagogical Academy, Moscow.

13.30 - 14.30 Lunch

14.30 - 16.00 **Round Table 4 on “Psychological aspects in teaching about conflicts: the role of a school psychologist”**

Chair: Dr Ludmila KUZNETSOVA, Head of the Department of Specialised Psychology, Moscow State Pedagogical University.

Rapporteur: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

16.00 – 16.30 Break

16.30 -18.00

Plenary Session

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

- i. Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the rapporteurs of the round tables.
- ii. Presentation by the General Rapporteurs of the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar.

Comments by the participants

Closing speeches of the Seminar by:

- i. Ms Larisa EFREMOVA, Deputy Head of the Department for International Relations, Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation;
- ii. Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Administrator, Council of Europe;
- iii. Professor Vladimir FILIPPOV, Rector of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia.

18.30

Dinner

Thursday 27 April 2006

Departure of the participants

APPENDIX II

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS AND LIST OF QUESTIONS

Round Table 1 on “Teaching about conflicts through school history ”

Chair: Ms Tatiana MINKINA-MILKO, Administrator, Council of Europe

Rapporteur: Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH Head of the Department of History of Religions, St. Petersburg State University, Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, St. Petersburg.

1. How conflicts are currently being taught in schools in the Russian Federation?

All participants are invited to share their experiences and difficulties in teaching about conflicts in world, national and regional histories, including conflicts from ancient and modern histories and, in particular, when teaching about recent conflicts.

2. How could the methodological basis be improved upon when teaching about conflicts through history?
3. What new methods could be integrated into classroom practice to enable teachers to avoid creating all kinds of confrontation when teaching about conflicts in a multicultural context?

Round Table 2 on “Initial training of history teachers and how it could help in teaching about conflicts”

Chair: Professor Marianna SHAKHNOVICH Head of the Department of History of Religions, St. Petersburg State University, Smolny College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Rapporteur: Ms Tatiana AGARKOVA, Director of the Educational Innovation Centre, Petrozavodsk State University

1. How initial training could help students to acquire conflict-resolution skills and competences?
2. How to integrate principles of tolerance in the initial training?

3. How to integrate multiperspectivity into initial training, in particular, when teaching about controversial and sensitive issues in a multicultural context?

Round Table 3 on “Teaching about conflicts in specialised schools”

Chair: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

Rapporteur: Professor Vasily MOSGOVOJ, Institute of Remedial Education Russian Pedagogical Academy, Moscow.

1. What are the main methodological approaches to be used when teaching about conflicts in history in remedial schools?
2. How to build history lessons in remedial schools: general trends and regional peculiarities?
3. What competences should teachers acquire to be able to teach conflicts in history in remedial schools?

Round Table 4 on “Psychological aspects in teaching about conflicts: the role of a school psychologist”

Chair: Dr Ludmila KUZNETSOVA, Head of the Department of Specialised Psychology Moscow State Pedagogical University

Rapporteur: Professor Tatiana VOLOSOVETS, Head of the Chair of Specialised Education, Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia, Moscow.

1. What strategy could be used to survive conflict situations as seen through historical events?
2. What should the role of a school psychologist be in the prevention and resolution of conflict situations in schools?
3. What should the role of a school psychologist be in the development of principles of tolerance in pupil relations?

APPENDIX III

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