

TEACHING 20TH-CENTURY EUROPEAN HISTORY

by Robert Stradling

Project "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe
in the 20th century"

Council for Cultural Co-operation

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A look at the 20th century.¹

*If I had to sum up the twentieth century, I would say
that it raised the greatest hopes ever conceived by humanity,
and destroyed all illusions and ideals.*

Yehudi Menuhin (musician)

*Historians can't answer this question.
For me the twentieth century is only
the ever-renewed effort to understand it.*

Franco Venturi (historian)

1. Quoted by Eric Hobsbawm in *Age of extremes: the short twentieth century*, Abacus, London, p. 2. Originally quoted in Paulo Agosti and Giovanna Borgese, *Ritratti e parole di centosei protagonisti del Novecento*, Turin, 1992, pp. 2, 160.

The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has forty-one member states,¹ including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary organisation in Europe, and has its headquarters in Strasbourg.

With only questions relating to national defence excluded from the Council of Europe's work, the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth; health; environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is also open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and enables them to take part in the Council's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-seven states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention: the Council of Europe's full member states plus Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See and Monaco.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC)** is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Higher Education and Research Committee, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the standing conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and the cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three main policy objectives:

- the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;
- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

- the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school and higher education. At present, there are projects on education for democratic citizenship, history, modern languages, school links and exchanges, educational policies, training for educational staff, the reform of legislation on higher education in central and eastern Europe, the recognition of qualifications, lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion, European studies for democratic citizenship, and the social sciences and the challenge of transition.

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FOREWORD

Recent developments in teaching 20th-century European history

Over the last 25 years the coverage within the school curriculum of 20th-century history in general, and European history in particular, has changed considerably in most European secondary schools. The balance between the teaching of modern and earlier history has shifted. In the 1950s the majority of history syllabuses stopped at 1914 or 1918. By the 1970s most history syllabuses within western Europe covered the first world war, the key events and developments of the inter-war years, the second world war, post-war reconstruction and the emergence of the cold war era. In a number of countries now, virtually half of the history curriculum for secondary level students focuses on the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of the most recent syllabuses and history textbooks to emerge within the expanded, present-day Europe have included the break-up of the Soviet Union, its consequences for the countries of central and eastern Europe and the wider European and global implications.

Within the coverage of modern history there is now a greater emphasis on teaching recent or contemporary history – the history of the last 25 years or so. Traditionally there has tended to be a certain reluctance at official level amongst those responsible for developing syllabuses and history courses or ministry guidelines to bringing history teaching right up to the present day. Usually it has been argued that interpretations and conclusions about recent events can only be provisional because of lack of hindsight, the incompleteness and uneven quality of the evidence available and the difficulties which teachers and their students might have in looking at recent events in a detached way because of their own personal involvement, commitments and loyalties. However, it is now increasingly recognised that these concerns could apply equally well to the teaching of any period of history.

There has been a growing interest – by no means universal across Europe as yet – towards teaching some European and world history in its own right and not just as a means of illuminating particular aspects of national history. The former Soviet republics, and most of the other central and eastern European states which came under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, have traditionally included world history as a distinct course on the secondary school curriculum. Although these countries have been reforming their history curricula since gaining independence in 1991 many have opted for retaining

two distinct history courses: one on national history and one on world or general history.

In the west this pattern is still uncommon but the need to help young people understand the cold war and the evolution of the European Union and other forms of European co-operation have led to at least a greater regional focus when teaching about the 20th century. It is too soon to say whether the break-up of the Soviet Union and the subsequent restructuring of Europe will encourage more western European countries to broaden the European perspective to encompass central and eastern Europe within their history curricula but we hope that this handbook will encourage discussion about the feasibility and scope of doing so.

Approaches to teaching school history have followed trends in academic history. As a result there have been moves in most European educational systems to broaden the content to include social, economic, cultural and even intellectual history as well as the political and diplomatic.

This has also entailed a new focus on the history of groups who had previously been largely ignored in history syllabuses: women, ethnic minorities, children, families, migrants. These developments have brought with them new challenges for the history teacher. Teachers often find themselves dealing with topics and themes, such as cultural movements or developments in science and technology, and history sources such as oral history, film and newsreels that were neglected in their own history education. They also find that some of these topics and themes are not easily introduced into a syllabus which is structured in the conventional way as a sequence of relatively short periods.

Another development of major significance is that whilst still acknowledging the important role of history teaching in helping students to acquire a body of historical knowledge, it is now recognised increasingly that students also need to adopt a critical attitude to historical facts and evidence and to develop and apply the thinking processes essential to historical awareness and interpretation. These attitudes and processes include:

- understanding that historians, authors of history textbooks, journalists and producers of documentaries about events in the recent past are not simply reporting the facts, they are trying to interpret the available information and look at the connections between different facts in order to understand and explain events and developments;
- understanding that through this process the historian, author, journalist or television producer converts his or her selected facts into evidence (that is, facts which are used to support a particular argument or interpretation of what happened);

- understanding that in this way the same historical facts can be used by different people for different purposes or to support different interpretations of the same event or phenomenon;
- recognising that a multiplicity of perspectives are usually possible on any historical event or development and that these different perspectives reflect a diversity of experiences, assumptions and beliefs (often equally valid);
- distinguishing facts from opinions and detecting bias, prejudice and stereotypes in textual accounts and visual representations of a particular event;
- learning how to analyse and use material from primary and secondary sources;
- understanding and applying the key concepts associated with the study of history, such as chronology, change, continuity, causation, significance, sense of period;
- recognising that proximity to an historical event or happening (for example the eye-witness account) does not necessarily ensure that the account or record is more accurate and less biased;
- appreciating that any historical account is provisional and liable to reassessment in the light of either new evidence or new interpretations of existing evidence.

Discussion of this change of emphasis in history teaching over the last 20 years or so is often presented as a debate between those who see the main purpose of school history as teaching students about the important events and developments in national, European and global history and those who think the main purpose is to facilitate the learning of historical skills and understanding and that the content of the syllabus is merely a means to that end. In practice this is a rather sterile debate because many history teachers, curriculum designers and textbook writers have tried to strike a balance between these two approaches. The main issues arising from this greater emphasis on the development of critical skills and historical interpretation have been in terms of the design of textbooks and other learning resources and the need for history teachers to give more thought to how their students learn these skills and ways of thinking.

As a recent study of history textbooks has shown, there is a trend away from the conventional text towards workbooks which provide the student with a variety of sources and materials to analyse and interpret (maps, photographs, statistical data, extracts from documents, eye-witness accounts). Sometimes this source material is designed to illustrate points being made in the text, but it may also be independent of the text and intended to familiarise the student

with the process of analysing particular kinds of evidence.¹ Initially this trend was most apparent in the textbooks published in western Europe but now there are signs that some of the publishing companies based in central and eastern Europe are also beginning to introduce elements of the workbook format into their history textbooks for schools.

The implications for teaching and learning are also profound. It is difficult to see how critical skills and historical understanding can be acquired if the student is solely a passive recipient of pre-digested knowledge. Some degree of enquiry-based learning combined with active learning (for example collecting oral history, debates, participating in simulations) and opportunities for independent learning is called for.

One other relatively recent development in history teaching which also needs to be taken into account here is the growing recognition that history teachers and school textbooks are not the students' only sources of information and opinions about 20th-century Europe. Firstly, the more recent the events the greater the range of sources seeking to provide interpretations and explanations: politicians, journalists, broadcasters, documentary and feature film makers. Secondly, students may also know people within their families and communities who have had firsthand experience of major historical events of this century. Thirdly, a growing number of school students, particularly in western and northern Europe, can gain access to historical accounts and interpretations through the new communication technologies (CD-I, CD-Rom, the Internet). Students need to apply the same critical skills and historical understanding to these sources as they do to those which they encounter more formally in their school history lessons, but the transference of these skills from the classroom to these other contexts does not happen automatically. It has to be learned and critically "reading" a film or a documentary calls for additional knowledge and skills which have to be taught.

Challenges facing the history teacher

The handbook draws on innovative ideas and case studies of good practice from across the whole of Europe, as well as providing information on resources and useful organisations in order to achieve its objectives. However, in producing the handbook we have also recognised that a number of challenges face the history teacher today and we have tried to address these in various chapters of the book.

Some of the challenges are posed by circumstances beyond the history teacher's control. In most of Europe the ministries of education issue official

1. F. Pingel, *The European home: representations of the 20th century in history textbooks*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2000.

syllabuses or curriculum guidelines which can limit the scope for individual teachers to introduce new topics and themes or to look at some pan-European issues and developments in greater depth. Their scope for introducing additional topics and themes is further constrained by the number of hours available to them to teach the subject and the range and quality of textbooks and other educational materials which are available to schools.

The scope for introducing innovative teaching and learning approaches is also constrained to some extent by the traditions and pedagogic approaches which prevailed when many of the teachers were undergoing their initial training and, indeed, when they were experiencing their own history education. As observed beforehand, when studying the history of the 20th century, history teachers and their students are able to draw on a much wider range of sources than for any other historical period. However, these sources do not represent nor do they seek to interpret and explain the recent past or contemporary events in the same way as historians do. They are also designed to entertain; they are subject to commercial, managerial and even political constraints. Their products – even major historical documentary series such as *The world at war* or *The people's century* – are expected to have a relatively short “shelf-life” and are produced primarily according to principles of “what makes good television” rather than “what makes good history”. The issues which this raises for the history teacher are covered in more detail in a later section but it is sufficient at this point to emphasise that, at present, few history teachers will have looked, in either their initial or in-service teacher training, at how to “read the output of the mass media” or how to teach their students to do so.¹

Similarly, although a growing number of schools now make use of the new communication technologies in most areas of the curriculum – and the extent to which this happens is likely to increase considerably over the next decade – the pedagogic implications of using CD-I, CD-Rom and the Internet in history teaching are seldom explored in any depth. For example, the use of hyperlinks to enable the Internet browser to explore what may be available on a particular historical theme or period can fundamentally change the experience of “reading a text”. On the one hand this seems to empower the student to be enquiring and investigative but it can also lead to unstructured, unsystematic and confused thinking.

In both cases innovation, while introducing exciting and potentially fruitful opportunities for teaching and learning about 20th-century European history, is also making history teaching more complex and the history teacher's role more challenging.

1. See, for example, L. Masterman, *Teaching the media*, London, 1985.

Another potential challenge which teaching recent and contemporary history can pose for the teacher arises precisely out of the role which history as a discipline plays in challenging myths and critically examining popular interpretations and assumptions and standpoints which may have the support of various sectors of society. Any syllabus covering 20th-century national and European history is likely to touch on themes, issues and questions which are still sensitive and controversial. That is to say, topics which, if taught in an objective way or from a multiplicity of perspectives could upset and arouse criticism from some groups, including some parents and possibly even the political authorities.¹

Finally, as a number of leading European historians have observed, our students can only comprehend the complexities of the world they now live in by studying and reflecting on the broad forces which have shaped the world during the past century. However, the challenge which this poses for the history teacher, given the multiplicity of topics which could be studied and the sheer volume of information now available from a variety of sources, is how to help the student to develop a coherent overview of the century not just so that they grasp the broad chronological sequence of events but also so that they can see how apparently distinct political, social, economic, cultural and intellectual developments were actually influencing each other and may have been interdependent.

Purpose of the handbook

The main aims of this handbook are threefold:

- to encourage history teachers throughout Europe to extend the breadth of their teaching on the 20th century, in particular to introduce a wider European dimension, that takes account of the main forces, movements and events which have shaped the whole continent over the last 100 years;
- to provide them with a wide range of perspectives, teaching ideas and illustrative material on those topics, themes and events which have been of particular significance to Europe as a whole;
- to offer some practical advice, based on teachers' own experiences, of how to make effective use of some of the more innovative teaching and learning activities, including the new communication technologies, in their teaching.

However, in developing this handbook we have also kept in mind considerations discussed below.

1. See R. Stradling et al., *Teaching controversial issues*, Edward Arnold, London, 1984, and C. Gallagher, *History teaching and the promotion of democratic values and tolerance*, Doc. CC-ED/Hist (96) 1, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1996.

First, any book which is produced for teachers across the whole of Europe has to acknowledge that, at present, educational systems vary greatly in terms of the resourcing for schools and the provision of initial and in-service training; the range and quality of textbooks and other learning materials; and the scope for making use of multi-media learning facilities and new technologies. Some of the approaches and illustrative material in this book will be regarded as everyday practice by some readers, highly innovative by others, and even unrealistic by some given the practical constraints they have to operate within. We have tried to maintain a balance here to reflect these different circumstances and experiences.

Second, recent surveys of history curricula in Europe indicate that there is no overall consensus about how 20th-century history should be structured or taught, although there are some signs now that approaches are beginning to converge. Therefore, we have tried to reflect the current diversity by openly acknowledging that there may be a number of different ways in which the same topic or theme could be effectively covered, and a number of different ways in which the same desirable learning aims and objectives could be achieved.

Third, we have tried to ensure that the handbook will be both flexible and user-friendly. Some may choose to use it as a resource for in-service training; others may prefer to “dip into” it rather than read it from cover to cover.

The structure of this book

The book is split up into three main parts. The first part focuses on those historical themes and topics relating to the 20th century which are widely taught throughout Europe. It includes some illustrative material and some ideas for innovative approaches using the mass media, oral history, simulations and out-of-school learning opportunities.

The second part focuses on aspects of pedagogy within history teaching. It addresses some of the key issues outlined previously, including, for example:

- the integration of skills-based learning into a predominantly knowledge-based syllabus or curriculum framework;
- handling controversial and sensitive issues;
- teaching students how to make effective use of visual archive material on the 20th century;
- integrating out-of-school learning opportunities into classroom teaching;
- making effective use of the new technologies.

The third part focuses on how different historical sources and resource material can be used in the classroom. These include oral history, primary written

sources and audiovisual source material. The second part also includes guidance on evaluating some of the teaching resources now available to the history teacher.

An appendix has been included which provides information on bilateral and multilateral projects supported by the Council of Europe and which have relevance to teaching 20th-century European history. Information about other European-wide activities and initiatives which may be of interest to teachers involved in teaching recent and contemporary history may also be found here.

FIRST PART:

HISTORICAL THEMES AND TOPICS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The trends in the teaching of 20th century European history discussed earlier in the foreword, such as the focus on recent or contemporary history, the shift to cross-disciplinary history, more coverage of European/world history, and so forth have highlighted a fundamental issue in curriculum planning and design. As the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Association (Euroclio) has observed: when it comes to teaching about the 20th century "there is too much history per square kilometre".¹ The critical question is not what we should include in the history curriculum, it is what we should leave out. In eastern Europe, for example, although the majority of teachers have welcomed the post-Soviet reforms in history teaching, a common complaint has been that the new curriculum is overcrowded, particularly with regard to 20th-century history. Similar concerns were expressed in western Europe when major changes were introduced into history curricula in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

No history course can hope to be exhaustive in its coverage of any period. Selection is inevitable. Therefore, before we go on to look at various approaches to topics and themes – which is the main focus of the first part of this book, it is useful to examine closely and critically the criteria which are applied when selecting topics and themes for inclusion in the curriculum. The selection criteria relate not only to *what* should be taught but also *why* it should be taught and *how* it should be taught. These are all fundamental questions for curriculum planners, textbook publishers and authors, history teachers and those who are responsible for training history teachers.

Recent surveys of history curricula for secondary education in Europe² have indicated that certain topics and themes relating to 20th-century history are

1. Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, "An overview of the way in which the history of the 20th century is presented in curricula in some European countries", presented at a Council of Europe seminar on "The reform of the curricula for teaching 20th-century history in secondary schools", (Moldova, June, 1998).

2. Stradling, *The European content of the school history curriculum*, Doc. CC-ED/HIST(95) 1, Council of Europe, and F. Pingel, op. cit.

widely taught throughout Europe. The topics most commonly found in curricula are:

- the first world war and its origins;
- the Russian revolution;
- the restructuring of Europe in 1918;
- the rise of totalitarianism: communism, national socialism and fascism;
- economic depression;
- the collapse of international peace;
- the second world war: the "people's war";
- restructuring Europe in 1945;
- the cold war era: Nato and the Warsaw Pact;
- decolonisation;
- post-1945 political and economic co-operation;
- the European Community;
- glasnost and perestroika;
- the break-up of the Soviet Union;
- the emerging independent democracies of central and eastern Europe.

This part of the book will explore different approaches to a number of these topics. However, surveys also show that it is possible to find in a growing number of history curricula one or two developmental themes associated with 20th-century history. Among those most commonly included in history curricula are:

- technological and scientific developments in the 20th century;
- social change, particularly in the lives of ordinary people;
- the changing roles of women in society;
- the emergence of mass culture and youth culture;
- the distinctive cultural and artistic movements of the 20th century;
- industrialisation and the emergence of post-industrial societies;
- urbanisation;
- transport and communications;
- population movements;
- the changing situation of national and other minorities in Europe;
- conflict and co-operation;
- nationalist movements;

- totalitarianism and liberal democracy;
- human rights.

Now, some of the topics and themes listed here could be, and often are, taught from a predominantly national rather than a European perspective; others are often taught from a regional rather than a pan-European perspective. Also most of the listed topics tend to be taught from the perspectives of political and, to a lesser degree, economic history, rather than social, cultural and intellectual history. The themes, by comparison, tend to be explored in a multidimensional way. While the themes are mostly diachronic and therefore looked at in a developmental way over the whole century or a significant part of it, mostly the topics are taught in a fairly rigid, sequential (or chronological) way. That is, most typically the 20th century is broken up into discrete blocks of time corresponding to roughly 10 to 20 years.

Nevertheless, there is scope in each of these topics and themes for introducing a broader European perspective, for exploring the political, economic social and cultural dimensions to a greater degree and for looking at the century from different time perspectives (diachronically and synchronically) much more than currently tends to be the case.

This, of course, highlights the issue of selection criteria. Looking at a topic or theme in a pan-European way, or examining it both diachronically and synchronically or exploring it from a multiplicity of dimensions is time consuming. Decisions therefore need to be taken on the basis of several criteria and not just the sole criterion of the need to teach students a corpus of knowledge about the key events and developments of the 20th century.

Statements of aims in official guidelines and history curricula often seem to be highly ambitious. The history teacher is expected to help students understand the present, arouse their interest in the past, contribute to the development of their sense of national identity and prepare them for citizenship – all in around two hours per week, often for no more than four years of their schooling. Another, and perhaps more realistic way of looking at the problem, is to seek answers to the question: What residual of their history lessons would we like them to retain five or ten years after they have left school?

This is a question which has consistently emerged in discussions among historians and experts over the last decade, particularly since research studies have shown that many ex-students seem to retain very little of their history education in later life. The main points which tend to emerge out of these discussions are that students need to develop:

- a broad overview of the century which is partly chronological and partly thematic. In this respect specific bits of historical knowledge can serve as building blocks for assembling this overview and perhaps it does not

matter too much if, with time, these “facts” are forgotten. In later life they can always seek out the information again if they need it;

- some understanding of the forces which have shaped this century: the recurring patterns, the dynamics of change, the connections between what happens in one place and what happens in another or what happens at one point in time and what happens later. This is part of developing an overview but it also requires some understanding of how to apply key historical concepts such as chronology, cause and effect, change and continuity, evidence, primary and secondary sources of evidence, multi-perspectivity, a sense of period; some opportunities to look at the century through different time frames – that is the short-term, medium-term and long-term; and some opportunities to look at the same events or developments in a comparative way, from a variety of perspectives and dimensions.
- some understanding of the factors which have influenced and shaped their own lives and identities, which, in an important sense, revolves around the understanding that history is not just about wars, superpowers, diplomacy and economics. It is also about the changes which have taken place in the way ordinary people live and the forces which have brought about those changes, such as science, technology, industrialisation, urbanisation, changes in community and family life and mass communications;
- transferable critical skills necessary for understanding how the recent past is interpreted by historians, writers, politicians, journalists and the mass media in general. That entails some understanding of the processes of historical investigation: in particular how facts, once selected, become evidence in the construction of an account, explanation or argument. It also requires some understanding of the processes by which the mass media select, interpret and edit information before transmitting it for public consumption;
- positive attitudes and values which include tolerance, respect for diversity, open-mindedness, a belief that judgments, opinions and conclusions should be justified by reference to rational evidence. As with transferable skills, values and attitudes such as these need to be developed through practising them and that, too, has implications for the selection of topics and themes and the approaches which teachers and students adopt for studying them.

The main implication of the foregoing is that the selection of each topic or theme to be taught on 20th-century European history is just the beginning of the process. Each topic and theme can be taught in a variety of different ways and for different purposes. Ultimately the key to the selection process lies in what we think the students ought to learn and what it is reasonable to expect them to learn, and how wide the gap is between those two expectations.

CHAPTER 2

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN HISTORY TEACHING

Extending the European dimension of the history curriculum¹

Much of the recent thinking about the teaching of European history has been influenced by a wider debate about whether Europe is best defined by its common cultural heritage or by its diversity.

Those who argue that the identity of Europe can only be defined by reference to its common history and cultural heritage usually refer to the Graeco-Roman philosophical tradition, Judaeo-Christian beliefs and ethics, a common artistic heritage, a shared architectural heritage, the emergence of the nation-state throughout Europe and such shared historical experiences as feudalism, the Crusades, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and so forth.

Approaches to teaching European history which have focused on the shared history and cultural heritage have tended to portray European history as “an unfolding and continuous narrative” from earliest times to the present day. This has two main implications for curriculum design. First advocates of this approach tend to favour a syllabus or course which offers an outline survey covering an extended period of time. Second, these chronological surveys tend to focus on a linear development, suggesting that the essential elements of contemporary European civilisation can be traced directly back to their roots in antiquity via the Enlightenment and the Renaissance.

The resulting syllabuses seem to have a number of limitations. They tend to omit those parts of Europe which, for significant periods of their history, were untouched by those influences which are thought to be central to the European tradition. They also tend to gloss over those periods of European history when the mainstream cultural tradition was virtually lost to large parts of Europe and only recovered through rather circuitous means, for example the translation into Latin of the writings of Aristotle, Euclid and other Greek philosophers by Arab scholars whose work gradually found its way into western

1. This section draws on a report by the author. See Stradling, *The European content of the school history curriculum*, op. cit.

Europe via Moorish Spain and Norman Sicily. Also, this approach tends to downplay the external influences on European cultural, philosophical and scientific history, such as the change from Roman to Arabic numerals, or the influence and impact on Europe of Arabic works on the theory and practice of navigation, the enduring influence of the Ottoman Empire on parts of eastern and south-eastern Europe, or the influence on social and cultural life in western Europe of the colonial experience. Finally, this approach tends to put a lot of emphasis on cultural and political history and the history of ideas. Social and economic history tends to be missing, perhaps because a focus on these dimensions would tend to highlight diversity rather than commonality.

In the 1980s and early 1990s this “idea of Europe” dominated much of the thinking about the possibility of a European history textbook. One such example, edited by Frederic Delouche, presents a chronological survey of European history from pre-historic times to the present written by an international team of 12 historians.¹ Three principles underpinned the selection of the content: elements of similarity, one civilisation with various cultures and common European phenomena. Each chapter represents a block of time and as the survey approaches modern times, so the periods covered get shorter. So, for example, the penultimate chapter covers the period 1900-45 and the final chapter focuses on the post-1945 era. Some of the limitations referred to earlier apply here. There is very little on the history of Russia and eastern Europe, the multicultural nature of Europe, the history of women or the impact of science and technology over the last two centuries.

By contrast, others have argued that what characterises Europe – its unique particularity – is its diversity rather than its commonality: the different ethnic groups and nationalities, the variety of languages and dialects, the different ways of life and the variety of local and regional loyalties. This perspective perhaps gives greater emphasis to the “darker side of European history” – tribalistic conflicts, nationalism, xenophobia, intolerance, genocide and ethnic “cleansing” – than the perspective which focuses on the unifying forces in European history. However, it also highlights the political and economic dynamism and the creativity and the cultural fertility which seem to flourish when tensions and conflicts exist between Church and State and religious and secular thinking, or when power is fragmented rather than centralised or when the unifying forces associated with a common cultural heritage are not just assimilated but become fused with local traditions and circumstances.

As yet not many curriculum planners have converted this viewpoint into a syllabus. However, two German academics, Hagen Schulze and Ina Ulrike Paul,

1. Frederic Delouche (ed.), *Illustrated history of Europe*, Henry Holt, New York, 1993.

attempted to address some of the limitations of the “grand European narrative” in their sourcebook on European history.¹ The approach is thematic covering war and peace, freedom and despotism, hegemony and the balance of power, unity and diversity, and so forth. As this list suggests, the editors have focused primarily on political themes and the history of ideas. The broad aim is to provide history teachers and students with a collection of sources and materials which, through an emphasis on drawing comparisons and contrasts, can be used to locate events and trends in their national history within a broader European perspective and to identify similarities and differences between national developments and European patterns. The analytical approach also tends to call for a longer timescale than the more conventional chronological survey.

If such an approach were to be genuinely integrated into the history curriculum in a systematic way, particularly for students at upper secondary level, then it could help students to gain some understanding of the dynamic forces which have influenced and shaped their own country's history and that of Europe too (or at least a part of it) and help them to understand better how historical phenomena which appear to be common to the whole of Europe, or the larger part of it, can transform and be transformed by local and national traditions. At the same time there is also the risk that through this approach students may acquire an atomised and fragmented picture of European history rather than an overview. There is also the potential risk with the comparative approach that the unique and the particular in a nation's or region's history is subsumed by the need to focus on the more generalisable patterns. It should be stressed that these are potential risks rather than inevitabilities. It will be argued later on that the need to provide opportunities for students to compare and contrast is critically important to the development of their understanding of the history of the 20th century.

Reviews of the curriculum guidelines and syllabuses which have emerged over the last 10 to 20 years would seem to suggest that the scope for a comparative approach as comprehensive as the one proposed by Schulze and Paul is rather limited, as is the scope for taking a longitudinal perspective over an extended period of time.² However, there are numerous examples across Europe of history syllabuses or guidelines where teachers and students are required or encouraged to look at some events and developments in a comparative way, examine international relations or cross-border conflicts and periods of co-operation or conduct a longitudinal study of a contemporary issue or problem.

1. H. Schulze and I.U. Paul, *Europa: Dokumente und Materialien*, Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, Munich, 1994.

2. See Stradling, *The European content of the school history curriculum*, op. cit., and Pingel, op. cit.

So, one set of issues for the curriculum planner centres on whether to highlight diversity or the common experiences and shared culture and whether to focus on broad themes or the chronological narrative. Another key question facing the curriculum planner, and the individual history teacher in those educational systems which are relatively decentralised, is: to what extent can the existing history syllabus be extended to include a wider European dimension? In some cases we may be talking about the scope for broadening a national history syllabus, in other instances the issue may be how to broaden the regional perspective into a continental one, and in some cases, particularly in eastern Europe, the issue may be whether to introduce a wider European dimension into the world history syllabus or the national history syllabus.

In most educational systems curriculum innovation will tend to be limited to a vanguard unless the majority believe it is practicable and feasible to introduce more European history into their teaching.

At present, most history teachers in Europe will feel that the scope for wide-scale change in this direction is severely constrained by some combination of the following factors.

First, the current curriculum framework for teaching history prescribed by the national or local education authority. This can constrain innovation in two ways. A content-rich syllabus focused on national history, as many chronological surveys tend to be, will leave little scope for much coverage of what has happened elsewhere in Europe. More typically, if the history curriculum has been structured according to certain principles (chronological, thematic, interdisciplinary, etc.) then any additional coverage of European history is likely to be governed by the same structuring principle.

Second, the degree of autonomy enjoyed by the history teacher varies from one European state to another. Some official guidelines merely list the topics to be covered leaving scope to the teacher to decide which aspects of that topic will be focused upon. Others provide more detailed content but even then some syllabuses and curriculum regulations provide opportunities for the teacher to also choose some topics from a list of options. In theory, virtually all western European educational systems would claim that even where the content of the curriculum is officially specified the individual teacher can still exercise considerable autonomy regarding the teaching methods they employ. But "content-rich" syllabuses can be a severe constraint upon the range of teaching and learning styles which a teacher uses. Lack of suitable textbooks and the lack of suitable in-service training can also limit the amount of choice the teacher can exercise when deciding what to teach and how to teach it.

Third, limited educational resources. If changes in the history curriculum or syllabus require new textbooks and a structured in-service training programme it may be difficult to bring about wide-ranging changes quickly and universally. This is certainly the case in some central and eastern European states in the current economic climate, but, to a lesser degree, this is also a problem in the rest of Europe.

Last, the number of hours of history teaching which the student receives. In some educational systems compulsory secondary education lasts 3 years, in most it lasts 5 years and in a few states compulsory secondary schooling lasts 7 to 8 years. In some systems history is a compulsory subject for the whole of secondary education, while in others it is compulsory only for 3 years and then becomes optional. Clearly there is less scope for broadening the history curriculum or looking at some pan-European themes and topics in greater depth if compulsory secondary schooling lasts 3 rather than 5 years. The average secondary school student receives less than 2 hours of history teaching per week, approximately 80 hours per year; a total of 240 hours in a school where lower secondary education is limited to 3 years and 400 hours in a system where compulsory secondary schooling begins at age 11 and ends at age 16. The more limited the number of hours of history education which a student receives and the more content-rich the existing curriculum is, the fewer the opportunities there will be for extending or expanding the curriculum.

Some history teachers working with secondary-aged students will be able to read this handbook and then give serious consideration to ways of introducing new topics and themes into their history syllabuses which have a strong regional or pan-European dimension. But for many other teachers the change that they will need to consider will not be *quantitative*; it will be *qualitative*. That is, they will be less concerned with adding more content to an already crowded syllabus and more likely to be interested in introducing qualitative changes in their approach to the topics and themes which they already teach.

The next section looks at what these qualitative changes might be and subsequent sections go on to look at how they might be introduced into the teaching of a range of topics and themes.

Some curriculum principles and selection criteria

Over the last three decades there has been much discussion in history workshops and conferences about the criteria for selection of content for history syllabuses, and much of this has focused on the teaching of 20th-century history.

What is clear is that any selection of topics and themes on contemporary European history will only be partially based on educational criteria. School history is public property. It is perceived to have political and social purposes as well as educational objectives. If you examine the lists of aims that preface so many history curriculum guidelines and syllabuses you will see that history teaching is often expected to promote certain broad social aims by helping the students develop a sense of national identity, passing on an awareness of the cultural heritage, preparing them for democratic participation and citizenship, developing respect and tolerance for diversity between peoples of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and so on. At the same time these lists also usually include subject-specific educational aims such as, helping students to understand the present, including the origins of contemporary problems; helping them to develop a sense of history and historical consciousness; introducing them to the distinctive methodology of history and what is involved in understanding and interpreting the past; and arousing their interest in the past.

It is also clear that the criteria for selecting curriculum content, particularly new or additional content, will, in most instances, have to take into account the kinds of constraints on innovation outlined above in this chapter.

Are there any guiding principles which might be applied regardless of whether there is scope for wholesale restructuring of the coverage of the 20th century within a given syllabus or scope only for minor changes in the way one or two topics or themes are approached by teachers and students? What follows is an attempt to at least stimulate debate on this question.

I would argue that when considering how to introduce more European content into the teaching of 20th-century history there are three curriculum principles that should be taken into account in addition to those principles which are likely to underpin specific syllabuses.

The first of these principles is concerned with the need to establish a balance between what is historically important and what is suitable for inclusion in a specific syllabus for teaching a particular group of students. By "historically important" here I mean those events and developments which have had a major impact on much of Europe this century, or have had wide-ranging consequences, or might be regarded as key turning points in the century, and those conditions and processes which have helped to shape the century. By contrast, "suitability" relates to such issues as the availability of suitable teaching materials and resources, the time available on the timetable for further developing the European dimension of this particular topic, no matter how historically significant it is, and the teacher's perceptions of how students will respond to this development.

For example, it may well be that the European experience of colonialism and de-colonisation in the last century will have resonance for many students and their history teachers in western Europe because they are already looking at the impact of this process on their national history. Here there is potential scope for widening the coverage to highlight similarities and differences between the processes of de-colonisation in several European countries. By contrast, it may well be that a history teacher in a secondary school somewhere in eastern Europe might feel that this topic would not be particularly relevant to or have the same resonance for his or her history students. However, another teacher in the same situation might feel that there were interesting parallels and contrasts that could be drawn between the relationships between western European colonial powers and their colonies and, on the other hand, their own nation's historical relationship with the Ottoman Empire or the former Soviet Union.

The second principle is the need to establish a balance between “the particular” and “the general”. The rapid development in the second half of the 20th century of disciplines such as social history, economic history, cultural history and the history of ideas has meant that more historians and history teachers are now more comfortable with the kinds of data and conceptual frameworks that are employed in the social sciences. They are also more willing to employ comparative techniques and to generalise about broad developmental trends and patterns in a society and between societies. However, this degree of convergence between history and the social sciences has not meant that the historian is no longer interested in describing in detail what happened in a particular situation or event, and no longer concerned with bringing out the historical significance of the particular, the unique, the distinctive and the fortuitous in understanding a particular situation. In this respect, the introduction of a wider European dimension into history teaching does indeed involve providing opportunities for students to compare and contrast developments in different countries or regions and to identify trends and patterns, similarities and differences. But there is still scope for the in-depth case study and the detailed historical reconstruction.

A third curriculum principle in teaching European history concerns the need to establish a balance between the *vertical* historical perspective and the *horizontal* historical perspective.

The vertical perspective relates to the study of change and continuity over time. In the context of 20th-century European history it involves the student in:

- developing a broad overview of specific topics, periods, and the century as a whole, such as the important sequences of events and developments, the major forces shaping events and the key turning points;

- understanding some key lines of development over an extended period of time, particularly the phases which they have passed through, for instance the changing roles and status of women during the 20th century; the different phases in the process of de-colonisation, etc;
- understanding some of the more significant diachronic or developmental trends and patterns, such as increasing urbanisation, globalisation, demographic shifts, etc;
- understanding the causes (long-term, medium-term and “triggers”) of some of the more significant historical events and processes;
- being able to trace back the development of a major contemporary European or regional issue or problem to its roots (even if these roots lie beyond the period under study);
- being able to identify the consequences and significance of particular important historical events and developments.

The horizontal perspective relates to the setting of specific events, developments and trends into a wider European context. Modern national history, particularly within syllabuses which seek to provide the student with an outline chronological survey from antiquity to recent times, can often be taught as if history could be reduced to a single linear narrative. In practice, of course, national, local or regional developments may be part of a wider movement or trend, or a reaction to events taking place elsewhere. Similarly, looking at parallel situations and similarities and differences may help to clarify understanding of what was happening nearer to home.

A good example of the general point being made here would be Garrett Mattingly's book, *The defeat of the Spanish Armada*.¹ The author, an American historian, seeking to escape the British historians' tendency to narrate this event from a wholly British perspective, provides instead a multiplicity of interwoven narratives representing the perspectives of all of the different protagonists, whether they be on the high seas, or in London, Madrid, Antwerp, and so on. While it is not being suggested here that secondary school students should be undertaking the kind of sophisticated analysis of a particular historical event that an academic historian such as Mattingly has done, it is suggested that students sometimes need to be encouraged to examine key events and moments in their national history from a variety of different perspectives, partly to test, cross-reference and authenticate the version in their textbooks, partly to understand the links and connections with developments taking place elsewhere, and partly in order

1. Garrett Mattingly, *The defeat of the Spanish Armada*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1959.

to understand that the same facts and pieces of evidence are often open to different interpretations when looked at from different standpoints.

In the context of 20th-century European history the horizontal perspective involves the student in:

- comparing and contrasting events and developments in their own country's history with the equivalent in other European countries or regions;
- comparing and contrasting ways of life (urban life, agricultural life, trade, communications, traditions) in different parts of Europe at different times during the century;
- looking at how events and developments in their own country's history have influenced or been influenced by what has happened elsewhere in Europe;
- demonstrating how neighbouring cultures have influenced each other and been influenced by cultural developments outside the region or even outside Europe;
- looking at how national or local events and developments at a given point in the century were experienced or perceived elsewhere in Europe;
- examining how European rivalries, conflicts and divisions (economic, political and religious) have affected recent national history;
- examining how international processes, developments and institutions (for example the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, the League of Nations, the United Nations, Nato and the Warsaw Pact) are perceived across Europe.

Again it should be stressed that this is not intended to be a blueprint for developing a new European history curriculum or a new European history textbook. It is intended more as a kind of development framework which might guide the introduction of a European dimension into the teaching of one or two topics in a syllabus or more wide-ranging changes.

We will now look at how some of these ideas and principles might be applied to the teaching of some selected topics and themes.

CHAPTER 3

APPROACHING SELECTED TOPICS

Developing an overview

It may seem slightly odd to start a discussion on topics with an aspect of history teaching which does not appear to be specifically topic-based. However, the principle can be applied just as easily to a topic, an event, a developmental process, a period such as the inter-war years or the cold war era, or the century as a whole.

Essentially the process of developing an overview involves helping the student to locate particular events or changes into their temporal and spatial contexts. That is:

- putting an event or series of events into a broad chronological sequence (requiring some sense of the order of events rather than accurate recall of dates);
- identifying the key factors which connect the events (some general sense of the conditions and causes which have contributed to it and the consequences which arose from it);
- locating the sequence of events within a wider European or global context. How were events influenced by developments elsewhere? Were the influences direct or indirect? Were people clearly aware of what was happening elsewhere and did this affect their decisions and actions? Were there similar developments happening elsewhere at the same time? Were they affected by the same contributing factors?
- locating the particular sequence of events or developments, where appropriate, into a broader historical context. For example, in most western European history curricula de-colonisation tends to be examined in terms of the national experience, without giving much attention to the fact that other European countries were experiencing the same processes at around the same time and for very similar reasons. The process itself tends to be seen predominantly in political terms and the starting point for coverage of the topic is usually the late 1940s. However, if we set de-colonisation into its broader historical context then the approach would need to incorporate

the pre-war growth of nationalist movements in many colonies, the impact of the economic depression in the 1930s on the colonial economies and their trade with the imperial nations, and the disruptive influence of the second world war.

What is the educational value of helping students to develop an overview? It is not my intention to suggest that students should not be required to study aspects of local, national, regional, European or global history in detail. That will always be an important element of their history education regardless of whether they are following an outline-survey syllabus or one where particular periods and phases have been selected for study. However, much of the detail of what they learn is forgotten by students as soon as they cease to study the subject at school (if not sooner!). In a subsequent chapter it is argued that in planning history curricula we need to give some thought to the residue of knowledge and understanding which we would hope that our former students would retain 10 or 15 years after they have left school. A broad, interpretative overview of the 20th century would form an important part of that residue. Whilst still formally studying history an overview will help them to see how the fine detail – the specific events, happenings, decisions, actors and their actions – fits into the larger picture and help them to understand the connections more clearly.

An important element in this, especially when studying topics and periods, is the timeline. Timelines are becoming more widely used in history teaching. Textbook publishers increasingly include them in their illustrative material and some of the most comprehensive ones can be found in reference books. There are also a number of history websites on the Internet, such as Hyperhistory (<http://www.hyperhistory.com>) which covers the last 3 000 years, which provide useful timelines. (For other examples see “Using new technologies: history on the Internet” in this book). Most of the timelines which have been developed for textbooks tend to outline periods of national history and also tend to focus almost exclusively on the political dimension of history, presumably because it is easier to identify specific dates and events than those historical dimensions which focus more on themes, patterns and trends.

Timelines do not necessarily have to be highly detailed to achieve their purpose. A brief table of relevant statistics can often encapsulate some complex patterns and trends in a very effective way. For example, the dramatic fall in the size of the British armed forces during the 20th century as a result of changes in weaponry, the way wars and battles are fought, the development from a conscript army to a professional, technically modernised army, the development of air power and the overall change in the international status of Britain over the century is encapsulated in the figures in **Box 1** below.

Box 1: British military forces in the 20th century

| | |
|-------|-----------|
| 1918: | 8 500 000 |
| 1944: | 5 067 000 |
| 1975 | 338 000 |
| 1999 | 119 000 |

Source: N. Davies, *Europe: a history*, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 897

From the point of view of developing students' understanding of the European dimension of 20th-century history it is also useful to introduce a comparative dimension so that when students are looking at events and developments in their national history they can also see what might have been happening at the same time in other parts of Europe. This not only provides opportunities for identifying similarities and differences and highlighting connections; it also introduces an element of synchronicity (that is parallel developments which are not directly connected in a causal way). The example in **Box 2** (at the end of this chapter) is just one individual's attempt to produce a European timeline for a specific period, the inter-war years (1918-39) which includes three distinct dimensions: the political, the socio-economic and the scientific and technological. Inevitably timelines, like syllabuses and textbooks, are the result of a selection process and reflect the particular perspective of those who compile them. It may well be, for example, that a European timeline compiled from the perspective of central Europe or Scandinavia or the Russian Federation would omit some items, include others, and put a different emphasis on some.

It is included here primarily for illustrative purposes. It can be used in a variety of ways. First, each column can be looked at from a vertical perspective to convey a sense of the pace of change and development over the period. Second, if looked at alongside a similar but probably more detailed timeline of national history over the same period then it offers a possibility of a horizontal perspective as well, enabling the student to locate events and developments at home within the context of events taking place in other parts of Europe. To further facilitate this it was also necessary to include some events and developments taking place outside Europe, particularly in the United States, reflecting the increasing globalisation of the economy over this period. Third, there is also scope for identifying connections between the columns. This applies particularly between the political and the socio-economic, for example the growing political instability, particularly in the

new democracies, as the economies were hit by falling prices, rising unemployment and people losing their savings, and the subsequent introduction of welfare measures to limit the political as well as the economic consequences of falling industrial production and long-term unemployment during the period.

This is an example of what might be called an externally produced timeline: the work of a teacher, a textbook writer, a historian or a historical website compiler. However, provided the students have access to suitable reference materials and the syllabus and timetable are flexible enough then there is a very good case for involving the students themselves in the development of these European timelines. The process would develop and reinforce the student's sense of a broad chronological overview.

It would be useful for students to undertake an exercise of this kind at the end of each topic, period and century. From the point of view of helping students to reflect on the 20th century as a whole then it might be useful to get them, retrospectively, to identify the main changes that have taken place within each historical dimension (political, social, economic, cultural, technological, etc.) by comparing Europe in 1900 with Europe in 1999, organising the exercise around what might be termed "the big questions": Are governments more accountable to the people now? Is wealth more equally distributed now than it used to be? Are peoples' lives more secure now than in 1900? Are people better educated now? Is the nature of work and employment very different now from what it was then? Is there more equality between the sexes? In what ways, if at all, have the relationships between north and south, east and west changed?

Compare and contrast

There is a sense in which, of course, this entire part of the handbook is about the processes of comparing and contrasting what is happening in different parts of Europe during the 20th century. However, given the kinds of constraints which were outlined earlier the opportunities for doing this will be limited in many history classrooms. Consequently there is a case for arguing that history teachers need to think strategically about the examples they use.

Clearly strategic thinking will involve taking into account the teaching materials which are available. It is also likely in many cases that the baseline for comparison will usually be national history, that is comparing and contrasting what was happening in one's own country at a given point in time with what was happening in another country or across a particular region of Europe, such as the Balkans, the Baltic, central Europe, and so forth. However, I would also suggest that an additional "strategic" concern might be pedagogic. The

need to help history students to learn how to critically evaluate sources (primary and secondary), to identify perspectives and assumptions and to recognise that historians interpret evidence rather than reveal historical truths, runs like a thread through this entire handbook. Comparison is an important tool for developing that mode of historical understanding and thinking. In that respect I would suggest that in selecting topics for a comparative approach priority might be given to those which encourage students to question their own assumptions and perhaps the assumptions underpinning their textbooks and also to recognise the “darker side” of their own national histories.

For example, many history textbooks covering the 20th century include a chapter on fascism. It is usually presented as a phenomenon which emerged in Italy after the Great War and then emerged soon after in a slightly different form as national socialism in Germany. The treatment of the topic may involve some comparison between developments in Italy and Germany, reflecting the different leaders and differing circumstances in the two countries. It is less common to find textbooks or syllabuses which provide opportunities for students to:

- compare the fascist dictatorships in Europe with the other dictatorships (authoritarian, conservative, Marxist, monarchist, military) which emerged elsewhere in Europe during the inter-war years;
- examine the emergence of fascist movements and parties elsewhere in Europe, even in the more mature democracies, and to evaluate their role during the German occupation in the second world war;
- explore why similar conditions in some countries did not lead to the emergence of fascist movements or why the emerging movements did not mobilise sufficient support to seize power;
- examine why political parties which share some fascist aims re-emerged in the late 20th century.

An outline example of this approach applied to the topic of fascism in Europe appears in the **Box 3** approach at the end of this chapter. There are several other topics which are covered in many textbooks which could also benefit from a similar comparative approach:

- the Holocaust and the treatment of Jews, Roma/Gypsies, Muslims and ethnic, national and religious minorities across Europe;
- wartime collaboration;
- war crimes;
- the treatment of colonised and occupied peoples;
- emigration and immigration;

- the political emancipation of women, etc.;
- a range of human rights issues.

These are all themes and topics which potentially provide opportunities for the student to explore the general question: was this phenomenon unique to this country at this moment in time, or was it an example of a more widespread phenomenon which could be found to varying degrees across Europe at the time and subsequently?

Tracing back the development of a major contemporary European issue or problem

Most history students are used to a syllabus on the 20th century which starts at 1900 (or 1914 if the syllabus focuses on what is sometimes known as “the short 20th century”) and working their way gradually to the present over a timespan of one to two years in upper secondary school. Or in some cases they may study the 20th century in lower secondary school and then return to it in greater depth and breadth when they are older. In either case the chronological approach is the most common one.

Now this approach is, to some degree, based on a very large assumption, namely that when students encounter events in “country x” in, say, 1989 then they will make the connections with events that happened in “country x” (and indeed in other countries too) in 1918, 1878 and even as far back as the late 16th century. In practice some students make these connections, most do not without some assistance from their history teachers.

With many contemporary issues, whether domestic, European or global, the students bring to the classroom information they have already picked up from mass media, particularly television. News coverage on the broadcasting media tends to be ahistorical. Most broadcasters, when analysing the history of a contemporary issue or problem will seldom attempt to relate it to events and developments in the distant past even if the collective memory of these events has shaped people’s contemporary perceptions and actions and even if past decisions have created the conditions which now give rise to the problem or issue. Their timeframe for explaining events will tend to be six months, a year or two years at most. Interviewees who try and offer an historical perspective on current events are usually interrupted and brought quickly back to the present.

Given that this is the context in which most young people first start to learn about contemporary issues and events there is a strong case for taking some of these issues and helping the students to backtrack from the recent to the more distant past to, in a sense, “unravel the plot”. With a number of contemporary European issues and problems it is also important that this process

takes into account the parallel developments and circumstances which might have shaped and influenced the direction which the issue actually took.

Box 4 at the end of this chapter offers one example of this approach based on the break-up of the Soviet Union. It was chosen for two main reasons. First because it is quite a good example of how a crisis can sometimes develop its own momentum and secondly because it also shows how difficult it can be to identify and rank specific causes for some contemporary events. They seem to arise instead because of a multiplicity of circumstances which affect the situation in a variety of different ways with a “logic” that can only be understood with hindsight. Something which modern historians are very familiar with but which tends to be glossed over in school textbook accounts.

Exploring “key” historical questions and puzzles

Earlier in this section, when looking at ways of helping the students to develop an overview of the century, it was suggested that one possibility is to encourage them to identify some of the main changes that have taken place over the last 100 years. It was suggested that one way of doing this is to focus on some of the key questions concerning continuity and change. For example: did the gap between rich and poor widen or narrow over the century? Do people now have more control over their lives than they used to? Are political refugees treated better now than they were in 1900? These could be termed key questions because they focus on the quality of people's lives: their standards of living, their civic rights, their life chances, their treatment by people with power or authority. Clearly questions like these provide opportunities for broad comparisons across time and comparisons across Europe (the vertical and the horizontal perspectives). Whilst these questions have been phrased in such a way that they would encourage the student to examine broad trends and patterns across Europe or within a particular region, it is also possible to examine “the particular” as well as “the general” through, for example, case studies of local communities or even the students' own families through a small-scale oral history project.

This focus on key questions need not be restricted to the study of trends and patterns; it can also apply to specific periods, events, topics and themes. One type of question which can be particularly fruitful here focuses on historical puzzles or anomalies. For example:

- why did a local conflict between Austria and Serbia in 1914 escalate so quickly into a war involving much of Europe, which then spread to Turkey, the Middle East and parts of Africa and, eventually, led to the participation of Japan and the United States as well?
- why did so many European democracies collapse in the 1920s and 1930s?

- why did the French government not use its superior military numbers to prevent the re-militarisation of the Rhineland in 1936?
- why did the Soviet Union enter into a non-aggression pact with Germany in August 1939 when Hitler's aggressive intentions towards the Soviet Union were already well-known from his book, *Mein Kampf*, and from his speeches in the 1930s?
- why did Hitler believe that an attack on Poland would not lead to war with Britain and France?
- after the fall of the Netherlands, Belgium and France in rapid succession in May 1940, why did Hitler then launch "Operation Barbarossa" against the Soviet Union instead of completing his supremacy in western Europe by invading Britain?
- why did the successful wartime alliance between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union break down so quickly, leading to what came to be known as the cold war?
- why is it that so many European countries introduced legislation to ensure full adult suffrage for women during two short periods of the 20th century: in 1918-21 or in 1944-52?
- why did the European colonial powers all start experiencing demands for independence from their colonies at about the same time?
- why did so many communist governments in central and eastern Europe collapse so quickly in 1989?

All of these questions have something in common. They focus on actions and decisions which, either at the time or later with the benefit of hindsight, seemed to take people by surprise because of the speed with which events happened, or because previous events would have led them to expect a very different response or decision, or because the consequences seemed to be more significant and wide-ranging than had been expected at the time. In other instances questions like these focus on behaviour that was out-of-character, or anomalous or puzzling.

Puzzles, problems, unanswered questions, anomalies and conundrums are often at the heart of the work of the historian, particularly when examining events and developments which are well-documented. While it is not being suggested here that school students should be identifying and exploring new puzzles and anomalies (although this sometimes can be fruitful ground for local history and oral history projects) there is a good case for supplementing the standard approaches to 20th-century topics and events with an examination of some of the more well-documented "puzzles". Why?

First, puzzles of this kind are interesting, challenging and stimulating. They often relate to key “turning points” in the history of a particular event or development. Also, sometimes they represent the kinds of questions to which students would like to know the answers but do not ask for fear of appearing foolish.

Second, they put students into the role of a historical detective. That is:

- they have to look for clues to the motives of the people involved;
- they have to look for corroborating evidence from other sources;
- they have to assess whether these clues are consistent with all of the other information available to them;
- they are looking for the decisive moments, actions or events which have triggered off the subsequent events.

This provides them with opportunities to apply their skills and demonstrate their historical understanding. By that I mean that through one means or another most students can study a topic, memorise the chronological sequence of events and list the main causes and consequences. Historical understanding, however, also involves making sense of what they are studying and that entails examining the meaning which particular actions or decisions had for the people involved (both those who acted and those who were on the receiving end of those actions).

Third, historical puzzles are a useful way of helping the student to question the apparent inevitability of a sequence of events which is often implied by the textbook account that was written with the benefit of hindsight. They get to see that at the time people were making decisions and choosing options with limited and even incorrect information, they were trying to second-guess the actions and decisions of others and they were sometimes just trying to “buy time” until they were in a better position to decide what was best to do. They see as well that their decisions were sometimes taken for emotional rather than logical reasons.

Fourth, if a teacher has only limited scope for introducing a European dimension into the study of a particular topic then puzzles can be a very useful means of doing so. Take the treatment of the second world war in many national history syllabuses and textbooks. Some curricula and textbooks adopt a mainly chronological approach beginning in the mid-1930s with the re-militarisation of the Rhineland and the Anschluss and ending with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, followed by the unconditional surrender of Japan. This kind of approach usually also includes some discussion of the causes of the war and its aftermath.

Another fairly common approach focuses on a number of broad themes (each of which may or may not be looked at chronologically): the war in western Europe, the eastern front, the north African campaign, the national experience of the war, the Holocaust, total war and the consequences for a civilian population, women and the war, the peace and the re-construction of Europe. A genuinely European approach to the second world war is probably beyond the scope of many of these syllabuses and textbooks. More often than not they offer a predominantly national perspective on the war with a limited amount of illustrative material focusing on the other main protagonists. Where the scope for developing the European dimension is fairly limited, the four puzzles or key questions relating to the war which were identified earlier (and others like them) can be important elements to focus upon because, by their very nature, they were turning points in the course of the second world war.

By way of illustration I have included some material on the origins of the cold war which, along with a textbook and any other relevant resources available to the student, could be used to address the question: why did the wartime alliance between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union break down so quickly? (See **Boxes 5 and 6** on this subject at the end of this chapter). The material has been put together to help demonstrate the following:

- that the mutual distrust between the former allies that was so apparent after 1945 had its roots in events and developments which had taken place well before the outbreak of war in 1939;
- this mutual distrust persisted throughout the war;
- that the behaviour of the allies towards each other often reflected their inability (or unwillingness) to distinguish between actions determined by their respective ideological positions and actions determined by more immediate concerns, not least survival and the need to defeat the common enemy;
- that whilst both the Soviet Union and the United States were concerned to take steps to ensure that they could not become embroiled in a third world war emanating from central Europe, the defeat of Germany meant that each saw the other as the most likely enemy if such a conflict did break out;
- the American monopoly of the atomic bomb in the period 1945-49 proved a major influence on relations between the former allies;
- the personalities of the key figures and the timing of the changes (particularly Truman for Roosevelt) also influenced the outcomes.

Some questions have been included for students to explore and discuss which reflect these points.

However, before students start to analyse key questions and historical puzzles it may be necessary to introduce some learning activities that will help to make the events and the issues more tangible and less abstract to them. Some of the sections in the other parts of this handbook offer possibilities here, particularly the use of extracts from television documentaries, newspaper articles written at the time, cartoons and posters. In the case of the cold war a useful starting point might be to examine perceptions of each other before, during and after the second world war as presented in propaganda posters and cartoons: for example the presentation in the United States and Britain of Stalin as a dictator like Hitler or Mussolini at the time of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, as "Uncle Joe" during the war and as the man behind "the iron curtain" in 1946.

Identifying cross-national linkages and connections

This is an important aspect of teaching European history in any period, but especially when teaching modern history. Some topics in 20th-century European and world history particularly lend themselves to this approach. For example, the Great Depression of the 1930s, the emergence of nationalist movements in Europe in the 1920s and again in the 1980s, the emergence of state-supported terrorism in the late 1960s, the world oil crisis of the early 1970s, the chain of revolutions in central and eastern Europe which began in 1989, and so forth.

In each case we see how well-established political and economic linkages (political alliances, trade, economic co-operation, finance) became the channels through which a problem or crisis in one country or a region spread, intensified, gathered in momentum, and, in turn, created new problems and crises. Yet at the same time we also see how local conditions helped to shape each country's or region's response to that crisis. Although each of the events and developments listed above could be looked at (and often are) from a predominantly national perspective, it can still be difficult for students to understand how the national government's freedom of action and room to manoeuvre were restricted by events and developments outside its influence without also exposing them to a comparative, cross-national perspective.

On the other hand students often find it difficult to identify and trace the various links and appreciate their relative significance, especially when these may not always be straightforward linear, causal connections. Interdependence is a rather abstract concept which is difficult to grasp even when

looking at a specific example of it in operation, especially if the example is drawn from economic history. As with the approach to exploring key questions and historical puzzles, it is important to begin by making the topic tangible to students. This might be through a case study of what happened in the student's own country or town or locality at the time. Or it might be by taking a particularly vivid image which encapsulates people's experiences during a time of political or economic crisis. For example, a topic like the Great Depression is full of powerful images: the unemployment queues, the soup kitchens, the banks closing, the factory lock-outs, the stories of people losing all their savings during the Stock Exchange crash, the prairies in the mid-west of America turning into dustbowls, the political demonstrations and street marches. However, topics like this all present the history teacher with at least two other pedagogical problems.

First, how to help the students to understand the processes through which a problem or crisis emerges at a particular point in time. This can be particularly difficult when examining economic problems since they tend to have a logic of their own which needs to be understood; but so also do some political crises. This involves finding ways to engage the students in a diagnostic process. One way into this is by focusing down on a single actual or hypothetical instance or case. For example, **Box 7** at the end of the chapter shows what would have happened in a particular company (producing radios) in the late 1920s or early 1930s as the onset of an economic recession in the United States began to have an impact on people's lives.

The second pedagogical problem is how to help the students to understand how a local or national problem can escalate into a global one. One possibility here is to produce a network web or flow chart of the kind demonstrated in **Box 8** at the end of this chapter which traces the connections and linkages through which a global crisis can emerge. The same approach, of course, would also work with regional, national and local problems.

| Box 2: A timeline for European history in the period 1918-39 | | |
|--|---|---|
| Political | Socio-economic | Science and technology |
| <p>1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Russia recognises Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Ukraine as independent. Civil war in Russia. Revolutions in Munich, Berlin and Vienna. Independence for Czechoslovakia and Hungary; Independent kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia). Armistice on Western Front.</p> <p>1919 Independent Polish Republic declared. Paris Peace Conference to establish reparations and re-draw national boundaries. Treaties of Versailles (with Germany), Saint-Germain (with Austria) and Neuilly (with Bulgaria). Italian Fascist Party founded.</p> <p>1920 Treaty of Trianon (with Hungary). Treaty of Sèvres (with Turkey). End of Russian civil war. Victory for Bolsheviks. League of Nations set up. War between Greece and Turkey.</p> <p>1921 Border fixed between Russia and Poland. Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist Party in Germany.</p> | <p>1918-21 World-wide influenza epidemic killed millions. The rate of emigration from Europe to the United States falls well below the pre-war levels. Population movement now tends to be more within Europe than out of Europe. Some European countries start to regulate employment and working conditions; e.g. France, Netherlands and Spain introduce an 8-hour working day. Major changes in the democratic process come in after the war. From 1920 on vote extended to all adult males in most countries and to some women. This means that electorates are now much larger and politicians have to take into account the views of the working class. The Great War had stimulated heavy industry – manufacture of armaments, motorised vehicles, introduction of new production techniques and technologies. Most of the industrialised countries enjoy a mini-economic boom. The United States is now the leading industrialised country in the world. The mini-economic boom collapses in 1920. Final agreement on the level of German reparations for the Great War (1921).</p> | <p>1919 First non-stop transatlantic flight by Alcock and Brown.</p> <p>1920 Edwin Hubble discovers that the universe is expanding. Chromosome theory of heredity developed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

| Box 2: A timeline for European history in the period 1918-39 | | |
|--|---|--|
| Political | Socio-economic | Science and technology |
| <p>1922 Italian fascists march on Rome. Mussolini called on to form a government. USSR formally created. Defeat of Greeks at Smyrna by Turkish forces.</p> <p>1923 Belgium and France occupy the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland because Germany had not paid reparations. Political unrest in Germany. Strikes in Ruhr in protest against occupation. French-Belgian direct action unsuccessful. Hitler's failed coup in Munich. Kemal Atatürk and Turkish nationalists overthrow the Ottoman regime and replace it with a modern, secular republic. Negotiate new treaty with Allied powers (Treaty of Lausanne). General Primo de Rivera establishes military dictatorship in Spain.</p> <p>1924 Stalin becomes General Secretary of Communist Party during Lenin's illness. Takes full control after Lenin's death. Albania and Greece become republics.</p> | <p>1921-24 Prices for foodstuffs and raw materials fall dramatically in the early 1920s. Farmers and peasants throughout Europe are badly hit by this. Worst hit are those in the countries of central and eastern Europe with the Soviet Union on one side closing its borders to trade and Germany on the other side suffering from rapidly rising inflation and economic paralysis.</p> <p>By the early 1920s most of the economies of Europe are experiencing an economic recession with rising levels of unemployment. Germany experiencing hyperinflation, the currencies of central Europe also suffering from these developments.</p> <p>The economic situation stabilises in much of Europe after 1924 although unemployment averages around 15% and is worse in Scandinavia.</p> | <p>1922 Radio transmissions begin. Herbert Kalmus invents technicolour movie film.</p> <p>1923 Juan de la Cieva flies the first autogyro with a rotating wing. Vladimir Zworykin invents the first electronic camera tube.</p> <p>1924 Leitz produces the first 35mm camera, the Leica.</p> <p><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 2: A timeline for European history in the period 1918-39

| Political | Socio-economic | Science and technology |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1925 Treaty of Locarno: Germany, France and Belgium accept existing borders, guaranteed by Britain and Italy. France promises to defend Belgium, Poland and Czechoslovakia if attacked by Germany.</p> <p>1926 Military coup in Poland leading to end of democratic government. Marshall Pilsudski seizes power. Military coup in Portugal. General Strike in Britain.</p> | <p>1925-28 Restoration of the gold standard in Britain and Germany in 1925.</p> | <p>1926 <i>Don Juan</i>, the first silent film with a synchronised music soundtrack is released. A workable television system is demonstrated by John Logie Baird.</p> <p>1927 Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle of atomic physics. First talking motion picture, <i>The jazz singer</i>, is released. Georges Lemaitre formulates the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe.</p> |
| | <p>Stalin introduces first Five Year Economic Plan in Soviet Union in 1928.</p> | <p>1928 Wave mechanics introduced by Erwin Schrödinger. Alexander Fleming discovers the antibiotic properties of penicillin mould. Zworykin patents first colour television system. <i>(continued)</i></p> |

| Box 2: A timeline for European history in the period 1918-39 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Political | Socio-economic | Science and technology |
| <p>1929 Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes becomes Yugoslavia. Royal dictatorship established. French start to build Maginot Line.</p> <p>1930 King Carol II returns to Romania. Forced collectivisation of farms in Russia.</p> <p>1931 British Commonwealth established. Republic declared in Spain.</p> <p>1932 Salazar becomes Prime Minister in Portugal.</p> <p>1933 Adolf Hitler elected Chancellor of Germany. Chancellor Dollfuss becomes dictator in Austria.</p> <p>1934 Dictatorships established in Estonia and Latvia. Hitler's purge of Nazi Party. Political purges in Soviet Union begin.</p> | <p>1929-39 The Wall Street Crash ("Black Tuesday", 29 October, 1929). In the 1920s the US economy grew at a very rapid rate. By 1929 the USA is by far the world's largest industrial producer, e.g. it produces 4.5 million cars per annum whilst Germany, Britain and France together only produce 0.5 million. The country is experiencing a consumer boom based on borrowing.</p> <p>At the same time the European states involved in the Great War are borrowing from US banks to reconstruct their economies after the effects of war. After the Crash American loans to European business are recalled, businesses go bankrupt, unemployment figures rise rapidly.</p> <p>By 1932 German factories are only producing about 60% of their output in 1928. By 1933 44% of the working population is unemployed. When their savings go and they are unable to get credit at the local stores they become desperate. The situation in rest of Europe is only slightly better. Around 1 in 3 of workforce in Scandinavia is unemployed; around 1 in 5 in western Europe. The situation is worse in much of central and eastern Europe.</p> | <p>1930 Frank Whittle patents the jet engine. The planet Pluto is discovered.</p> <p>1931 Radio astronomy founded.</p> <p>1932 Dutch complete the drainage of the Zuider Zee.</p> <p>1934 Artificial radio activity developed by F. and I. Joliot-Curie.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 2: A timeline for European history in the period 1918-39

| Political | Socio-economic | Science and technology |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1935 Mussolini colonises Libya Saarland returned to Germany after plebiscite. Anti-Jewish Nuremberg laws passed.</p> <p>1936 German troops occupy demilitarised Rhineland. General Metaxis becomes dictator in Greece. Start of Spanish Civil War.</p> <p>1937 German and Italian military aid to Franco.</p> <p>1938 German troops occupy Austria. Anschluss. German annexation of Sudetenland. Kristallnacht in Germany; Jewish shops and businesses attacked.</p> <p>1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact between Germany and Soviet Union. Agree to partition Poland. Germany occupies rest of Czechoslovakia, annexes Memel in Lithuania. Nationalist forces capture Barcelona and Madrid. End of Spanish civil war. Italy invades Albania. Hitler and Mussolini sign "pact of steel". Germany invades Poland. Britain and France declare war. Russia invades Poland and Poland is partitioned. Russian troops invade Finland.</p> | <p>1930-39 At this time Britain, Scandinavia and the USA abandon the gold standard. Other European countries followed suit in the early 1930s.</p> <p>During this time industrial production in the USSR is rising compared with the rest of Europe. Social democratic governments in Europe start to introduce economic planning.</p> <p>By the mid-1930s some European economies are beginning to expand again, e.g. Germany, Sweden.</p> <p>At this time because of the experiences of the previous five years most countries start to develop welfare systems: basic pensions for the elderly, unemployment insurance schemes, compensation schemes against accidents at work. Some schemes are voluntary, some are state subsidised. Even so private charity support for workers and the elderly still exceed public welfare expenditure until the 1960s.</p> <p>During this decade the populations moving from the rural areas to the cities stabilise (by 1918 the majority of people living in the more industrialised states already live in towns and cities) but the cities begin to expand in the 1930s as suburbs are built and commuter railway lines are constructed to serve them.</p> | <p>1935 First radar system constructed to detect aircraft. Charles Richter devises scale to measure earthquakes.</p> <p>1936 Alan Turing develops the mathematical theory of computing. First prototype helicopter built.</p> <p>1937 Whittle builds and tests first prototype jet engine. Nylon is invented.</p> <p>1938 Hungarian inventor L. Biro produces first ballpoint pen.</p> <p>1939 Hahn and Strassman discover atomic fission. First jet aeroplane flown in Germany.</p> |

Box 3: A comparative approach to teaching about fascism

Fascism: What is it?

A 20th century ideology not found before 1914. Advocated a new, aggressively national authoritarian state and “rebirth” of the nation. Corporatist economic solutions. Emphasised romantic, mystical aspects of history. Aim was mass mobilisation of society. Intervened in nearly every aspect of life. Charismatic leadership.

Who did it appeal to?

People who: felt marginalised and powerless in the face of impersonal economic forces and big business; felt betrayed by government; felt they needed to organise themselves; felt that violence was legitimate to achieve this; and wanted a new generation of leaders not drawn from the old élites.

Re-emergence in modern Europe: Why did right-wing, neo-fascist and neo-nazi parties and movements emerge in some countries in the late 20th century? Similarities and differences.

How widespread was it?

Apart from Italy and Germany, other fascist parties emerged in Romania, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Netherlands, Belgium, France. Most had weak electoral support. Some collaborated with occupying forces.

Fascist states or dictatorships?

Other dictators came to power in 1930s who adopted some features of fascist regimes, such as Franco in Spain, Salazar in Portugal, Horthy in Hungary, Metaxas in Greece, but wary of mobilising mass society to same extent.

Italy

The roots of political instability and anti-parliamentary feeling existed pre-1914. Mass discontent with peace settlement in 1919.

1919-21: Economic problems (high unemployment, no work for ex-soldiers, rising inflation, anger at war profiteering). **Political and social unrest.** Strikes and the Biennio Rosso. **Political weakness of the system:** corruption, élite complacency, north-south divide, growth of new small parties through PR. Difficult to form stable governments. Fascist Party formed in 1919 on left-wing policies. Wins no seats at election.

1921-25: Fascists win 35 seats at election in 1921. Moves to the right. Lib. Dems. unable to form stable govt. Power vacuum. Socialists declare general strike. Fascist “march on Rome”. King refuses to declare state of emergency, govt. resigns, King asks Mussolini to form govt. Fascists introduce changes in electoral system. Wins 65% of votes in 1924 and large majority.

1925-39: Other parties are outlawed. One-party state. Trade unions abolished. New “corporate” state. After early growth economy slumps; hit by 1929 Crash. By mid-1930s wages in Italy amongst lowest in Europe.

Conquest of Abyssinia in 1935. Military support to Franco 1936-39. Pact with Hitler in 1939.

(continued)

Box 3: A comparative approach to teaching about fascism

Germany

With defeat imminent in 1918 Kaiser abdicated, civilian government formed and negotiated armistice. Later many Germans saw Peace Treaty terms as very harsh and blamed civilian government for this and for defeat rather than old regime. The “stab in the back” (Dolchstuss)

1919-24: Weimar Republic. **Economic problems:** hyperinflation, collapse of Deutschmark. People on fixed incomes, pensions, ex-soldiers, middle class badly hit. Left-wing and right-wing **political unrest** in Munich and Berlin. **Political system lacked support from some sectors.** Nazi Party founded in 1919 in Munich. Failed Beer Hall Putsch in Munich in Nov.1923.

1924-29: Economic stability returned. Nazi Party remained fairly insignificant during this period. Won less than 3% of vote at 1928 elections.

1929-39: But support gained rapidly as the depression brought about by the 1929 Crash worsened. 6 million unemployed by 1932 and fear of communist revolution. In July 1932 Nazi Party became biggest party in Reichstag.

Hitler fought 1933 election on need to suspend parliament for 4 years to restore stability. One party state established. Took control of trade unions in 1933. Hitler assumed Presidency in 1934. Army took oath of allegiance to him.

Censorship and purges in professions. Control of youth organisations, racial persecution of the Jews, construction of concentration camps.

Re-emergence in modern Europe: Why did right-wing, neo-fascist and neo-nazi parties and movements emerge in some countries in the late 20th century? Similarities and differences.

| Box 4: The break-up of the Soviet Union – a reverse chronology | |
|---|---|
| Events in central and eastern Europe | Developments in the Soviet Union (1991-85) |
| <p>May 1991: Leaders of 15 Republics agree to form a new union.</p> <p>April 1991: Georgia declares independence.</p> | <p><i>Anatomy of a failed coup:</i></p> <p>Dec. 1991: Soviet Union ceases to exist. Russia, Belarus and Ukraine form Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).</p> <p>25 Dec. 1991: Gorbachev resigns as President of the Soviet Union.</p> <p>24 Aug. 1991: Gorbachev resigns as General Secretary and recommends that Central Committee of Communist Party be dissolved.</p> <p>22 Aug. 1991: Gorbachev returns to Moscow.</p> <p>21 Aug. 1991: Coup collapses. Plotters arrested.</p> <p>20 Aug. 1991: Thousands gather to protect White House and throw up barricades. Some troops defect and join the defenders.</p> <p>19 Aug. 1991: Attempted coup by a self-appointed committee who declares a state of emergency. They announce Gorbachev is ill. The group had been recent ministers or aids in Gorbachev's govt. Tanks and troops appear on streets. Yeltsin, barely escapes arrest, and goes to Russian Plt. Building (White House). He denounces the coup and calls for general strike and popular support.</p> <p>18 Aug. 1991: Gorbachev on holiday in Crimea is visited at his villa by group demanding he declare state of emergency. He refuses and is imprisoned there.</p> <p><i>Reform and crisis</i></p> <p>Dec. 1990: Soviet Foreign Minister resigned complaining of "the advance of dictatorship".</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 4: The break-up of the Soviet Union – a reverse chronology

| Events in central and eastern Europe | Developments in the Soviet Union (1991-85) |
|---|--|
| <p>Late 1990: Negotiations between Gorbachev and Baltic leaders stalemated.</p> <p>3 Oct. 1990: Unification of Germany.</p> <p>Autumn 1990: Military force used against nationalists in Baltic republics to stop disintegration of USSR.</p> <p>23 Aug. 1990: E. German Volkskammer votes for unification of Germany.</p> <p>18 Mar 1990: Election in E. Germany won by CDU party.</p> <p>11 Mar 1990: Lithuanian Plt declares independence. Declared invalid by Moscow.</p> <p>Spring 1990: Parliament elections in each of the republics strengthen position of nationalists.</p> <p>Early 1990: calls for independence from different nationalities in Soviet Union. Strongest calls from Baltic republics.</p> <p>25 Dec. 1989: The Ceasescus executed in Romania</p> <p>Dec. 1989: Communist govt. collapsed in Czechoslovakia.</p> <p>Nov. 1989: Large anti-communist demonstrations in Czechoslovakia. East German leader Erich Honecker resigns. Reformists take control of <i>Politburo</i> of Bulgarian Communist Party.</p> | <p>Autumn 1990: Gorbachev backs away from economic reforms. Abolishes Presidential Council brings back hardline conservatives (KGB, army and police) to form Security Council.</p> <p>Summer 1990: Gorbachev and Yeltsin co-operating on “500 Days Plan” to introduce market economy.</p> <p>July 1990: Yeltsin resigns from Communist Party. Helmut Kohl and Gorbachev meet. Kohl agrees to cut German troops, Gorbachev agrees to pull Russian troops out of E. Germany.</p> <p>May 1990: Yeltsin elected President of Russian Federation.</p> <p>March 1990: Gorbachev elected President of Soviet Union.</p> <p>Feb. 1990: 250 000 people demonstrate in Moscow against communism.</p> <p>Oct. 1989: Gorbachev visits East Germany for 40th anniversary of GDR. Tells E. German leaders that Soviet forces will not be used to stop reforms.</p> <p>US and Soviet presidents officially declare end of the cold war.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

| Box 4: The break-up of the Soviet Union – a reverse chronology | |
|---|--|
| Events in central and eastern Europe | Developments in the Soviet Union (1991-85) |
| <p>10 Nov. 1989: Berlin Wall pulled down.</p> <p>Autumn 1989: Many young E. Germans leaving country to go to W. Germany via Hungary and Austria.</p> <p>Aug. 1989: Non-communist government takes office in Poland.</p> <p>Aug. 1989: On anniversary of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which delivered Baltic States to USSR, a human chain links all three republics.</p> <p>June 1989: Free elections held in Poland. Success for Solidarity.</p> <p>May 1989: Hungarian government opens frontier with Austria.</p> <p>April 1989: popular demonstrations in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia.</p> <p>Spring 1989: Solidarity and Polish govt. reach agreement. Solidarity legal again.</p> <p>Autumn 1988: Estonia proclaims its sovereignty as an autonomous republic (the first to do so in USSR).</p> <p>Autumn 1987: Large scale demonstrations in the Baltic states. Conflict in the Caucasus between Christian Armenians and Muslim Azerbaijan.</p> | <p>May 1989: Demonstrations in Moscow in support of Yeltsin and radicals.</p> <p>25 May 1989: First session of Congress of People's Deputies. Elects Supreme Soviet. Mostly conservatives. Excludes Yeltsin and radicals.</p> <p>May 1989: Soviet troops are ordered to support Communist leadership in Georgia.</p> <p>Feb. 1989: Last Soviet troops leave Afghanistan.</p> <p>Dec. 1988: Brezhnev Doctrine abandoned by Soviet Union. Gorbachev speaks at UN. Announces large cuts in Soviet armed forces.</p> <p>May 1988: Soviet army begins pulling out of Afghanistan.</p> <p>Dec. 1987: Agreement between Washington and Moscow on getting rid of intermediate and short range nuclear missiles.</p> <p>Oct. 1987: Open conflict between Yeltsin and Gorbachev after Yeltsin announces intention to resign from the <i>Politburo</i>. Economic problems throughout 1987. Rising inflation, unsuccessful measures to make state enterprises more efficient.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 4: The break-up of the Soviet Union – a reverse chronology

| Events in central and eastern Europe | Developments in the Soviet Union (1991-85) |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Oct. 1986: Reykjavik Summit and Gorbachev proposes complete nuclear disarmament if Reagan does not go ahead with Star Wars plan. Reagan does not agree.</p> <p>April 1986: explosion in nuclear reactor at Chernobyl. Fallout in Soviet Union, Scandinavia and western Europe. Setback for Soviet economy.</p> <p>Gorbachev replaces two thirds of the key leaders of the Communist Party and introduces other political reforms.</p> <p>April 1985: Gorbachev outlines his blueprint to Central Committee for perestroika (re-structuring or reforming the economy) and glasnost or greater political openness.</p> <p>March 1985: Mikhail Gorbachev elected as General Secretary of the Communist Party.</p> <p>What did he “inherit”?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soviet economy in crisis; • Soviet Union fighting a disastrous war in Afghanistan; • Ronald Reagan, president of the US, has abandoned détente and begins a new arms race with Soviet Union; • Growing discontent with communism in central and eastern Europe. |

Box 5: The break-up of the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, and the emergence of the cold war

I. The roots of mutual suspicion

Allies leaving German troops in occupation of eastern and Baltic territories after Armistice in 1918;

Western intervention on side of White Russians in civil war 1919;

Lenin's commitment to world revolution. Ideological differences and mutual distrust in the 1920s and 1930s;

Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, 1939;

Stalin's belief that his allies delayed opening second western front in hope that the Third Reich and USSR would destroy each other.

II. Soviet perceptions

The Soviet leadership concerned about the future security of the USSR;

They wanted to make sure that the governments on its borders were either friendly or not under the influence of the USA;

They anticipated that if there was another attack on the Soviet Union it would be through Poland and other central and eastern European states;

Soviet Union saw US actions after 1945 as aggressive, a potential threat, and an attempt to establish world political and economic dominance.

III. Western perceptions

After 1945 many people in the US and western Europe saw the spread of communism and Soviet influence in central and eastern Europe and the activity of local communist parties in western Europe as evidence of the USSR's expansionist foreign policy and continuing commitment to world revolution. The US, in response to this, became committed to a policy of containing the USSR, which remained its policy into the late 1980s;

The global spread of communism was also seen as a threat to US economic interests, for example the need to have a secure supply of essential raw materials, the need to maintain foreign markets for US goods, and the need to avoid another depression similar to the one in the inter-war years;

Soviet possession of the atomic bomb influenced US perceptions. US had assumed it would take USSR 20 years to catch up rather than 5.

(continued)

Box 5: The break-up of the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, and the emergence of the cold war

IV. Sequence of key events 1943-1955

- 1943: Tense discussions between USSR and western allies over future of Poland and occupation of Germany;
- 1944: 300 000 Poles killed by German forces in Warsaw rising while Soviet Army already in Polish territory does nothing;
- 1944-45: USSR excluded from participation in occupation of Italy and dismantling of its empire;
- Feb. 1945: Allied talks at Yalta. Agreement on zones of occupation for defeated Germany. Talks dominated by future of Poland. Agree that interim governments in the liberated states should be formed which are representative of all democratic elements in the populations;
- Aug. 1945: Potsdam Conference. Recently elected Pres. Truman informs his allies that USA now has atomic bomb. USSR wants to be involved in running the industrialised Ruhr region in Germany and wants to be involved in occupation of Japan. Both claims rejected by the US. Western allies want greater say in eastern Europe. Rejected by Stalin;
- 1945: After defeat of Japan, Korea occupied by Soviet and US troops who divide country along the 38th parallel;
- 1946-49: Civil War in Greece between monarchists supported by the west and Greek communists supported by USSR, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria;
- 1945-48: Emergence of communist control through elections or take-overs across central and eastern Europe;
- Mar. 1946: Soviet troops still in north Persia (Iran). US complains at UN. Stalin withdraws troops;
- Aug. 1946: Soviet navy wants naval bases in Black Sea Straits. Turkey feels threatened. US sends warships and threatens force if USSR persists;
- Jan. 1947: UK and US governments fuse their 2 occupation zones in Germany into one administrative unit.
- 1946-47: Economic crisis in much of Europe: food shortages, millions of refugees, high unemployment. Political and social unrest;
- Mar. 1947: US President announces Truman doctrine. US Govt. introduces Marshall Plan to provide economic aid for European states. Poland and Czechoslovakia apply. Ordered to withdraw by USSR;

(continued)

Box 5: The break-up of the wartime alliance between the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, and the emergence of the cold war

| | |
|---------------|--|
| June 1948 | West introduces a new currency in western Germany. Stalin sees this as one more step towards a divided Germany; |
| 23 June 1948: | Soviet authorities block all roads and rail links to Berlin; |
| July 1948: | Western allies begin supplying Berlin by air; |
| Apr. 1949: | Nato formed; |
| May 1949: | USSR abandons Berlin blockade. A new state, Federal Republic of Germany founded in the west; |
| 1949: | USSR sets up Comecon (mutual economic aid for communist countries) as alternative to Marshall Plan; |
| Sept. 1949: | USSR announces it has atomic bomb; |
| Oct. 1949: | Second state, German Democratic Republic, founded in the east; |
| June 1950: | North Korea invades South. UN force (mostly US troops) drive them back over border. Then counter-attacked by Chinese communist forces; |
| June 1951: | Negotiations begin over Korea; |
| Nov. 1952: | US explodes first hydrogen bomb; |
| Aug. 1953: | USSR explodes its first hydrogen bomb; |
| 1953: | Old frontier between North and South Korea restored; |
| 1955: | West Germany joins Nato. Soviet Union set up Warsaw Pact. |

Key questions for discussion

- Why was the future of Poland so central to the negotiations between the three Allied Powers in the last stages of the War?
- Was the Soviet Union's foreign policy during the period 1943-1955 defensive or aimed at communist domination of the world?
- To what extent was US foreign policy in this period based on containment of the Soviet Union and to what extent was it based on extending its sphere of influence?
- Based on the information here and your other reading, in what ways did the personalities of the key figures, especially Stalin and Truman, influence the development of relations between the USSR and the west?

Box 6: Primary source evidence of growing distrust between former allies in the post-war era**Telegram from Winston Churchill to President Truman
12.5.1945**

I have always worked for friendship with Russia, but, like you, I feel deep anxiety because of their misinterpretation of the Yalta decisions, their attitudes towards Poland, their overwhelming influence in the Balkans, excepting Greece, the difficulties they make about Vienna, the combination of Russian power and the territories under their control or occupied, coupled with the Communist technique in so many countries, and above all their power to maintain very large armies in the field for a long time. What will be the position in a year or two, when the British and American Armies have melted, and when Russia may choose to keep two or three hundred divisions on active service?

Stalin's justification of Soviet foreign policy given in March 1946

It should not be forgotten that the Germans invaded the USSR through Finland, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The Germans were able to invade because governments hostile to the Soviet Union existed in these countries. As a result the Soviet Union had a loss of life several times greater than that of Britain and the United States put together. Some people may be able to forget the huge sacrifices of the Soviet people but the Soviet Union cannot forget them. And so what is surprising about the fact that the Soviet Union, anxious for its future safety, is trying to see that governments loyal to the Soviet Union should exist in these countries. How can anyone who has not taken total leave of his senses describe these peaceful wishes of the Soviet Union as expansionist tendencies?

On 12.3.1947 the US President announced his "Truman Doctrine" to the US Congress

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections and the suppression of personal freedom. I believe it must be the policy of the United States to support people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must help free peoples to work out their own destiny in their own way.

Andrei Zhdanov, the Soviet Union's representative at the Cominform Conference in September 1947 attacked US foreign policy

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan are both part of an American plan to enslave Europe. The United States has launched an attack on the principle of each nation being in charge of its own affairs. By contrast, the Soviet Union is tireless in upholding the principle of real equality and independence among nations whatever their size. The Soviet Union will make every effort to ensure that the Marshall Plan is doomed to failure. The communist parties of France, Italy, Great Britain and other countries must play a part in this.

Box 7: The downward spiral of economic recession

In the mid-1920s the radio was still a novelty and everyone wanted one. Two American electrical engineers set up their own company to make radios. They took out a loan from the bank to get them started.

They were very successful. They could not make enough radios to meet demand. They employed more workers and needed more capital to build a larger factory. They extended their loan with the bank. They also sold shares in their company on the New York Stock Market (Wall Street).

Lots of people bought the shares. Production of radios expanded, the companies profits rose and shareholders were getting a good return for their investment. Other companies making radios were also doing very well.

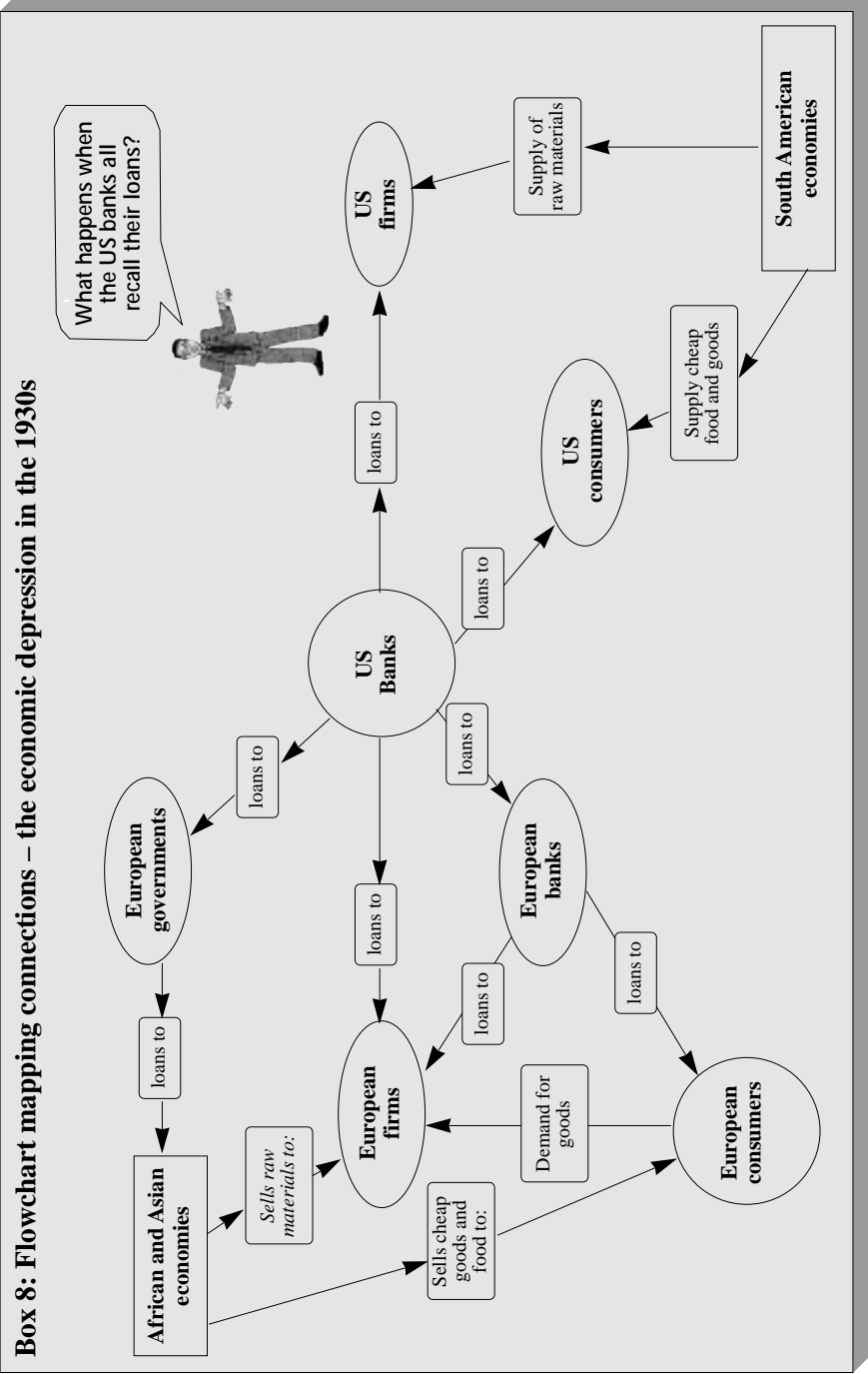
After a while the company began to realise that sales of new radios were no longer increasing. Most people only wanted one radio. The company introduced new models to attract people to buy a 2nd or 3rd radio.

Sales increased again for a while but then started falling. Times were getting hard and people were buying necessities not “luxury” goods. The company reduced the size of its workforce.

Profits were down, the value of the company’s shares started to fall, and some shareholders started to sell their shares before they lost too much money. This created a panic, more shareholders sold and the price of the shares fell and fell.

The bank which lent the owners the money to start the firm now recalled the loan. The company could not pay its debts and was declared bankrupt. All the workers were made unemployed. The shareholders who had borrowed money to invest it in the firm were also financially ruined.

Now imagine this happening at the same time in 1928-31 in thousands of companies across the United States and Europe making all kinds of products.



CHAPTER 4

APPROACHING SELECTED THEMES

Some history curricula for secondary students have been organised around a thematic framework.¹ This tends to be adopted for any combination of the following reasons:

- themes, problems and processes can be analysed through a limited number of "case studies", thereby permitting the development of historical enquiry in depth;
- the thematic approach provides some degree of coherence to a comparative approach to teaching history. In other words, a focus on themes or problems enables the history teacher and her or his students to identify common or contrasting patterns more readily than might be possible if they were taking a comparative approach to an entire period;
- this can be a useful framework when one of the main aims of the curriculum is to use history to help students to understand the present. It provides scope for the teacher to take a longer time span than he or she can usually do with the conventional chronological syllabus, which is often split up into rather arbitrary periods. Therefore it becomes possible to trace back over several centuries the roots of current events and to better understand the processes of continuity and change;
- it can be a better framework for introducing the student to historical methods than the conventional chronological survey. There is more time to use a variety of source documents, to examine alternative historical interpretations, to collect, classify, structure and examine historical evidence and to apply the historian's key analytical concepts.

The potential strength of this framework is that it can offer a dynamic view of historical processes – the factors which contribute to change and continuity and the tensions between them, at any given time; and the long-term developmental patterns which transcend the often arbitrary periods that are the basis of chronological surveys. It offers depth rather than breadth. Its critics, on the other hand, express concern that this approach may not contribute

1. The first part of this chapter draws on another publication by the author. See R. Stradling, *The European content of the school history curriculum*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1995, pp. 28-30.

sufficiently to the development of a sense of time and historical perspective, and that it might run the risk of students developing an atomised view of history. That is, jumping from theme to theme with no obvious connections. Much depends on how the teacher and the supporting teaching materials link themes together to ensure that this “atomisation” does not occur.

This handbook is not the only product of the Council of Europe's project “Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century”. In addition a number of teaching packs have also been produced, each of which focuses on a particular historical theme: nationalism, migration, women in Europe, the Holocaust and cinema in the 20th century.

These packs not only provide resource materials, lesson plans, suggested learning activities and ideas about assessment of learning on these specific themes, they can also be used by history teachers as examples for developing their own approaches to other historical themes. In this handbook I am more concerned, firstly, with highlighting what the student can learn about the history of the 20th century through studying some of the more significant themes and, secondly, with looking at ways in which some of these themes can be integrated into curricula which are organised around topics selected to be taught in a broadly chronological sequence.

The study of 20th-century themes can make at least four contributions to the development of the student's historical understanding. First, themes help the student to recognise trends and patterns over time and across Europe at a given point in time. As such, themes help the student to go beyond description in order to analyse, compare, and contrast.

Second, themes often embody important ideas that have helped to shape a particular period. Clearly no one could be said to have an understanding of the history of the century as a whole without some knowledge of the major ideologies of the century, liberalism, socialism, communism, free market capitalism and their influence on events in the 20th century. However, we can also discern the influence of other fundamental ideas on the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. For example, the idea of self-determination for peoples has had a major influence on the whole century. It has found expression in peace settlements and the foreign policy of some of the major powers, and underpinned the establishment of international organisations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. At the same time the belief that it is an inalienable right for all peoples has been a major source of conflict throughout the century both in Europe and the world as a whole. Other ideas which have helped to shape the century have included modernisation, political and economic co-operation, the idea that the state should provide a basic level of care for its people, the idea that there are certain

universal human rights which should be protected within national legislation and enforced if necessary through international action, the idea of progress being inextricably linked to technological development, and so forth.

In addition, themes, as one historian has put it, “lend unity to a period”.¹ We are most familiar with this notion when focusing on the history of earlier periods. Alongside the succession of kings, emperors, invasions, wars and dynastic disputes we also study the broader themes such as feudalism, the renaissance, the reformation, the Enlightenment and the age of revolutions. The themes encapsulate each period. The 20th century seems to be such a period of major changes that the people responsible for designing syllabuses and curricula or for writing textbooks often break the century up into relatively short periods and concentrate on the key events and developments within those periods. Yet there is a sense in which the themes which do lend unity to the study of the 20th century are precisely those which focus on change, uncertainty, the temporary nature of structures and boundaries, the speed with which traditional ways of doing things disappeared.

Finally, the study of themes helps to bring into clearer focus the forces which have shaped the century, something which is not impossible but is certainly more difficult to do when concentrating solely on a chronological sequence of topics and events.

This has implications for how we might structure lessons and learning activities on major 20th century themes. Ways need to be found of ensuring that students get an opportunity:

- to chart the main changes which occur over an extended period of time;
- to look at how general these trends were or how specific they were to particular countries or regions;
- to identify patterns and trends and recognise different types (for instance of nationalist movements, migrations, political co-operation, etc.);
- to explore the political, social, economic and cultural factors and conditions which give rise to these trends and patterns;
- to examine the direct and indirect consequences for people’s lives;
- to examine how people’s perceptions of and ideas about these phenomena change over time and to explore what the theme tells us about life in the 20th century.

1. Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in practice*, Arnold, London, 2000, p.134.

Take, for example, a theme which seems to be particularly relevant to the study of contemporary European history or current affairs – nationalism. In the last quarter of the 20th century nationalism and issues relating to national identity re-emerged in a variety of forms.

First, within some regions of western Europe there has been a cultural renaissance (in language, music, literature, traditions and heritage) amongst the small nations and peoples who had long been absorbed into the larger nation-states, such as France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Italy. In most cases cultural movements gave birth to political movements demanding some level of political autonomy and self-determination. In some cases these political movements have been pluralist, reflecting the whole spectrum of political positions and ideologies. Sometimes specifically nationalist parties have emerged, such as Plaid Cymru in Wales and the Scottish National Party in Scotland. Usually these have tended to advocate civic nationalism rather than ethnic nationalism where citizenship in a newly independent state is a matter of residence and allegiance rather than ancestry and blood-line, often reflecting the fact that these nations tend to be ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse. In some instances the political movements have divided into those committed to bringing about autonomy through political action and those, like ETA in the Basque Country or the IRA in Northern Ireland, who have opted for direct action and violence.

Second, we have also seen the emergence of nationalist parties and neo-nationalist organisations in some western European states, including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, which have sought to mobilise racist and xenophobic attitudes within the population in reaction to the influx of migrant workers, refugees and immigrants from former colonies.

Third, in some of the former European colonies of North Africa and in the Middle East we have seen since 1945 the emergence of a more complex situation of multiple identities where, depending on the cause and the circumstances, political leaders have appealed to different identities in order to mobilise people, for example ethnic nationalism, secular, civil nationalism, Islam, pan-Arabism or pan-Africanism.

The fourth manifestation of late 20th-century nationalism can be found in most of the post-communist states of central and eastern Europe. Western observers quickly found that the concepts of nationalism which they had tended to apply to 20th century developments and social movements in the west did not easily fit the complex ethno-political stew that existed in eastern Europe, where mutually antagonistic forms of nationalism could be competing for mass support within the same territories. That is, a civic or

nationalising nationalism to unite peoples living within a given territory in their support for the newly independent democratic regime, often competing, on the one hand, with a form of nationalism which had its roots in the discontent of those who feared the direction or rate of political change and, on the other hand, with a variety of ethnic nationalisms which had their roots in the aspirations, fears and allegiances of the national, linguistic and religious minorities which also resided in that territory.

If one of the objectives of school history is to help young people to understand the present then a strong case could be made out for suggesting that a study of late-20th-century European nationalisms should be an important element of the modern history curriculum. However, it would also be important to find ways of helping students to understand:

- the complexity of the situation (whether they are examining the re-emergence of nationalism in western or in eastern Europe);
- the diverse forms that late 20th century nationalism has taken in response to local circumstances and trends;
- the basis of the appeal which these different nationalist movements have for particular sectors of the population;
- the broader social and political factors which have created the conditions in which nationalist movements can mobilise support.

Providing students with a detailed description of a sequence of events (for example from the death of Tito in 1981 to the present situation in the territories of the former Yugoslavia) may be necessary but it is not sufficient if the students are going to understand what has been happening there. That calls for analysis as well as description. Concepts such as nationalism (or revolution, democracy, economic development, etc.) are powerful analytical tools. They help us to identify the kinds of information we need to look for and to organise the evidence once we have it, and they help us to generalise and to test the limits of our generalisations. However, to do that we need to make comparisons. We need to compare across time and space (earlier referred to as the horizontal and vertical dimensions). In western Europe people's ideas about nationalism are strongly influenced by the manifestation of fascism and national socialism during the inter-war years. While some aspects of this particular conception might apply, for example ethnic conflicts and "ethnic cleansing", it clearly does not help us to understand other aspects of the developments now taking place in much of eastern Europe.

How to encourage this kind of comparative analysis when time is limited and the history teacher is constrained by the demands of a syllabus which is content-rich and structured in the form of a chronological survey? At the

very least the teacher needs to be sufficiently well informed about European and global history to be able to introduce some comparative material into discussions about specific events and development. For example: What happened in country X had some similarities with what was also happening at the same time in countries Y and Z but there were also some important differences. Or: Although the nationalist movement which emerged in country X in 1992 bore a superficial resemblance to the nationalist movement which had emerged in that country in 1936 the pressures and forces which created it were very different from those in the 1930s.

Another more systematic approach would involve engaging the students in making the comparisons themselves. Over the period of one or probably two years in secondary schooling most students will have encountered a number of examples of different forms of nationalism (The list in **Box 1** below includes those which are covered in many syllabuses and textbooks used in Europe's secondary schools). We cannot assume that students, over an extended period of study such as this, will always be able to make these comparisons for themselves. Provision needs to be made to encourage them to ask and seek answers to comparative questions in their reading (for example encouraging them to read again the relevant sections in their textbooks on earlier manifestations of nationalism at the national or European levels), in individual and group projects and in assessment exercises.

If nationalism is a theme and a generalising concept for anyone (historian, teacher or school student) who is studying the 20th century then it needs to be applied in a meaningful way. That is to say, in addition to trying to describe and explain the emergence and the appeal of a particular nationalist movement at a particular time and then explore its consequences and historical significance it is also important to be asking: What kind of a nationalist movement was it? Or: In what sense was this a nationalist movement? Was it seeking to unify a nation of diverse minorities? Was it seeking to mobilise support for the political independence of a stateless nation or people? Was it seeking to mobilise a nation for war? Was it seeking to demonise a minority and blame it for the problems now facing the nation?

Another possibility is to get students to review changing notions of nationalism over an extended period of time. Earlier, when exploring ways of helping students to develop an overview, it was suggested that when they come to the end of a period or century it is useful to get students to chart the main changes that have taken place over the period or century as a whole. The longer the timescale for such an activity the more likely it is that this process will focus on the broad trends and patterns which are reflected in themes such as nationalism, democracy, economic development, political co-operation, technological development.

Box 1: Types of nationalist movement 1800-2000

The growing emphasis in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in nation-states such as England, France, the Netherlands, and the United States on the need to forge a sense of national identity where allegiance to the state came to take precedence over other allegiances.

The wave of revolutionary uprisings which occurred across much of western and central Europe in 1848, particularly within the territories of the Habsburg Empire, in which liberal nationalist movements, drawn mainly from the intellectual élites, played such an important part.

The “nationalising” or unifying nationalism which emerged in Italy and Germany at the time of the unification in the 1860s which perhaps was best described by Massimo d’Azeglio at the first meeting of the parliament of the newly united Italian kingdom: “We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians”¹

The standardisation of language, the use of nationalist iconography and symbols and the forging of national identity through mass education in the modernising states of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The short-lived nationalist movements which emerged at the end of the Great War when the old empires of central and eastern Europe were broken up by the peace settlement and the Russian Revolution and a number of new nation-states were created.

Fascism and national socialism in Italy and Germany respectively and the subsequent emergence of authoritarian nationalist movements elsewhere in Europe during the inter-war years.

The growth of various forms of liberationist nationalism in the colonies in the 1920s and 1930s and again in the period between 1945 and the late 1960s.

The emergence of neo-nationalist movements in some west European states which reflected growing demands for some degree of political autonomy for the small stateless nations and linguistic minorities.

The growth of extreme-right nationalist parties seeking to capitalise on the fears, frustrations and growing discontent within some sectors of the population fuelled by economic recession, a crisis in the welfare state and antipathy towards immigrant communities.

The emergence of nationalist movements in the post-communist states of central and eastern Europe.

1. Cited by Eric Hobsbawm in *Nations and nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, p.44.

Much of what has been said here about nationalism as a historical theme would also apply to a theme like population movements. First, recent events and ongoing developments in parts of eastern Europe have made migration, in its various contemporary forms, a “hot” issue in many European countries. Second, it is quite common in syllabuses and text-books for the various migrations which occurred in the 20th century to be treated as discrete topics rather than for population movement to be treated as a broad theme which is one of the defining characteristics of the century. Even in a situation where there is only limited scope to examine the theme of migration it might still be possible to create opportunities for students to not only find out about where people migrated from, to which countries and in how many numbers but also to analyse the dynamics within societies that lead to increased and reduced levels of migration.

Similarly it is quite possible to examine specific instances of the migration of political refugees within a predominantly topic-based rather than theme-based curriculum framework. It could be argued, for example, that the flight of east European Jews and political revolutionaries and activists from the Tsarist Empire and other parts of eastern Europe between 1890 and 1917 were due primarily to pressures and tensions within those particular societies at that time and were not due to broader forces at work across Europe as a whole. Likewise, the major refugee problem caused by the aftermath of the Balkan wars could be looked at solely as a phenomenon of that period, and the influx of migrant workers from the southern periphery and borders of Europe and from the former colonies can also be looked at simply as a phenomenon of the 30 years of economic growth in western Europe from 1945 to 1975.

However, while these various instances of population movement in 20th-century Europe may be examined in isolation when covering specific periods or decades their social, political and economic consequences for Europe have been more long-term. Indeed some of them are still being worked through. A good case can be made out for finding some time, even in the most content-rich, topic-based curriculum, to provide an opportunity for students to look at the long-term effects which these successive waves of migration have had on the different regions of Europe.

There is at least one form of population movement that can only be looked at over an extended period of time because it is diachronic or developmental. This is the internal movement of populations from the rural areas to the towns which has taken place at varying rates in virtually every country of Europe. The impact of this process on people’s lives (fundamental changes

in family life, work practices, politics, pollution, the widening gap between the centre and the geographical margins within countries and across Europe, etc.) means that this is a relevant, “live” issue for most students studying the history of the 20th century: an issue which may seem much more tangible to them than a war that began over 60 years ago or an international treaty signed forty years ago.

If there is scope within the curriculum framework to examine some 20th-century themes in detail then I would suggest that migration is one of those themes (like technology, representative democracy, or developments in mass culture) which lends itself to an approach which uses the metaphor of waves to describe trends and patterns over an extended period of time (see **Box 3** at the end of the chapter). To make sense of the notion of “waves” the students would need to be aware of the main types of migration which have been characteristic of the 20th century:

- transoceanic economic migration;
- economic migration within Europe;
- political refugees;
- forced migration of groups and communities (for example within the Soviet Union under Stalin);
- migration from the rural areas to the towns;
- immigration from the former colonies to the more economically-advanced European states.¹

They would also need to understand that these different types of population movement occurred in response to different factors and conditions and that the political, social and economic consequences were different.

The approach being suggested here is one which helps the student to chart the population flows over the century, analyse the forces which regulate the migratory flow and look at the social, political and economic consequences for Europe in general, and the student’s own country, region or locality in particular (See **Box 2** below).

1. For a more extended discussion of types of migration in the 20th century which also includes some useful ideas about teaching approaches, see Danielle Leclerc’s report, “Migration flows in 20th century Europe and their impact on school life”, Doc. Decs/edu/inset/donau (98), Council of Europe.

Box 2: The dynamics of the flow of economic migrants in 20th-century Europe

Over-population and poverty in rural areas and regions in economic decline push people into thinking about emigration or migration to urban areas.



Economic growth in other regions or countries leads to demand for labour exceeding the supply.



Opportunities for work and a better life in the economically-developed regions and countries, often combined with official incentives to migrate, pulls or attracts economic migrants.



The flow of migration increases until the supply of labour equals or exceeds demand for it.



The countries or regions that have been attracting economic migrants introduce immigration quotas and other restrictions.

N.B. during an economic recession the most recent migrant workers are often blamed for “causing” unemployment and economic hardship.

However, as has been noted earlier in this chapter, some themes are relatively abstract and complex and potentially rather dry. The study of migration flows, for example, can all too easily be reduced to looking at tables of statistics and maps with lots of arrows on them. It is important, therefore, with secondary school students to find a human angle as well. This could include examining:

- first-hand accounts of emigrants’ experiences when crossing the Atlantic or their first year in a new country;
- first-hand accounts of people’s lives after they moved from the village to the town and from working on a farm to working in a factory;
- first-hand accounts of immigrants’ experiences when they first arrived in Europe;
- doing an oral history project to collect information about the population changes that have occurred in a particular community. This can be a highly

sensitive topic and needs careful planning by the teacher. In some situations, for example, where there is social tension within the community between people born in the community and those who have settled more recently, it might be better either to avoid doing such a project or to focus on emigration from the community rather than immigration into it (see the chapter on oral history)

- producing an outline script for a television documentary on, for example, the situation of political refugees in Kosovo, or official attitudes in a west European state towards economic migrants;
- producing a critique of an actual television documentary on one of these topics (for some ideas see the chapter on television as a source for history teaching);
- analysing cartoons produced during a period of high-level migration within Europe.

Teaching and learning activities like these provide useful entry points into a complex theme by “humanising” the issues, that is, highlighting the human experiences and social consequences of being the victims of war, political repression, persecution or economic recession. They also provide the student with primary and secondary evidence against which they can “test” any generalisations emerging from examining the broad trends and patterns.

Some themes are diachronic. That is, it is possible over an extended period of time to discern a developmental pattern. A good example here might be the theme of technology in the 20th century. Here too the metaphor of “waves” works well to describe trends and patterns. In this case the specific technological changes which have occurred may be very different but the dynamics of the processes of developmental change seem to be very similar. For example:

- new technologies and techniques emerge;
- they start to be adopted;
- this creates new markets and rapid growth;
- new applications for the technology are developed;
- the potential for new applications becomes exhausted;
- eventually there is market saturation;
- the pace of growth slows down;
- another wave of technological development begins.

The diachronic nature of the theme has some implications for how it might be approached in the classroom. Firstly, it is not a theme which easily fits into the artificial boundaries established by history curricula which are organised around periods. There is not much to be gained (and a lot to be lost in terms of students' understanding of the theme) if the study of technology has to begin in 1900 just because the students are now studying the 20th century.

Secondly, the idea of change itself needs to be explored. To what extent has technological change been revolutionary or evolutionary? Some textbooks and reference books are prone to presenting the 20th century as an era which witnessed a revolution in the lives of ordinary people. The evidence they present seems overwhelming: changes in life expectancy due to improvements in health care and sanitation; major changes in standards of living and quality of life for many people (particularly those in the more economically-advanced countries), major changes in land, sea and air transportation, telecommunications, automation, the space age, and so on. On the other hand, many of the changes which have taken place would seem to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Much technological innovation has been incremental. The inventors of the motor car, the television, the camera and the telephone might well be impressed by modern developments but they would still recognise many of the basic elements of their inventions in the products of today.

Thirdly, technological change does not occur within a vacuum. It has social and economic consequences but also the extent to which new technologies are taken up and fully exploited depends to a large degree on other changes taking place simultaneously within society: the introduction of public education and vocational training, the emergence of mass literacy, the organisation of labour and work practices, urbanisation, etc. The technological developments therefore need to be set into their political, economic and social context and the relationships between the four dimensions needs to be explored.

The final theme which I want to discuss here is women in 20th-century Europe. There are a number of reasons for this. First, women's historical experiences have been overlooked in too many school syllabuses and textbooks (and, indeed in too many academic history texts) for far too long. Too often coverage is restricted to a few passing references to the acquisition of the vote, famous women of modern times and the contribution of women to the war effort in 1914-18 and 1939-45.

Second, although some countries have made women's history a legal requirement within school curricula, in most European countries there is a distinct shortage of good resources on the history of women which have been produced specifically for use in the secondary school classroom. This is ironic since, compared with any other century, there is a wealth of good

primary and secondary source material on women's lives in the 20th century waiting to be used by historians and history teachers: biographies, diaries, testaments, oral history, audiovisual material, documents, statistics and photographs.

Third, an excellent teaching pack on this theme had been produced by Ruth Tudor, which breaks new ground in its approach to teaching women's history to secondary school students.¹

Finally, this is a theme which, in an important sense, is not a theme at all. To present women's history as a topic or a theme is to run the risk of further marginalising it. Instead, it would be more appropriate to think of women's historical experiences as a dimension of all history teaching which should be fully integrated into the history curriculum as a whole. However, a change in curricula, textbooks and classroom practice of this magnitude takes time. In the interim some practical steps need to be taken to start the process of redressing the balance.

Elsewhere, Ruth Tudor has argued for "a shift from the study of the public, often political, domain in history to the private domain and that given the nature of male domination of the public domain in Europe, such a shift is necessary if women's history is to be taught." This complements calls by others for a better balance in teaching 20th-century history between the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. In her teaching pack she goes on to suggest ways in which women's history can be integrated into five broad thematic areas:

- work (including economic life, production, education, training);
- family (including motherhood, reproduction and consumerism);
- political life (including suffrage, local politics, national politics, representation, rights and responsibilities and activism);
- cultural life (including sexuality, gender identity, self-expression, art, literature, music, religion and morality);
- war and conflict (including resistance, survival, the Holocaust, war and work, war and the family).

The pack also contains learning activities and resource material that could be integrated into all five thematic areas.

This proposed approach to women's history, with its emphasis on the private as well as the public domain has two particular pedagogical implications. First, teachers will need to utilise a wide range of sources (much of it collected

1. Ruth Tudor, *Teaching 20th century women's history: a classroom approach*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Publishing, 2000.

locally), including letters, diaries, photographs, documents from archives and, above all, people's memories; and students will need to learn how to analyse and interpret these kinds of source material (for suggestions see the second part of this handbook). Second, teachers will need to look at ways of introducing multiple perspectives into their approach to women's history. It is an obvious point – although one which is often forgotten in school textbooks – but women are not a uniform group; they come from different socio-economic classes, different ethnic, religious and cultural groups and different generations. A failure to recognise this in our teaching simply reinforces the tendency towards marginalisation of women's history.

Finally, bearing in mind that many history teachers are confronted by already crowded syllabuses and curricula and may also be constrained in terms of the extent to which they can introduce new topics and themes, is there a minimalist option? Is there a learning activity that would, at the very least, help students to examine the 20th century from the perspective of women's life experiences? Earlier in this chapter it was argued that students need to be helped to develop an overview of the history of Europe in the 20th century and that one way of doing this is to provide opportunities at the end of topics, periods and even the coverage of the century as a whole to examine "the big questions" relating to the changes which have taken place over the century. In this respect it could be argued that there are two related "big questions" that could help students to develop an overview of women's history in the last century:

- first, how has the status of women changed over the century and to what extent have these changes been universal or related to particular regions of Europe or to particular social categories of women?
- second, in what ways have women gained greater control over their lives during the 20th century and to what extent have these changes been universal?

To approach these two questions, Ruth Tudor recommends an enquiry-based approach which focuses on change throughout the century or between two particular periods or across three or four decades; the scope being dependent upon the age, ability and prior learning of the students (see the section on "The big picture – women and change"). Working in small groups and using a bank of resource materials, the students would investigate different aspects of the century. She suggests that possible areas for investigation might include: international events, work, technology, leisure, national politics, demography and migration, family life, health, education, to name but a few. After each group had presented its findings the students could then be asked to assess the significance of the changes in relation to:

- how, if at all, the status of women had improved?

- how women benefited from the changes?
- were there any disadvantages for women?
- which social categories of women benefited and which did not?

Epilogue

It has not been the purpose of this chapter to recommend a particular list of topics and themes which should be covered in all secondary level history curricula. As someone with a specific interest in modern European history, I would certainly welcome a greater emphasis on the European dimension in school curricula, whether this be within courses which are predominantly concerned with national history or within world history courses, following the dual-course curriculum model which has predominated in much of eastern Europe. However, that kind of change cannot be brought about through the publication of a handbook on history teaching. The emphasis, therefore, has been on ways of tackling topics and themes rather than on presenting the case for an alternative history curriculum with a greater emphasis on European history. As such it needs to be read in conjunction with the following part on "Methods and approaches".

| Box 3: Waves of European migration in the 20th century | | |
|---|---|--|
| | Economic migration | Refugees |
| Pre-1914- | <p>Transoceanic migration to USA, Canada, Australasia, Argentina and Brazil.</p> <p>Between 1891 and 1920 over 27 million Europeans emigrated mainly from the rural areas of Ireland, Italy, Spain and eastern Europe. By 1920 nearly 1 in 7 American citizens had been born in Europe.</p> <p>There was also migration within Europe from the poorer rural areas to the more economically-advanced countries such as Britain, France and Germany, often to replace those British, French and Germans who had migrated across the Atlantic.</p> | <p>Jews fled the anti-Semitic pogroms in the Tsarist empire and eastern Europe.</p> <p>Political activists opposed to the Tsarist regime left Russia, mostly for western Europe.</p> |
| 1920s | <p>Emigration from Europe fell by over one third from the pre-war level. USA and Canada introduced restrictions on immigration.</p> <p>The impact of the economic depression after 1929 led to many emigrants returning to Europe. By 1930 the number of people returning to Germany exceeded those who were leaving.</p> | <p>A major refugee problem created by the Balkan Wars. Muslim refugees fled to Turkey while Greek refugees migrated from west and north Turkey.</p> <p>The aftermath of the Great War and the changes introduced by the 1919 peace settlement also created refugees in central Europe. This included some Jewish emigration to Palestine (now under a British mandate).</p> <p>Refugees from the Russian Revolution migrated in large numbers. By 1921 there were over 800 000 Russian émigrés in Europe. The problem was so great that the League of Nations established a High Commissioner with special responsibilities for Russian refugees.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 3: Waves of European migration in the 20th century

| | Economic migration | Refugees |
|--------------------|--|---|
| 1930 | <p>Only France was encouraging immigration at this time because the demand for labour exceeded supply. But by mid-1930s France was beginning to encourage some of its migrant workers to return to their countries of origin.</p> | <p>Political and racial persecutions in the Third Reich led to waves of refugees moving to neighbouring countries in Europe, many of whom subsequently emigrated to the United States.</p> <p>During this period some European Jews went to Palestine.</p> <p>The number of Spanish Republicans emigrating from Spain increased during the late 1930s.</p> <p>Enforced migration of whole communities in the Soviet Union during the era of collectivisation and the Stalinist reign of terror.</p> <p>By 1938 the French government was creating special camps for political refugees.</p> |
| 1940s-1960s | <p>With economic growth in the more advanced economies of post-war western Europe, economic migration increased again with workers from southern Europe (especially Portugal, Greece and southern Italy) seeking work in the industrial and urban centres of northern Italy, France and Germany. Some European countries introduced special “guest-worker” schemes to attract unskilled and semi-skilled workers from the poorer countries of Europe. The largest schemes were run by France, Germany and Switzerland. In Germany, for example, the number of guestworkers rose from 9 000 in 1956 to 2.6 million by 1973.</p> | <p>In 1945 there were millions of displaced people, including those who had been liberated from the camps and the many ethnic Germans from central and eastern Europe who went to West Germany.</p> <p>Some internal migration within the USSR.</p> <p>From the 1950s the focus of the refugee problem shifted from Europe to Africa and Asia where the end of the Empire had brought with it ethnic and ideological conflicts.</p> <p>The emigration of European Jews to Palestine which had begun in the late 1930s increased with the founding of Israel in 1948. Also in that year nearly 800 000 Arabs were expelled from the territory of the new state of Israel.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

| Box 3: Waves of European migration in the 20th century | | |
|---|--|--|
| | Economic migration | Refugees |
| 1940s-1960s | <p>From the 1950s levels of immigration from colonies and former colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean increased, especially to Britain and France. Between 1945 and 1970 over 30 million immigrants came to western Europe in this way.</p> <p>Emigration from Europe also doubled from the level in the inter-war years. Between 1945-65 about 10 million Europeans emigrated to USA, Australasia, Argentina and Brazil.</p> <p>The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) starting taking migrant workers from some of the poorer communist countries, including Vietnam.</p> | |
| 1975-2000 | <p>An economic slump in the 1980s reduced the demand for labour. Most guestworker schemes were halted and some workers deported.</p> <p>Economic migrants from the world's poorer countries began seeking work in the Middle East, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea rather than Europe.</p> | <p>In Africa civil wars continue to create millions of refugees (around 5 million currently live in camps supported by international relief agencies).</p> <p>The developments in Russia and eastern Europe since 1989 have also created internal migration and migration between countries in the region.</p> <p>Developments in Bosnia and Kosovo have also created a refugee problem. During the Kosovo crisis over 700 000 Albanians fled to camps in surrounding states and some then moved on to western Europe.</p> |

SECOND PART:

METHODS AND APPROACHES

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION

The second part is divided into nine chapters, each of which focuses on a different pedagogic issue or problems associated with teaching 20th-century European history to secondary-level students. In each chapter there is a brief commentary on the specific issue or problem being addressed and the different approaches which are illustrated. The issues covered are:

- integrating skills-based learning into a predominantly knowledge-based syllabus or curriculum framework. The content-rich syllabus is often put forward as the main reason why teachers are unable to focus on developing students' historical skills. This looks at a number of ways in which teachers have introduced skills-based work within these constraints;
- handling controversial and sensitive issues, particularly ones which relate to national or group identity; relations with other countries (especially neighbouring countries); treatment of minority groups; and experiences of war and military occupation;
- helping students to "read" visual archive material on the 20th century (including propaganda material). Photographs relating to current news or historical events are not neutral representations of reality. Similarly news-casts and documentaries are not just a source of evidence which can be checked against other sources. To some degree they select, edit and present the evidence according to production values which are distinct from the professional values of the historian or the journalist. Values which relate to what is thought to make a "good" television or radio programme or film. Students need to understand these values and priorities in order to critically "read" this material;
- using simulations and role play in history teaching. Active learning of this kind can often be very effective in crystallising in the students' minds the motives, circumstances, pressures and priorities which led people to act in the ways that they did. But to be effective preparation and follow-up work is essential;
- helping students to analyse and interpret multiple perspectives on the same event or historical phenomenon by comparing the perspectives of different historians; comparing eye-witness accounts with those which

have the benefit of hindsight; comparing how different nations (or different groups within the same nation) view or interpret the same event and so forth;

- making effective use of out-of-school learning opportunities, such as museums, archives and exhibitions, and how to integrate them into classroom teaching;
- integrating the new technologies into history teaching. No matter how many useful websites there may be on a particular historical topic or theme, the student (and the history teacher) needs an effective search strategy. One of the issues addressed here is how to develop such a strategy and how to develop students' search skills;
- finally, the methods and approaches outlined above have implications for the role of the history teacher and how he or she knows whether the aims and objectives which underpin these methods are actually being achieved. Therefore, the second part concludes with a discussion of these issues and their implications for teacher training.

CHAPTER 6

DEVELOPING SKILLS AND CONCEPTS

A key question for those who are responsible for developing new history curricula for secondary schools and for those who are responsible for teaching history is: "what residue of historical knowledge and understanding would we like our students to retain ten or fifteen years after they have left school?"

Since 1989 national and local ministries of education in central and eastern Europe have been reforming their history curricula. In many of these countries, but particularly those which have experienced centuries of annexation and occupation, the implicit answer to this question has been that the history curriculum should engender a sense of national identity. An understandable though ambitious aim bearing in mind that few students in any of these countries receive more than two hours of history education per week during their secondary schooling. Many of the reformed curricula were developed by academic historians with no experience of teaching their discipline to school students. They often produced over-crowded syllabuses with a heavy emphasis on content presented in the form of a chronological narrative of the nation's history. In some of these countries work is now underway on the "second generation" of history syllabuses and the debate about what should be regarded as essential historical knowledge and how history should be taught to secondary-aged students continues. In some other eastern European countries, particularly where the educational systems have been decentralised, there is still considerable uncertainty within the teaching profession about what to teach and how to teach it.

Since the mid-1980s significant changes have also been introduced into the history curricula of most western and northern European states. Sometimes the result has been content-rich syllabuses, sometimes teachers have been given scope to exercise their own judgment about what to teach within broad curriculum guidelines. Mostly however, teachers have had more flexibility and freedom to decide how to teach their students than to determine what should be taught. It is my impression that the debate has shifted away from a simplistic distinction between teaching content or teaching skills to one where the issue is more concerned with how to integrate skills-based learning into essentially knowledge-based syllabuses.

However, the question of what we would like our students to retain ten years on remains germane to any discussions regarding teaching methods and approaches. Within the context of teaching 20th-century European history (although I would suggest that the same case could be made for teaching national or world history) I would argue that this retained residue should be:

- a continuing interest in history which is not just restricted to the history of their nation or ethnic community;
- a broad, interpretative overview of the history of the 20th century which is partly chronological and partly thematic. The knowledge they are taught serves as building blocks for developing this kind of overview or framework and then perhaps it does not matter too much if, with time, they forget specific facts. They will know where to go to seek out this information, but more importantly, they will know how to make sense of it when they need to and how to make connections between disparate pieces of historical information;
- a sense of the recurring patterns and the dynamics of change which have shaped the century;
- a sense of some of the main trends and developments which have been common to most of Europe or regions within it, and those which reflect national or regional differences;
- a way of looking at the contemporary world which takes into account the temporal dimension; which recognises that today's events and developments usually have their roots in the past (often the distant past) and are not just the result of things which have happened recently;
- transferable analytical and interpretative skills which they will be able to use in the future to understand the world they live in and the changes they are experiencing, and which will help them to evaluate the information presented to them by the mass media and other sources.

To achieve these broad objectives it is necessary to give some thought in history teaching to how best to help students acquire these skills and ways of thinking and a grasp of the key historical concepts which will give them an analytical and interpretative framework.

Key concepts

Concepts are general ideas. They provide a means of:

- organising historical knowledge;
- organising ideas about history;
- making generalisations (for example, this is an example of...);
- recognising similarities and differences;

- finding patterns;
- establishing connections.

It is important to recognise that helping students to understand and apply key concepts calls for a different approach to teaching history than the one which focuses on “the grand narrative” with its emphasis on chronological sequence. For students to be able to apply concepts they need to make comparisons, they need to generalise and at the same time recognise the limitations of those generalisations and they need to be able to move backwards and forwards in time, recognising that different historical phenomena tend to have different time frames (that is that some phenomena can be studied as events or happenings, while others can only be understood by looking at them over an extended period of time).

Sometimes history teachers who have been trained to deliver the grand narrative approach (and some who have not!) protest that concepts and conceptual frameworks are too abstract and too complex for their students. Undoubtedly there will be some students, particularly in mixed ability groups, who do have problems in understanding and using these concepts and feel more comfortable with an approach to history that emphasises the acquisition of knowledge. But this has not deterred teachers trained in other disciplines from teaching abstract ideas and concepts, whether these be related to the theory of relativity or quantum mechanics in science, calculus in mathematics or the sophisticated spatial models that are now frequently used in both physical and human geography.

Broadly speaking there are two kinds of concepts which are relevant here. The first type are sometimes described as substantive concepts or “first order concepts”. A list of typical examples from 20th-century European history would probably include: total war, civil war, revolution and counter-revolution, imperialism, emancipation, independence, dependence and interdependence, capitalism, nationalism, socialism, fascism, communism, conservatism, liberal democracy, dictatorship, totalitarianism, colonialism, decolonisation, resistance, terrorism, cold war, welfare state, glasnost and perestroika, co-operation. These are concepts which help us to understand historical trends and patterns as well as specific events. Some, perhaps most, of them are borrowed from other disciplines; a process which intensified in the 20th century as the study and teaching of history broadened to incorporate economic, social and cultural history as well.

Do historians use these substantive concepts in the same way as specialists in other disciplines? History, like political science (with which it shares many substantive concepts) is an eclectic discipline. It would be surprising if there were not some evidence of common usage. But there is also a sense in which historians use their concepts in a more concrete way than political scientists

or sociologists. As Peter Lee has put it, for the historian “part of what communism is must be found in what communists have done”.¹ That is the historical dimension of the concept.

Although concepts such as these tend to be applied to specific historical events or phenomena our understanding of them (and their value to our understanding of history) depends on them being used: to illustrate a variety of historical circumstances; to direct our attention to what is generalisable and what is unique about a specific event; to illuminate the context in which a series of events has happened.

These first order concepts are distinct from more specific labels not only because of their generalising power but also because they relate to processes.

Take, for example, the concept of revolution as it is used by historians in the context of events taking place in Russia between 1900 and 1918. Western historians tend to apply the term revolution to the changes which took place in March and October, 1917 and also to the events in 1905 which began with “Bloody Sunday” on 22 January 1905, when unarmed and peaceful protesters were attacked by police and cavalry, and culminated with the suppression of the Moscow soviet in December of the same year. In so far as a revolution in the social and political sense denotes an attempt to bring about radical changes in the regime and in the political, social and economic structure of society then it is clear that there are significant differences between all three revolutions. The events of 1905 resemble a political rising but the opposition was far from united and its not clear to what extent they wanted to overthrow or reform the system. To some extent, and only temporarily, the tsarist government emerged stronger than before. The February revolution in 1917 seems to have come about to a large degree because of the collapse of the tsarist regime. Most historians and contemporary observers seem to agree that, for the most part, it was spontaneous, unplanned and disorganised and met with little resistance. Only Bolshevik historians argued that the events of February and October were two phases of the same proletarian revolution. The October revolution of 1917 shows many of the characteristics of a *coup d'état* though clearly the political, social and economic changes that took place subsequently were revolutionary.

The application of the concept of revolution to these events (as opposed to merely the label) focuses our attention on the underlying processes as well as on the sequence of events and the identifiable immediate and medium-term causes; processes which started well before 1905 (in reaction to the

1. Peter Lee, “Why learn history” in A. Dickinson, P.J. Lee and P. Rogers (eds) *Learning history*, Heinemann, London, 1984, p.1.

repressive policies introduced in the 1880s) and continued well beyond 1917. It also directs us to look at how people were interpreting the course of events over that extended period of time. Why, for example, were the revolutionaries surprised by the speed of events in 1905 and again in March 1917? Why were the tsarist generals, the politicians and the conservative elements unwilling to fight to save the system in February 1917? Why were the other revolutionary parties, except the Bolsheviks, prepared to co-operate with the provisional government between February and October 1917?

Historians and history educators also employ technical or “second order concepts”. As with first order concepts they do not necessarily “belong” exclusively to history. However, they help us to understand how historians work, what they are interested in and how historical knowledge and understanding is created and constructed. These concepts include: continuity, change, chronology, causation, comparison and evidence.

Continuity and change

To develop historical understanding students need to be encouraged, as they come to the end of looking at a specific topic or period or after looking at diachronic themes (such as population, technology or cultural movements), to reflect on the evidence of continuity and change. In doing so they need to understand the following.

First, continuity is not the same as stasis. It would be more accurate to say that when looking for evidence of continuity they would be looking for signs of uninterrupted or incremental evolutionary development. By contrast evidence of change, in this context, would be signs of a clear break with the past. So, for example, the changes which took place in relations between western European states and their colonies after the second world war represented a clear break with their imperial past, even though traces of that former relationship remained in terms of trading links, diplomatic contacts, immigration, and so forth. Similarly the regime which emerged after the Russian Revolution represented a clear break with the past, even though again historians may have been able to identify traces of the past in the new regime’s attitudes to its neighbours, to national and ethnic minorities, and so on. By contrast many of the developments which have taken place in people’s lives over the century seem to reflect an incremental, evolutionary process rather than dramatic changes. The process of urbanisation has been steady and predictable. In 1900 one-in-ten people lived in cities. By the end of the century the majority did. Technological developments, though sometimes appearing revolutionary, have often been incremental in practice. Space travel may have represented a significant technological change but the petrol-driven motor car has been with us for a century.

Second, students need to understand that change does not always mean progress; and that the concept of progress is value-laden, linked to values which may vary from one society or culture to another.

Third, they also need to understand that rates of change tend to vary depending on whether we are looking at the political, economic, social or cultural spheres. A former British prime minister once said that “a week is a long time in politics”. By contrast, the rate of change in people’s customs, mores and beliefs takes much longer with the result that certain traditions persist long after the reason for behaving in such ways has disappeared.

Exploring the concepts of continuity and change does not easily fit into the conventional sequential structure of the traditional history syllabus except when applied to specific events. However, the end of the 20th century and the millennium generated a great many books, magazines and television programmes which offered retrospectives of the century. Perhaps for the first time there is now a lot of material around which could be used to help students examine the evidence of both continuity and change over the entire century in the political, economic, social, cultural, religious and intellectual spheres. In looking at the world in 1900 and again in the year 2000 what has changed significantly? What has changed very little? Which changes represent dramatic breaks with the past and which ones demonstrate a process of incremental development?

Chronology and narrative

We have become accustomed to think of the historical past in terms of narratives, sequences, dates and chronologies. So much so that we tend to think that these are actually attributes of the past itself. In reality, of course, they are not. In trying to make sense of events and give shape and form to complex developments we seek to order them, interpret them, decide what is and is not significant and then weave them together into a story. Historians do it; eye-witnesses to a crime do it when interviewed by the police. But in real life we did not experience events and developments in this way, as if in a story. Mostly we experienced a series of disjointed happenings which we only began to make sense of with the benefit of hindsight. That also is what historians do much of the time. Chronological narrative is their stock-in-trade, so is the process of dividing up the past into a sequence of segments to give it shape and order.

Generally speaking, most curriculum developers and textbook authors have done the same. However, while it is relatively easy to assign dates, establish sequences and identify the causes and consequences when studying kings, wars, conquests and political crises, it is much harder to do this when studying social and cultural history. Cultural patterns and developments are not so

easily broken down into events and situations. They are processes and because they are processes it is not so easy to identify the order and sequence of things or assign dates to them. Often cultural processes are cyclical and the processes of change are slow and deep rather like the ocean currents, as the historian Marc Bloch once put it. In political history particular actors are often significant. We believe or assume rightly or wrongly that the character and thoughts of Hitler or Stalin are relevant to our understanding of decisions taken at the time. But with cultural and social history it is often the case that it is not the actual actors who are important or significant but the stage they are performing on.

With cultural history we are often more concerned with trying to set developments into a context than we are with trying to find out what happened before and what came afterwards, or with trying to trace the causes and consequences. Above all we are often trying to find out what certain cultural and social developments meant for people at the time.

Some history curricula have tried to take this into account, particularly in the coverage of the 20th century. However, by far the most common structure for modern history syllabuses at secondary level remains the segmented one with the 20th century divided up into 10-20 year blocks; a principle better suited to political history than to social, cultural or even economic history.

There is a strong case for arguing that one of the aims of history teaching should be to help students develop "a sense of chronology". To do this, however, it is also important that they understand that chronology, sequence and narrative are constructs which are imposed on the past and that the segments into which their curriculum has been divided may be somewhat arbitrary.

Another shibboleth of the curriculum planner is that the best way to teach history is to start at the beginning or pre-history and then gradually work up to modern times. As a result in almost every educational system in Europe the 20th century is taught to the oldest age group of students. And yet there is no pedagogical reason why this should be the case. As John Slater observes: "The history of the 20th century is not more intrinsically difficult than that of the 14th century or the Roman Empire".¹

Indeed a good educational case could be made out for younger children to study more recent history because it is more immediate and concrete for them while the history of Classical Rome and Greece or pre-history should be taught to older students. Because this is so rarely done we lack the evidence to know if students would acquire a sense of chronology just as easily by

1. John Slater, *Teaching history in the new Europe*, Cassell, London, 1995, p.123.

tracking backwards as they do by starting at the “beginning” and working forwards in time. It could be argued that students are more likely to think chronologically (that is to apply the concept rather than merely remember dates) if they are time travellers “able to move backwards and forwards in the past, leapfrogging some periods, backtracking to others [rather] than relentlessly trudging from the distant past to wherever the clock or timetable allows us to reach”.¹

The implication of this for studying the history of 20th-century Europe would be that in order to understand what is happening now in parts of Europe the student needs to be able to not only examine the recent contributing and causal factors but also trace the roots back through history. The traditional segmented curriculum structure assumes that the students will establish the links between what they may have studied six months ago or a year or two years previously with what they are studying now. The evidence to support this assumption is not very strong. The links have to be re-established when they are studying the recent past.

Causation

When seeking to explain a particular event or situation the historian is concerned with three related questions: Why did it happen? Why did it happen when it did? Which causal factors were the most significant ones?

How can we help the student to apply the concept of causation in this way? Gary Howells, a history teacher himself, suggests that if the objective is to help students to think historically rather than just memorise labels such as “long-term” or “short-term causes” then the teacher should opt for what he calls “big questions”. For example: why did the first world war break out in 1914? or why did Stalin agree to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact when he knew Hitler’s intentions towards the Soviet Union? or why did relations between war-time Allies break down so quickly after 1945 leading to the cold war?

Howells describes his approach in terms of building up layers of understanding. He suggests starting with helping students to develop a mental picture or overview of the event in question.² Here, for 20th-century history he strongly recommends using visual and audio-visual sources and resources. The next stage is to create a layer of understanding about the context, particularly the long-term causes. These, he suggests, tend to have compelling

1. John Slater, *ibid*, p.123.

2. Gary Howells, “Being ambitious with the causes of the first world war” in *Teaching History*, August 1998, Issue 92, pp.16-19.

explanatory power which can help to make the issues more tangible for the student. Then the students go on to rank order these long-term causal factors in terms of their significance, giving reasons for their decisions. Then they go on to examine the "triggers" or specific events which sparked them off. This enables them to seek answers to the question "why did it happen when it did?" Finally the students explore the inevitability of the events, considering such questions as "once this had happened was it inevitable that the rest should follow?" This helps them to understand two things. First, that at various points the decision makers usually had different options and often made their choices on limited or even incorrect information and second, how chance also played its part.

The students complete their enquiry by transferring the information they have collected onto an analytical grid.

With some historical events it might be necessary to differentiate between long-term, short-term and triggers and in the study of developments and processes it may be necessary to add a further category of "underlying contributing factors". Take for example the cold war. Unlike a hot war such as the Great War it does not fit into a clear, finite time-slot. There are long-term causes going back to 1919 when America, Britain and France landed troops at Murmansk, Archangel, Vladivostok and the Crimea to support the White Russian armies. We might also wish to add ideological differences, Lenin's commitment to world revolution, and the mutual distrust that escalated through the 1930s and 1940s.

The short-term causes would probably include the different interpretations of the Yalta agreement, the post-war disputes over the futures of Germany and Poland, the development of the atom bomb, Soviet policy in Iran, the unwillingness of the western allies to allow the Soviet Union any role in the occupation of Japan or the Ruhr, and the unwillingness of the Soviet Union to permit any western involvement in eastern Europe.

The triggers would undoubtedly include: communists coming to power in Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948, the Marshall Plan and the adoption of the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin blockade and the formation of Nato.

But to explain relations between the two blocs for the next 40 years also requires some analysis of the underlying contributing factors: the emerging spheres of influence not just in Europe but around the world, the mutual distrust based on wholly opposed perceptions of each other's intentions, the ideological differences, the changes taking place in the economies of the two superpowers, the arms race, and so forth.

Evidence

Once we move beyond the obvious and banal facts about the year in which a battle was fought or a law was passed or a leader died we find that historians are mostly dealing not with historical *truth* but with historical *evidence*. More often than not that evidence is incomplete and provisional and likewise their interpretation of that body of available evidence is also provisional and may indeed be contested by other historians using the same body of evidence.

It is important that students understand this, particularly at a time when some political groups in some countries seek to use and misuse history for nationalistic purposes. Even if that were not the case it is also important, if we are aiming to develop students' historical understanding, that they have a clear sense of how the historian works. That in any study of an historical event the historian:

- selects facts according to their own view of what is relevant and significant (but that does not mean leaving out those facts which do not fit their ideas and theories);
- then examines the connections between these facts;
- organises those facts into a coherent account or argument; and
- if there are any gaps in the factual information then the historian may have to make an educated guess or extrapolate from the information which is available. Historians often do this when trying to "get into the mind" of an historical figure. To do this they might look for patterns of behaviour or they might compare this person's actions with other people's actions in similar situations, and so on.

In doing this historians convert their selected facts into evidence (that is, facts which are used to support a particular argument or theory or interpretation of what happened).

Key skills

Much more space has been devoted in this chapter to concepts than will be given to skills. This is not because the former are thought to be more important than the latter. There are two reasons. First, nowhere else in this handbook are the key concepts of history examined explicitly although I hope that it will become apparent to the reader that the need to develop the student's conceptual understanding is a theme which runs right through the book. Second, the rest of part two and much of part three is concerned to a large degree with developing students' analytical and interpretative skills and historical thinking.

I will therefore confine myself here to some general points about the development of students' historical skills. First, although there have been ongoing debates for many years now about the desirability and feasibility of skills-based teaching and learning in the history curriculum and its implications for the teaching and learning of historical knowledge it is not, and never has been, an either-or issue. The issue has always been how to strike an appropriate and workable balance between developing the student's historical knowledge, developing their ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate historical evidence and developing a sense of history (including an understanding of how historical knowledge is created).

Second, it is important when thinking about how to help students develop relevant skills and ways of thinking, that we acknowledge that learning how to think historically is not like learning how to play the piano or how to do mathematics, where the acquisition of higher level skills is dependent upon learning lower level skills and operations first. It is not at all clear what are the prerequisite knowledge and skills that a student will need before she or he can, for example, assess the reliability of a particular source of evidence or identify the perspective of the author of a particular document.

Third, it is also clear that different sources of evidence need to be analysed and evaluated in different ways. The historian approaches the task and asks different questions of a photograph or a painting than the ones which he or she will ask of a document or a newsreel taken from a film archive.

Fourth, sources of evidence (primary and secondary, including textbooks) can be analysed from two quite distinct perspectives. On the one hand, substantive questions can be asked about the specific content in the source and how it relates to the event or situation which we are examining. On the other hand, procedural or generic questions can also be asked of virtually any source: who produced it, when, why, for whom, from what point of view, how reliable is it, in what ways might it be biased, against what other sources could we check.

However, in spite of these observations, is it still possible to identify certain core skills that could underpin an approach to teaching and learning history which incorporates skills and ways of thinking? I would suggest that an approach to teaching history which is seeking to develop the students' analytical skills as well as their historical knowledge would aim to help students develop the following abilities and qualities:

- to be able to formulate relevant questions;
- to examine an historical issue or question and suggest possible lines of enquiry;

- to be able to examine potential sources of information and distinguish between those which are primary and those which are secondary;
- to be able to evaluate those sources in terms of perspective, bias, accuracy, reliability;
- to recognise their own perspective, bias, prejudice and take it into account in their interpretation of the available evidence;
- to use these sources to identify relevant information to help answer their questions;
- to structure this information on a particular event or situation into a sequence (what happened first and then subsequently, what was happening contemporaneously, etc);
- to contextualise the information by relating it to the information they already have about the period, parallel events, etc.
- to scrutinise the available source material for reasons and causes and to rank order them in terms of their significance;
- to reach some conclusions about what happened and why and to provide reasons for these conclusions;
- to produce, orally or in writing, a clear, logical account based on this analysis.

To develop such skills clearly has implications for the way in which the teacher teaches and their perception of their role in the history classroom. It implies, for example, an emphasis on active rather than passive learning, on learning through enquiry and discovery, on providing opportunities for small groups and independent learning as well as whole class teaching and discussion, or providing students with access to a variety of source materials wherever possible. Examples of such approaches are discussed in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 7

CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE ISSUES

If one of the main aims in teaching 20th-century history, indeed in teaching any history at all, is to help students to understand the present and how we got to where we are now, then teaching about controversial and sensitive issues is inescapable. The question is not *should we teach them* but *how should we teach them*.

The century has provided us with a wide range of controversial and sensitive issues to consider: the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing, pogroms, war crimes, collaboration with occupying forces, treaty violations, civil wars, deportations, the treatment of Roma/Gypsies, migrant workers and refugees, military occupations, violations of human rights, religious persecution and sectarian conflict, colonialism, and so on. Every country in Europe has its controversial and sensitive issues.

This chapter looks at the treatment of selected controversial and sensitive issues and how they have been handled in the classroom. But before looking at classroom approaches, it is useful to address some more general concerns.

What are controversial and sensitive issues?

In a sense much of what is taught in history is controversial; there are disagreements about what happened and why it happened and over its significance. Sometimes these are purely academic controversies: two historians or two schools of thought interpreting the same evidence in different ways. Sometimes these issues divide groups or whole societies or neighbouring countries. Such disputes may be about:

- what happened;
- why it happened;
- who started it;
- who was right;
- who has the best case to argue;
- who has been most selective with the evidence.

Controversial issues which are socially divisive or divide nations are usually also *sensitive*: they upset or disturb people's sensitivities; they call on people's loyalties; they arouse people's prejudices. In such circumstances they can become sensitive for the teacher also, since some parents, their children, some politicians or pressure groups begin to question whether the issue should be taught or even whether a particular teacher should be allowed to continue teaching it.

Not all sensitive issues are also controversial in the sense of reflecting contemporary social and political divisions in society or between nations. They are sensitive because they relate to particularly painful, tragic, humiliating or divisive times in a country's past, and there is a fear or concern that reference to them in history lessons might renew old wounds and divisions and bring back too many painful memories.

Why teach about controversial and sensitive issues in history?

We started by suggesting that students need to study controversial and sensitive issues in order to better understand the world they live in. This, in itself, is a worthwhile educational aim for history teaching.

Also, students of history need to study such issues because there are very few aspects of 20th-century European history on which all historians agree. So, controversial issues are a useful means of helping students to understand the fundamental nature of history as a discipline: that almost every historical event and development is open to different interpretations. The process is not simply one of amassing all of the facts and then the truth will be revealed. The facts have to be assembled into an account or argument. The same facts can often support different interpretations and often the information or evidence available to the historian is far from complete leaving even more opportunities for different interpretations. To ensure that students understand this is another worthwhile educational aim.

However, it is also possible to teach students certain process skills and ways of looking at historical controversy which they can transfer from one issue to another. Essentially this consists of critically analysing the evidence and how it has been interpreted, asking a series of analytical questions and analysing the language that is used by people when they refer to the issue.

The first, **critically analysing the evidence** and how it has been interpreted consists in:

- appreciating the complexity of the issue (that is not reducing it to simple dichotomies, black and white terms, etc.);
- sorting out the arguments of the various groups and individuals involved (or the different historians);

- distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant background information;
- identifying potential sources of information;
- recognising the gaps in the information that is presented;
- recognising the limitations of this information;
- evaluating the likely biases of the people supplying the information;
- sorting out the similarities and differences in various accounts of the issue;
- handling conflicting evidence or accounts of what has happened.

In **asking analytical questions** about public statements, newspaper articles, film and broadcasting commentaries by politicians, journalists and any other interested parties involved in interpreting the issue, the following questions could be addressed:

- what motives might these people have for supporting this point of view?
- in what ways might they benefit from a particular solution, policy or argument being adopted?
- what causes do they attribute to the situation or dispute?
- what relevant information has been or appears to have been omitted from the statement, article, film, etc.?
- what motives, if any, might they have for intentionally omitting this information?
- do they emphasise some points and play down others in their argument? why might they do this?
- what policies, solutions or recommendations have they proposed to resolve this issue?
- what assumptions appear to underlie their arguments?
- how justifiable are these assumptions?

In educational terms, the asking of these questions may be more important than always being able to find the answers?

In **analysing language** when referring to certain issues, the following should be examined:

- use of false analogies;
- use of stereotypes;
- limitations of appeals to “the lessons of history”;
- use of emotive language;
- appeals to the prejudice of the reader, listener or viewer.

A number of strategies emerge in the examples included below. They can be summarised as follows:

- providing students with an opportunity to critically evaluate a variety of source materials which offer them different perspectives on the same events;
- looking at how historical interpretations and accounts have been influenced by the historian's own era and culture;
- comparing and contrasting with parallel situations in other countries and communities;
- using role plays and simulations to help students to put themselves into the shoes of others with different experiences and perspectives;
- using personal accounts from people who lived through the events and comparing them with the interpretations offered by historians;
- asking the students to test their expectations against the available evidence (an enlightening experience when they themselves discover information that is contrary to their preconceived ideas and expectations).

Handling sensitive issues in the classroom

Finally, some strategies for coping with issues where the sensitivities impinge on the classroom.

Distancing strategies: when an issue proves highly sensitive within the community in which the teacher is teaching, or when an issue generates a great deal of feeling or the class becomes polarised, the "heat" can be taken out of the situation by breaking off to examine analogies and parallels, or going back further in time to trace the history of the issue under discussion.

Compensatory strategies: these can be employed when students are expressing strongly-held attitudes based on ignorance, or when the minority is being bullied or discriminated against by the majority, or, also, when there is an unquestioning consensus in the class in favour of just one interpretation of events. In such circumstances some teachers take a more directive role – by playing the devil's advocate, or highlighting contradictions in students' responses, or demythologising popularly held beliefs. Others place the onus on the students to consider points of view other than their own by drawing up "for and against lists" or by role reversal (working in a group to construct an alternative argument from the position they actually espouse).

Empathetic strategies: which can be turned to when the issue involves a group or nation which is unpopular with some or all of the students, or when the issue involves covert discrimination against a particular group (an ethnic minority, a religious group or even a whole sector of society such as women), or where the issue is remote from the students' own lives. Methods here

can include some of those already referred to, including role reversals and for-and-against lists, but also role play and simulations, and the use of vicarious experience through examining films, novels, documentaries.

Exploratory strategies: these can be used most effectively when the issue is not clearly defined or where the teacher's aim is not only to develop understanding of the issue but also to use it as a vehicle for developing analytical skills. In these instances the use of project work, examining people's diaries and memoirs, doing some oral history can enable students to explore the wider implications of a controversial and sensitive issue over time.

Box 1: Northern Ireland and “The troubles” – an example of a controversial issue

Background

The conquest of Ireland by the English began in 1169 (although to be strictly accurate the people who launched the invasion were of Norman stock rather than English). What followed was not so much the planned colonisation of one country by another but a long series of military campaigns by individual Norman barons seeking land, power and wealth for themselves. Mostly the English crown had more than enough problems dealing with internal unrest and with its other neighbours, Wales, Scotland and France. The situation changed dramatically with the Reformation. Throughout the 16th century there were a series of rebellions culminating with a major uprising in 1595 led by Hugh O'Neill, the Gaelic chieftain of Ulster (the northern province of Ireland). This was finally defeated in 1603 and King James I of England evicted the native Catholic Irish from their lands in Ulster and replaced them with large numbers of Protestant settlers, particularly from Scotland. After several attempts to drive the settlers out the last great Irish rebellion was defeated by the armies of William of Orange, now King William III of England at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The so-called “Ulster Plantation” had become permanent, creating two mutually hostile communities within the province.

Towards the end of the 19th century a nationalist campaign began to persuade the British government to grant Ireland a limited form of independence, known as “home rule”. The Ulster Protestants opposed this, fearing that they would lose their religious and civil liberties in a state dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1920 the British government partitioned Ireland, giving home rule to the predominantly Catholic areas of the south and north-west and a separate parliament and government for that area of Ulster which was predominantly Protestant (two thirds) and which became the state of Northern Ireland. Over the following half century the Protestant majority effectively excluded the Catholic minority from a share in the

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government of Northern Ireland, even in districts and towns where the Catholics formed the majority of voters. In 1968, inspired by the civil rights movement in the United States, Catholics launched a civil rights movement of their own in Northern Ireland and open hostilities between the two communities broke out. Initially the British army was deployed to protect the Catholic minority but in time they came to be seen as a hostile occupying force and paramilitary organisations were formed on both sides. Since that time over 3 000 people have died as a result of the troubles.

Teaching about Northern Ireland

This is a controversial issue for a number of reasons. First, most of the students come into the history classroom with strong, pre-formed views and allegiances. The two communities have highly-developed and contradictory interpretations of their history. Each has its own particular events which are commemorated in songs, slogans, marches and murals painted on the walls of houses. The lives of many of them and the lives of their families have been directly touched by shootings, bombings and the other activities of paramilitary groups. The information which they receive about recent and contemporary events is mostly biased, incomplete and often contradictory. It is likely that coverage of some events in the recent past will trigger off strong emotional responses from some students. Finally, some history teachers and school inspectors have found that “students with deeply held views inherited from within their communities often seem adept at keeping apart the formal academic study of the classroom from what they perceive as the real world of the street”.¹

Northern Ireland also has a divided educational system with most Protestant children attending one type of school and most Catholic children attending Catholic schools. The history taught in each type of school has tended to reflect the traditions of the communities which those schools served. However, in the early 1990s it was decided to introduce a common national curriculum for all children. History presented the curriculum development working party (which had representatives from both communities and traditions) with a major problem. In a situation where there were two contested national histories and identities how could you attempt to offer students a common narrative history of the province?

Instead they opted for an enquiry-based approach through which the students would learn to apply the skills and key concepts of the discipline to the interpretation of source material on the situation in Northern Ireland. Source material includes documents, newspaper articles, media coverage, photographs, oral history, memorials and commemorations. They are asked to evaluate these sources using all the in

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1. For more details, see A. McCully, “The teaching of history in a divided community”, Council of Europe report DECS/SE/BS/Sem (97) 8.

formation available to them. They must make decisions about how reliable different pieces of evidence are. Some of the associated textbooks have been written jointly by authors drawn from both communities. Some teachers from across the divide have also worked together on the pedagogy of teaching the history of Northern Ireland.

By being able to examine first-hand evidence that has not been previously interpreted and structured for them the students also get an insight into how the information presented to them by politicians, interest groups, journalists and others with vested interests can be highly selective, simplistic and designed to persuade rather than explain. Students are learning “how to read between the lines”.

However, some of the issues involved are emotionally charged and teachers need to be highly sensitive in dealing with students’ feelings. In a situation where the political antennae are always alert, not only in the case of the parents and the political representatives but also of the older students, there will be situations in which the students will find it difficult to analyse source material rationally in a detached, objective way that recognises and takes into account the alternative perspectives. In such circumstances it may also be necessary to introduce learning activities which require the student to attempt to empathise or step into the shoes of someone from the other community in order to understand how they would interpret particular events and decisions. This can take a variety of forms:

- discussion of first-hand accounts taken from all sides in the dispute to explore what they thought, how they felt, why they acted as they did. Some of the most interesting are those of people looking back over an extended period of time and reflecting on how and why their views have changed during that time.
- simulating a television newsroom (or radio or a newspaper) where they have to make decisions about how to cover a particular event in a way that meets the broadcasters’ criterion of balance: how will the newsreader introduce it, what will the reporter say, what questions will she ask, who will she interview, what pictures will they include and leave out? etc.
- one project based in Northern Ireland created a role play which involved a fictional village where the students could explore the tensions and conflicts that emerged between the inhabitants. There were parallels with the situation in Northern Ireland without making specific references to the troubles.

Another possibility here is to introduce a European dimension by exploring the theme of conflicts which divide communities and nations so that the students can examine a local conflict within the context of examining what happened in other communities, for example Cyprus, the Basque country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Chechnya.

Box 2: The Holocaust – an example of a sensitive issue

Background

The term “Holocaust” is used to refer to the annihilation of more than 16 million people by the Third Reich during the period 1933-45. Nearly 6 million victims were Jews, which represented over two thirds of the total population of European Jewry, and a quarter of the victims were children. Other victims included Polish, Russian and Ukrainian civilians and prisoners of war, the Roma/Gypsy populations, socialists, homosexuals and people with mental and physical disabilities. The formal persecution of the Jews under the Third Reich began in 1935 with the Nuremberg Laws, which denied Jews the same civil rights as other Germans. Property was expropriated and many German Jews emigrated. Emigration ceased to be an option after the declaration of war, partly because of the Allied blockade and partly because the invasion of Poland brought millions of Polish Jews under German control. A policy of isolation was adopted at first and Jews, Roma/Gypsy and others labelled as “asocial” were rounded up and sent to designated ghettos.

In 1941 the opening up of the eastern front led to special SS death squads, known as the *Einsatzgruppen*, being sent into the newly occupied areas to murder Jews and communists, often with the assistance of local police and other collaborators. These squads were operating in Poland, the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Romania. Many thousands were killed in the first two months of the campaign. On 31 July 1941 Hermann Göring ordered the chief of the Reich Security Main Office to prepare the “Final Solution”. In January 1942 SS chiefs, including Adolf Eichmann, met at Wannsee near Berlin to decide on the most efficient means of mass extermination. Work on converting concentration camps into extermination camps using poison gas began immediately. The first extermination camp was ready within a few weeks near the Polish town of Oswiecim which the Germans called Auschwitz.

The “Final Solution” proceeded systematically for three years, beginning with the 3 million Jews of occupied Poland and then spread to the other occupied countries and territories. The young and fit were used for slave labour and worked until they died. The rest, including 1.5 million children were sent straight to the gas chambers and then cremated. Their hair, shoes, glasses, and even the gold fillings in their teeth were collected systematically to be recycled. The operation was only brought to a halt as the camps were liberated by the Allied armies.

Teaching about the Holocaust

The Council of Europe is producing a teaching pack on the Holocaust which will include fifty dossiers presenting the Holocaust in different European contexts, from German history to the history of the Jews. The specific nature of the destruction of European Jewry by nazism and national socialism will be examined along with other genocides and crimes against humanity, such as those against the Roma/Gypsies, the disabled, and homosexuals, thus justifying the general term of “Holocaust”.

It is critically important that a pack of this kind is produced. Many syllabuses and history textbooks barely touch upon it. It is rarely set into its wider historical and European context. It is also vital that such a pack includes primary and secondary

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source material that the students can analyse, evaluate and interpret in the same way as was suggested for teaching controversial issues like “The troubles” in Northern Ireland. But there is an additional dimension to the Holocaust. It is a sensitive issue and this has implications for the teacher’s pedagogical approach.

First, in any classroom there may be students who identify strongly with those groups who were singled out for persecution by the nazis, and this will require a special sensitivity on the part of the teachers. Second, as Carrie Supple has pointed out, “When teaching about the Holocaust, it is all too easy to “paralyse” the learner with images and information which are impossible to assimilate into an ordinary framework of meaning.”¹ Third, some students (usually boys) can have a morbid fascination with the cruelty and sadism of those who ran the camps, conducted medical experiments on the victims or were members of the death squads. Finally, some students are unable to comprehend what happened because of the nature and scale of the Holocaust while others seem to be desensitised to the horror of it, either out of a kind of shock or because of constant exposure to violent acts (real and dramatised) in the mass media.

Both the authors of the Council of Europe’s publications on the Holocaust and the educationists at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Remembrance Authority in Israel, appear to agree that this can be a difficult topic for teachers. They need to be sensitive to their students’ and their own responses, which involves reflecting on how they will respond to various kinds of student reaction. Both groups of experts also seem to agree that keeping one’s teaching purely at the level of generalities – events, dates, statistics – which may seem a “safe” thing to do, does not necessarily help the student to understand what happened. Many students simply cannot relate to the enormity of the statistics or the photographs of the gas chambers and the living and dead victims when the camps were liberated. Understanding comes through trying to comprehend the experiences of individual people through their testimonies, their biographies, letters, diaries, poetry and stories. The educationists from Yad Vashem also recommend that teachers encourage the students to explore human dilemmas. For example, the Jews in the 1930s who saw themselves as an integral part of the societies they lived in. Should they stay or should they leave? If they stay how do they deal with the deteriorating conditions for their families? If they leave, where do they go and what do they do if some of their family choose to stay? When living in the ghettos how can they retain some semblance of a normal life and their humanity and dignity? If they survive the camps how do they come to terms with what happened and build a new life?

In a similar vein it is also possible to look at the dilemmas facing those who resisted, the bystanders, those who tried to help (sometimes referred to as the rescuers or the righteous), the collaborators and the perpetrators. There is a great deal of material on the Holocaust, much of which will be incorporated into the Council of Europe’s pack, which will provide a basis for looking at dilemmas of this kind.²

1. Geoffrey Short, Carrie Supple and Katherine Klinger, *The Holocaust in the school curriculum: a European perspective*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 1998, p.35.

2. Some of the ideas in this final paragraph are derived from personal correspondence with Shulamit Imber, Pedagogical Director, and Edward Jacobs, Special Projects Assistant, at Yad Vashem.

CHAPTER 8

“READING” VISUAL ARCHIVE MATERIAL

Photographs

Although Joseph Niepce captured the first photographic image, after an exposure of eight hours, in 1826 and Louis Daguerre first marketed the daguerreotype in 1839, it is not really until the Crimean war (1854-6) and the American civil war (1861-5) that the potential of the photograph as an historical record was recognised. Most of the early photographers had been trained as artists and were clearly influenced by the artistic conventions of their day. This was apparent in some of the early wartime daguerreotypes. Also, since the exposure time of a daguerreotype was 30 minutes the photographs had to be posed and consequently seldom reflected the realities of war. However, as exposure times were reduced and cameras became smaller and more manageable the reporter-photographer gradually replaced the war artist.

The next major development in the use of photographs as an historical record came with the development of the Kodak camera by George Eastman in 1888. The shorter exposure times and the increased mobility of the Kodak camera increased the spontaneity of photography, considerably widened the range of subjects which came under the photographer's eye and changed the nature of news reporting.

Throughout the 20th century the visual image, whether it be a photograph, cartoon or moving picture, has helped to shape our image of ourselves and the world around us and provided us with reference points for recollecting the recent past. As one experienced newspaper editor has observed, “our impressions of major and complex events may be permanently fashioned by a single news photograph.” Certainly there are a number of photographs which appear in almost every major work of history and most school textbooks on recent European and world history. Most of the examples in **Box 1** below will be familiar. Some were posed photo-opportunities, others were fortuitous; someone with a camera (amateur or professional) just happened to be there in the right place at the right time.

At one level these photographs are simply visual traces of events in the recent past. At another level they often evoke an emotional response from us to those events and they impose meaning on the events without analysing them. That means that, like most other historical sources, they have to be interpreted or “read”. Few photographs of historical significance are neutral. The choice of subject, the selection of camera angle, the manipulation of light, tone, contrast and texture, the conscious and unconscious manipulation of the viewer’s emotional responses, and the accompanying caption all serve to encourage us to interpret the photograph in a particular way.

Perhaps this is why so many historians seem uncomfortable with visual material as a primary source, tend to use images only for illustrative purposes and seldom subject them to the kind of critical analysis that they would apply to a written document. They have been trained to analyse and interpret written sources but few have been trained to analyse and interpret photographs, film and video.

This chapter has two main aims. It tries to explore possible ways in which teaching and learning about the political, social, cultural and economic history of 20th-century Europe can make effective use of the vast bank of archive photographs to be found in textbooks, museums and on the Internet and CD-Roms, and to suggest some ways in which history students can be helped to learn how to interpret or “read” photographs of historical significance.

Some possible uses of photographs in teaching 20th-century European history

The following is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the possibilities. The selection is designed to illustrate not only how photographs can be used to support teaching of particular topics and themes but also how they can be used to help students to learn how to analyse and interpret an important source of primary evidence on events and developments in the 20th century. Although it is certainly easier to do this if you have ready access to a newspaper archive or can download historical and news photographs from relevant websites on the Internet, much can also be done with local photographs obtained from museum shops, local newspaper archives or even tourist shops. It is also possible to simply take the photographs provided in textbooks and help students to analyse them rather than just think of them as illustrations of the text. Here are a number of suggestions on how photographs could be used in an analytical way in history teaching:

- use photographs from different periods to study social trends, for example in fashion, recreation, family life, adolescence, the work place, the changing roles of women. A useful source here would be advertising photographs

from different periods in the century. What do they indicate about the advertisers' assumptions about social life at that time? Who are they aimed at? Who is seen as the likely purchaser? What kinds of products were seen as luxuries and what were seen as necessities? Are there any hidden messages? How have adverts for the same product changed over an extended period of time and why?

- use photographs to chart developments over the century in, for example, technology, transport, architecture, art, education. In this sense studying an array of photographs taken at different times can illuminate some of the main diachronic themes of recent history;
- examine sets of photographs of a particular period (for example street scenes, market places, work places, funerals, interiors of people's homes) as a means of looking for clues regarding different aspects of social life at that time. For example, how did people dress for work and for leisure? Are social class differences noticeable in the street scenes? Who is doing the shopping? What kinds of shops are there? And so on;
- present students with photographs (or postcards) of the same phenomenon taken at different times and get them to identify the similarities and differences. The primary objective here is to explore in a practical way the key historical concepts of change and continuity. This approach is most commonly used for exploring continuity and change in social history. For example, comparing photographs of the same street but taken at different times in the 20th century, or photographs of the different uses to which the same building has been put at different times. However, the same approach can also be used to examine a recurring phenomenon such as refugees, industrial strikes, discrimination against minorities, mass protests, and elections;
- take a very detailed photograph (like a street scene, a battle scene, a meeting or the interior of a factory) with date, caption and source removed. Ask the students to put a transparent 3 x 3 grid over the photograph and then describe in detail what they see in each box of the grid. Then they should also use their detailed description to try and answer a series of questions about the photograph: for example what period is it? What time of day is it? What time of year? Where is it? etc. In each case they should list the clues they have used and explain their reasoning. It may be necessary to assemble supporting material such as a timeline, appropriate textbooks or a list of useful websites to help their enquiries. On a scale of 1-5 they should also rate how sure they are about the accuracy of their answers;
- give students one of those photographs of an important historical event that have helped to shape the world's image of that event (that is photographs of the kind included in **Box 1** below) and get them to compare

the different captions and commentaries presented in a selection of newspapers at the time. It would be preferable if the examples could be taken from newspapers with different ideological or political positions and/or from different countries. Logistically it is probably easier to do this with more recent events, especially if you have access to a newspaper archive or can access the websites of different newspapers or press agencies. Discussion could focus not only on similarities and differences but also on why this particular photograph has come to be representative of the event in this way.

Box 1: Examples of photographs that have helped to shape our image of Europe in the 20th century

The arrest of Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June, 1914

Lenin addressing a crowd in Petrograd from the back of a truck in November 1917

A German with a wheelbarrow full of banknotes during hyperinflation in the 1920s

The burnt out shell of Königsberg's synagogue on Kristallnacht, November 10, 1938

Hitler in Paris with the Eiffel Tower in the background, 1940

Street fighting on the outskirts of Stalingrad in December 1942

The liberation of the concentration camp at Buchenwald, 1945

Stalin, Truman and Churchill at the Potsdam Conference 1945

The funeral of Jan Masaryk in 1948

The toppling of the massive statue of Stalin in Budapest, November 1956

Khrushchev at the United Nations, May 1960

An East German soldier sprinting from East to West Berlin on 15 August, 1961.

Students handing out leaflets in Wenceslas Square, Prague 1968

The attack on the Israeli quarters at the Olympic Village, Munich 1972

Lech Wałęsa speaking to shipyard workers, Gdansk August 1980

Armed soldiers in the Cortes in Madrid during the attempted army coup in 1981

Tearing down the Berlin Wall in November 1989

Yeltsin making a speech on a tank outside the White House in Moscow, August 1991.

Secretly taken photo of Bosnian Muslims in a Serbian detention camp, 1992

Where it is possible to exercise some degree of choice in the selection of historic photographs it might be advisable to look for photographs that fulfil some of the following criteria:

- they can be easily linked to other source material and evidence (both primary and secondary);
- they may challenge conventional wisdom or the students' expectations and taken-for-granted assumptions, stereotypical perceptions;
- they present some contradictions and ambiguities that need to be explained or investigated;
- they raise questions that can only be answered by looking to other sources;
- they demonstrate the particular insights that a photograph offers compared with other source material (for example what the photographer or his or her editor thought would particularly interest people; the attitudes and emotions which it is designed to stir up, etc.)

Learning to "read" historical photographs

Photographs are just one of many sources that we can use to analyse and interpret an event, development or historical phenomenon. Just occasionally it may be the only eye-witness evidence available (for example secretly-taken photographs of everyday life in the Warsaw ghetto in 1943); but usually other forms of evidence are also available and often need to be consulted in order to fully understand the photograph.

It is not being argued here that history teachers should develop specific curriculum units on historical photographs. Indeed it is only when photographs are examined in context that they can be fully analysed and interpreted. However, we are arguing that students need to acquire an analytical framework that will help them to systematically examine and interpret historical photographs and they need opportunities to apply that framework and to practise the analytical and interpretative skills.

What do students need to know?

First, that photographs which are preserved for the historical record have been subjected to an intensive process of selection at several levels. The photographer, when taking a picture has made decisions about the subject or subjects, the composition of the picture, the camera angle, the background and the foreground. When developing the negatives the photographer has

made certain choices about which to retain and which to reject. Then, the news editor has selected photographs on the grounds of whether they are newsworthy or not, how they relate to a particular news story, and how they fit in with the newspaper's stance on the event or issue. Finally, the archivist has also made a selection regarding which photographs should be retained for posterity and that choice may reflect the archivist's ideas about which photographs are or are not historically important or, simply, which ones best fit into their existing collections.

Second, that photographs almost always reflect the conventions and expectations of the period when they were taken. For example, the eminent British photographer, Frank Sutcliffe, when taking pictures at the turn of the century, complained that it was often difficult to take photographs of people at work because they did not want to be photographed in their working clothes. They wished to change into their "Sunday best" (that is their best suits or dresses) before a picture was taken. For this reason a comparative approach to examining historical photographs can be illuminative: comparison of a set of photographs taken at around the same period, and comparison of photographs of similar activities taken in different periods.

Third, photographs are easily edited and manipulated. The historian, Norman Davies, in his book on European history went as far as to claim that "The camera, like the historian, always lies".¹ Davies, himself, points to the practice of re-touching official photographs during Stalin's time, noting how Trotsky was removed from all official photographs. There is also evidence of Stalin's image being inserted into photographs to show how close he was to Lenin and therefore the obvious successor. Davies also refers to the practice of removing the birthmark from Gorbachev's forehead in official photographs as late as 1985. But when history students use photographs as an historical source they need to understand that these kinds of politically-motivated examples are merely the tip of the iceberg. The practice of manipulating photographic images by cropping the picture, using an airbrush to remove something or someone or to make someone look more attractive, enhancing or changing the background, manipulating light and shade, is almost as old as photo-journalism itself. The introduction of digital photography now provides the photographer and the news editor with even more scope for editing and changing the photographic record.

1. Norman Davies, *Europe, a history*, OUP, Oxford, 1996, p.770.

Some textbooks have good examples that could form the basis of a classroom discussion. If the teacher has access to the Internet then it would be worthwhile downloading photographs from some of the excellent photo archives now available on the Web). Some of the websites on the Russian Revolution include examples of photographs where Stalin's image has been inserted. If the teacher also has access to computer software which allows her or him to edit photographs (such as Microsoft Photo Editor) then it would be useful to download an interesting historical photograph from the Internet, edit it in various ways using the appropriate software and then use the various versions of the photograph as a basis for discussion of the implications for the historian and, indeed, for the consumer of the news media.

Better still, if the students have access to photo-editing computer software ask them to undertake this exercise as an assignment and write about its implications. There are two key discussion points here. The first is how easy it is to alter a photograph. The second, and more complex point, is how subtle changes to a photograph (for example elongating the height or width, sharpening or softening the focus, changing the balance between light and dark, blurring or sharpening the background) can affect the way we look at it and how we interpret the images in front of us.

Fourth, students need to understand that the photographer can have a direct effect on the events that are being photographed. The term "photo-opportunity" may be a relatively recent one but the practice is not. It is important, therefore, that when seeking to interpret photographs, students should think about why the photographer was there. There is also documentary evidence that some of the early action photographs, because of the long exposure times, were reconstructions of events rather than photographs of "the real thing". In the last quarter of the century we have also become more aware of some of the ethical issues associated with the role of the photographer and the television camera operative and producer. For example, has the presence of photographers sometimes been a catalyst for political violence? Do photographers at the site of public and private tragedies and outrages sometimes allow their desire for "a good picture" to go beyond the bounds of humanity (for example by taking photographs of victims rather than helping them)? Are press and freelance photographers, for commercial reasons, going too far in their intrusion into people's private lives? The key point here, therefore, is that in any analysis of an historical photograph or set of photographs the history student should also be considering the photographer's motives and reasons for being there and taking these pictures in particular.

Developing an analytical framework

Although every photograph is unique it is still possible to apply a set of generic questions to virtually every historic photograph as shown in the analytic framework in **Box 2** below. It is suggested here that these questions could be clustered around the following analytical processes:¹

- description;
- interpretation and conclusions;
- link to prior knowledge;
- identify gaps in the evidence;
- identify sources of further information.

1. The approach here uses and further develops the photo analysis guide, produced by National Digital Library Educators Institute, Washington, DC for their teacher workshop "Touring turn-of-the-century America" .

Box 2: Framework for analysing historical photographs

Description: Just describe exactly *what you can see*. At this stage do not try to make guesses about what you are looking at.

For example:

- describe the people and what they are doing &/OR the objects which are shown.
- how are the people and/or objects grouped?
- describe what you can see in the background, foreground, centre, left and right of the photo. (Use a transparency grid if it helps).

| Interpretation | Evidence How do you know? | How sure are you? |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| What do you think is happening in this photo | | |
| Who are / what are the people? (or objects?) | | |
| Roughly, when do you think it was taken? (year?, period?, the event?) | | |
| What time of year is it? | | |
| Is this a natural picture or is it posed especially for the camera? | | <i>(continued)</i> |

Box 2: Framework for analysing historical photographs

List any other historical sources which would help you to check your conclusions about this photograph?

From your recent work in history classes, what do you already know about the events surrounding the scene in this photograph?

Has this photograph raised any questions which you would like to get answers to?

Three photographs from the Great War (1914-18) have been included here to enable readers to apply this framework for themselves. They were selected for several reasons. First, they are drawn from three different combatant countries (Serbia, Germany and Russia) and they serve to remind the history student that the first world war was fought on several fronts and not just the Western Front in Belgium and France. They also provide some links to broader issues and themes associated with the Great War and challenges to conventional or stereotypical perceptions of that war; for example changes in military technology (from cavalry and bicycle platoons at the beginning to tanks, armoured vehicles and aeroplanes); the recruitment of women soldiers in Russia; the fact that conflict on some of the other fronts (for example the Balkans) was not simply between two entrenched infantry armies.

Last, they offer clues and further questions that the student can follow up using other sources.

Images of the first world war

Source: WWI Photo Archive, University of Kansas
Courtesy of Ray Mentzer



Serbian volunteers



German bicycle scouts keeping watch in a tree



*Russian female recruits on passing-out parade.
These are members of the Women's Battalion of Death.*

Historical cartoons

Background

Social and political cartoons have appeared in print since the early 18th century when their function was to make statements about events and public figures to a population that was predominantly illiterate. Subsequently, through the use of caricature, exaggeration, symbols, humour and irony, the cartoon often allowed the artist, his editor and publisher to imply things which it might have been politically dangerous or unwise to assert in print. In that respect the cartoonist in history has often performed a role similar to that of the fool in Shakespeare. In the 20th century we have also seen the cartoonist, particularly during wars and other times of national crisis, recruited to produce visual propaganda.

As with photographs, few historians have tended to analyse and interpret cartoons as primary sources. Mostly they have been content to include them in their books solely for illustrative purposes. And yet, provided that the historian takes into account the particular characteristics of the cartoonist's art (to use a variety of stylistic techniques, including caricature and exaggeration, to present a one-sided point of view on a particular issue, event or public figure) then cartoons can often be a highly effective way, particularly before the advent of public opinion polls, of investigating public opinion at a given time, whether amongst people of a particular political persuasion or within the population as a whole. While it could be argued that a cartoon represents only the opinions of the cartoonist it is also the case that it was published only once it had been screened by the editorial staff of the newspaper in order to ensure that it would have resonance with that newspaper's readership.

Historical cartoons can also have the following pedagogic value in the history classroom:

- they provide the student (as well as the professional historian) with insights into what people were thinking at a particular time;
- they often summarise or encapsulate an issue as effectively as text (sometimes more so);
- their meaning has to be extracted from the images;
- because they need to be interpreted, they provide the student with an opportunity to draw on her or his prior knowledge of the event or issue or person depicted. As a result a cartoon can often provide a useful focus at the end of a unit on a particular topic, when the students have the knowledge to enable them to recognise and decipher the clues in the cartoon and interpret the cartoonist's intentions.

Main sources

Most modern textbooks now include a range of cartoons to illustrate particular topics and themes and some, especially those which focus on 20th-century world history, include cartoons produced from a variety of countries. Local libraries may also have a limited range of newspaper archives and posters stored on microfiche. Another useful source is the Internet. Some of the websites on European history and on specific topics such as the first world war and the second world war, which are listed in Chapter 12 of this handbook, include cartoon archives. There are also some specialist sites from which you can download cartoons for educational purposes. See, for example, the site run by Horus H-GIG for historical postcards. (<http://click.ucr.edu/h-gig/hist-preservation/postc.html>), Princeton University's collection of cartoons covering the period 1890-1950 in the Seeley G. Mudd Library (<http://www.princeton.edu/~mudd/>) and also the archives of the University of Kent's Centre for the Study of Cartoons and Caricature (<http://libservb.ukc.ac.uk/cartoons>).

What do students need to know?

First, the cartoonist makes assumptions about the reader's background knowledge and, sometimes, their political opinions. Students need to be able to work out what these assumptions are in order to fully understand the more subtle cartoons.

Second, cartoons usually offer opinions rather than factual information. The cartoonist is biased and does not attempt to offer a balanced point of view or multiple perspectives on the issue.

Third, cartoonists rely heavily on exaggeration and caricature. These may be negative or positive. For example, a character may be drawn in such a way that she or he appears trustworthy or unreliable, tough or weak, confident or hesitant, patriotic or treacherous. Cartoonists have often relied on stereotypes to get their message over to the public; that is by presenting oversimplified generalisations, often of a derogatory nature, of a particular social group or nation.

Fourth, to be effective a cartoon must follow contemporary social conventions about what is and is not funny and what is and is not "fair game" for caricature and satire. Any look at cartoons from different periods of the 20th century shows that these conventions have changed over time. Similarly it is possible to detect different ideas about what is funny or appropriate subject matter for a cartoon in different parts of Europe.

Fifth, most cartoons rely on the use of symbols to make a point. The most obvious symbols are national ones: Marianne representing France, John Bull or a British bulldog representing Britain, the Russian Bear, Uncle Sam for the United States. It is also possible to find certain symbolic images recurring across Europe which are intended to represent various aspects of the human condition, for example storm clouds gathering; a row of white wooden crosses to represent the victims of war; the spectre of death stalking the land; variations on the theme of the *pietà* to represent tragedy and disaster; walls, fences and ditches to represent social divisions; the dove of peace. The symbols need to be understood in order to capture the meaning of the cartoon and sometimes these symbols have ceased to be used. For example, the spectre and the *pietà* are not used as frequently now by cartoonists as they would have been in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.

Developing an analytical framework

The suggested general framework for analysing cartoons is not dissimilar to the one proposed for historical photographs. The differences are apparent in the detail of the questions asked when “reading” cartoons. As with the analysis of photographs, students need several opportunities to apply the framework before they can make it their own.

Box 3: Framework for analysing historical cartoons

Description: **Just describe** exactly what you can see. At this stage do not try to make guesses about what you are looking at.

For example:

- Describe the characters portrayed in the cartoon. How are they dressed? What are they doing?
- Are the characters realistically drawn or exaggerated? If exaggerated, then in what ways?
- Describe any objects which appear in the cartoon? Are they realistically drawn or exaggerated?
- Describe what you can see in the background, foreground, centre, left and right of the cartoon. (Use a transparency grid if it helps).

(continued)

| Box 3: Framework for analysing historical cartoons | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Interpretation | Evidence How do you know? | How sure are you? |
| <p>Can you recognise any of the characters in this cartoon? If they are supposed to be real people name them and their positions at the time the cartoon was drawn.</p> <p>Check the date and year that the cartoon was published? To what event or issue is this cartoon referring?</p> <p>What do you know about this event or issue and people drawn in the cartoon?</p> <p>What does the caption mean? Is it meant to be humorous or ironic? If so, in what ways?</p> <p>Identify any symbols that the cartoonist is using? Why has the artist used these particular symbols?</p> | | |
| | | <i>(continued)</i> |

| Box 3: Framework for analysing historical cartoons | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Are the characters drawn in a positive or negative way?</p> | | |
| <p>What is the cartoonist's attitude to the subject of her or his cartoon? Is it positive or negative? Flattering or critical?</p> | | |
| <p>List any other historical sources which would help you to check your conclusions about this cartoon?</p> | | |
| <p>How effective is this cartoon in achieving its purpose?</p> | | |
| <p>Has this cartoon changed your own interpretation of the event, issue or persons to which it refers?</p> | | |

CHAPTER 9

USING SIMULATIONS AND ROLE PLAY

A simulation, as the term suggests, is a model which seeks to emulate or recreate the conditions which exist (or once existed) in a particular situation, event or process. Some simulations seek to recreate certain conditions exactly. Think, for example, of flight simulators, mechanical test beds, wind tunnels. In the context of history teaching, however, educational simulations tend to be simplified models of reality. Events take place in a conflated period of time rather than real time; the number of active participants tends to be limited to certain key figures and, above all, those who participate in the simulation have the benefit of hindsight – they know how “the story” ended. As such, the value of an educational simulation in history teaching is that it tends to reduce the complexity of the real world and real-life situations, extracting from reality only those elements and factors which are essential to the curriculum’s aims and learning objectives.

Historical maps are simulations; models of reality where the features thought to be significant are represented by symbols and the non-significant features are omitted. However, in the context of 20th-century European history most educational simulations are likely to focus on four areas.

The first is historical crises, or the major turning points in recent history where political or military leaders may be faced with different, equally difficult choices, each of which may have undesirable consequences. For example, deciding whether or not to:

- form an alliance with other countries;
- intervene militarily in the affairs of another country;
- support one country in its dealings with another;
- suspend normal democratic processes because of an internal governmental crisis, and so forth.

The second area is the decision-making processes recreating those occasions in recent history when decisions were taken that had immediate and long-term consequences for Europe. For example, simulations of:

- the Paris Peace Conference of 1919;

- the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations over Italy's invasion of Abyssinia in 1935;
- the Yalta conference in 1945;
- the formal and informal decision-making processes in Moscow and between the Western allies at the time of the Berlin Blockade in 1949, which led in turn to the formation of Nato, the Federal Republic of (West) Germany and Democratic Republic of (East) Germany;
- the struggle for control of the Soviet Union in 1991;
- decisions within Nato about the actions to be taken against Serbia over Kosovo.

They can also focus on enquiries and investigations. The previous two categories of history simulation tend to focus on European and global politics and diplomacy. Some simulated enquiries fit into these categories as well such as war crimes tribunals. However, simulated enquiries, often drawing on the evidence and conclusions published by official commissions, can also be a useful means of helping students to examine some of the social, economic and environmental issues of the 20th century such as:

- environmental issues;
- racism and minority rights;
- sexual equality;
- religious freedom and tolerance;
- poverty, development aid to the Third World;
- asylum for political refugees, and so forth.

Simulated public enquiries and commissions are also a way of helping students to understand that some of the social, economic and technological developments that they now take for granted were once highly controversial in most European societies and national and international commissions were sometimes set up to investigate the possible consequences of alternative decisions. For example, the shift from coal to oil as the main source of energy which resulted in the rapid decline of domestic coal mining industries and a greater reliance on imported oil was not universally seen at the time as logical or desirable or an inevitable development.

The last area that is usually focused on is the news desk simulation, a means of exploring how a crisis or an event of major significance might be interpreted and presented in different parts of Europe using, where possible, material from the news media at the time. The closer the chosen crises and

events are to the present day the more feasible it is for history teachers to develop this kind of simulation themselves.

Until fairly recently educators and educational publishers thought mainly in terms of simulations which would be enacted by groups of students (a history class, a year group, or even a group drawn from several schools). The evolution and spread of the personal computer has meant that now a generation of young people, at least in some parts of Europe, are used to playing sophisticated computer games and simulations on home and school-based PCs. Many of these games necessitate decisions being taken under the pressures of limited time and incomplete information. While these games are played for fun they often call for the same kinds of decision-making skills that are needed to participate effectively in educational simulations. As yet, however, the educational software producers have not caught up with those who produce recreational software but this is clearly an area with scope for further development.

Role playing in history education also provides opportunities for students to recreate a situation or event and act out the roles of the people involved. It tends to be less structured than a history simulation or game. The students are provided with background information about the characters they are going to perform and then they have to empathise or put themselves into the shoes of those people and represent their perspective. As noted earlier (see Chapter 10), this can be a useful way of introducing multiple perspectives into history teaching.

The approach to role playing in history education tends to be different from the approach commonly used in language and drama teaching and in social education. Students may be given a character sketch and some contextual information but they are often expected to do some independent research in order to build up a picture of why their character would act in a particular way when confronted by a specific situation, issue or problem. The role play may provide opportunities for the student to perform and improvise but ultimately the primary objective is to help the students understand how an individual (or a representative of a particular group) in another place at another time would have responded. The purpose may be to understand and interpret significant historical events and problems or it may be used to understand the everyday lives of ordinary people living at a particular time and experiencing changes and developments in their circumstances. For example, emigrating to start a new life; political emancipation, living under occupation, participating in a political revolution, living under totalitarianism, or simply experiencing the changes in life which came with electricity, working in a factory, moving from a rural to an urban environment, contraception, better health provision, mass communications.

What do simulations and role plays offer to the history teacher?

Simulations and role plays take a good deal of preparation time on the part of teachers and students. This is true even when the teacher is using a commercially-produced simulation, but even more so if the teacher has to produce the simulation or role play scenarios from scratch. It is important therefore to be clear about what the students will get from participating in simulations and role plays that they would not get simply from accessing other educational resources such as textbooks, primary and secondary sources, museums, mass media and the Internet.

Well-designed history simulations and role plays can provide opportunities for students to enhance their historical understanding and skills and also contribute to the further development of certain general educational attributes.

Potential contribution to the development of historical understanding and skills

History simulations and role plays have intrinsic educational value if they are well-structured and planned, realistic, the factual information is accurate and the aims, objectives and tasks are appropriate to the age range and abilities of the students (see “evaluating simulations” at the end of this chapter). In particular they have the potential for providing students with opportunities:

- to exercise historical empathy for people who were experiencing or actively involved in a particular event, situation, moment in time, problem, issue or period of social change;
- the same apparently clear and unambiguous statement can still have different meanings for people, depending on their particular situations;
- to appreciate through simulated experience some of the dynamics which influenced decisions which were critical for Europe in the last century: the different perspectives and priorities of the participating decision makers, the timescale within which decisions had to be taken, the domestic and international pressures on them, the resources they could mobilise, the power they could wield and the constraints on that power, the manoeuvres and machinations which shaped the decision-making process at the time;
- simulations and role plays tend to concentrate on particular historical processes rather than outcomes. A textbook, for example, will probably concentrate on the outcomes of a treaty, an enquiry or official commission, or a diplomatic mission. In the simulation or role play the focus is on the processes through which these outcomes emerged. Indeed the

simulation may not necessarily reproduce the same outcome as the one which emerged at the time;

- to make connections between the simulated event or decision-making process and work which they may have previously done on the events which preceded it or were taking place at the same time. The student participating in the simulation is trying to get into the mind of another person, assume their role, and respond as they would have done rather than as the student might do now knowing what she or he now knows. To do this effectively she or he has to be constantly asking: "What would X have done?" (and not: "What would I do?"), "What choices were open to X at the time?", "What had led up to the situation which X now found him or herself in?", "What was going on elsewhere in Europe (or the world) which X had to take into account?".
- to look at a particular historical event or development *as if it had not yet happened* instead of looking at it through the eyes of the textbook writer, the historian, the journalist or the history teacher who all have the benefit of hindsight. So often the school textbook, even inadvertently, implies a certain inevitability about the outcomes and even the sequence of events. The well-designed simulation or role play can help the student to understand that at the time the people involved may well not have had a clear idea of how events would turn out and were very uncertain about whether or not they had made the right decision.
- to understand through vicarious experience what it was like to be living at a particular time or living through a particular event in the 20th century. Some situations and circumstances are more easily understood, and students are more able to empathise with people experiencing those situations and circumstances, if they are confronted in simulation or role play by the same kinds of options and dilemmas as people were at the time. For example, the history curricula for the 20th century taught in many European countries include coverage of the post-war consequences of the Treaty of Versailles and the reparations. It is common to look at the effects of hyperinflation in Germany in the early 1920s. The accompanying textbooks often include extracts from letters where people describe what it was like to live in an economy hit by rampant inflation and photographs are often included which are selected to demonstrate the consequences for ordinary people. Some use a photograph of a German with a wheelbarrow full of banknotes, another of some children measuring their height with stacks of banknotes, or a picture of a woman lighting her stove with banknotes because they were cheaper than more conventional fuels. Role play (with scenarios drawn from these letters and photographs) can also help to highlight for students the stark choices facing many people at the

time if they were going to provide food and shelter for themselves and their families.

Potential contribution to the student's general education

Generally speaking simulations and role plays provide students with opportunities:

- to participate actively and work co-operatively with other students to meet a common objective;
- to exercise tolerance for ideas and views that are different from their own;
- to further develop and utilise their communication skills;
- to further develop their enquiry and problem solving skills;
- to demonstrate that they can use the knowledge they have already acquired from reading textbooks and other secondary and primary sources to imaginatively reconstruct an event or situation.

Some potential constraints and problems

At present there are not many commercially-produced historical simulations on the market which focus specifically on European history. Most of those which are available tend to focus on events in the 18th and 19th centuries rather than in the 20th century. Also, as noted earlier, they tend to concentrate on battles and diplomatic crises. Furthermore, not many of these commercial simulations are produced in a range of different languages. In these circumstances history teachers find themselves faced with either the task of translating a simulation from the language it was produced in to the language through which they teach, or modifying commercial simulations to fit the requirements of their particular national or school-based curriculum, or producing their own simulations and role play scenarios.

Using history simulations with mixed ability groups can also generate additional problems for the teacher. It may be necessary to produce a glossary of words and terms to help some students take a full and active part in the simulated activities and role plays. It may also be necessary to check the required reading level of any written materials and role cards which students will have to use. There may also be major differences between the group in terms of their communication and performing skills and their willingness "to perform".

The exercise of historical empathy lies at the heart of history simulations and role plays. We are asking the students to put themselves into the minds of other people in another place and another time and to respond in a realistic and authentic way to the problems, challenges and choices which those people once faced. This task is made easier if the students are well briefed

and have done the background reading and research before they take part in the simulation or role play. Even so, learning how to exercise historical empathy is not like learning how to ride a bicycle. It is not something which people ever fully master. A student may have demonstrated on one occasion that she or he can empathise very well with a particular character but there is no guarantee that the same degree of empathy will be shown for another character in the same or another simulation. There is always a risk when using a history simulation or role play in the classroom that it will not fulfil its learning objectives (even if everyone enjoyed doing it). However, to some extent the risks can be minimised by good preparation and follow-up.

Another potential problem that the history teacher has to guard against when using simulations and role plays, particularly those which are relatively open-ended and provide students with scope for improvisation, is the risk of anachronism. That is, the risk of modernising the past, assuming that people in the past would respond to situations in the same way as people do today. Sean Lang, who developed a simulation of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, which was run with students from a number of different European countries, observed that “one delegation of students arrived full of goodwill for other countries in a way which reflected modern attitudes towards Europe, but did not reflect the historical situation in 1919, consequently they were taken aback to encounter a more hostile and intransigent attitude in other delegations”.¹

However, if handled well, this can be overcome through a briefing before the simulation which reminds the participants of their priorities and objectives “when in role”, giving careful thought to the allocation of roles (the students taking part in the Paris Peace Conference simulation did not represent their own countries), and a debriefing after the simulation, where the teacher identifies any anachronisms which emerged, could provide students with some useful insights into history as a discipline.

If simulations and role plays are designed to involve the participants in decision-making, resolving dilemmas or entering into negotiations with each other then it may be essential to take steps to minimise the extent to which they employ hindsight, since this could undermine the whole basis of the exercise. In these circumstances it is critical that teachers remind the students that they need to stay in role and that people at that time would not have known how events would have turned out. The use of hindsight is not always a problem. If the objective is to use a simulation or role play to explain

1. Sean Lang, “Report of the European secondary school students conference: the Paris Peace Conference 1919 and the Treaty of Versailles”, Doc. CC-ED/HIST/Eur (98) 3 Council of Europe.

how things happened in the way that they did then knowledge of the outcome may be a positive advantage and the scenario employed may well be similar to a script for a play or drama documentary.

One final problem which applies particularly to the use of international simulations and role play scenarios is the risk of students interpreting and responding to particular situations within the simulation or role play in an ethnocentric way. Again this emphasises the importance of preparation work and a debriefing.

Using simulations in the history classroom

The success or failure of a simulation or role play depends to a large extent on the skill with which the teacher integrates it into the overall work which students are doing on a particular historical topic or theme. Much of the success will depend on the preparation work done by the teacher and the students. For this reason it is usually better to introduce a simulation or role play towards the end of a topic or theme rather than at the beginning. This is often in marked contrast to the way in which role plays and simulations are used in in-service teacher training, where they are sometimes seen as “ice-breakers” or entry points into the discussions and joint planning work that will follow. This practice presupposes that the history teachers are already aware of the issues and the events being covered by the simulation or role play. The same approach seldom works well with students. Another aspect of the preparation that also works well, if time permits, is to involve the students in doing the preliminary research for the development of the simulation or role play: a good opportunity for them to practice the skills of the historian.

Follow-up work is also essential. Firstly, immediately after completing the simulation or role play scenario the students need a debriefing session on what happened. For this reason it is often advisable to encourage the students to keep a log of what happens during the simulation or role play (not just of their own individual inputs but of the process as a whole). The debriefing performs several functions. It is an opportunity to discuss any problems which emerged, for example, instances of anachronisms, ethnocentrism, not making use of the information available. It is also an opportunity to evaluate the simulation or role play and make improvements to it. Secondly, follow-up work is also essential for comparing the process and outcomes of the simulation or role play with actual events and for exploring why differences might have emerged. Finally, follow-up work also needs to focus on what has been learned from the simulation or role play which may be different from or supplementary to what was learned about the event through textbooks and other written sources.

A lot of thought needs to be given to the allocation of roles. A balance needs to be struck between, on the one hand, ensuring that students are able to use their skills and particular qualities to best advantage, while, on the other hand, ensuring that the simulation or role play is not wholly dominated by the most vocal or the most able students.

Developing your own simulations and role plays

It was noted earlier that as yet there is a relative dearth of good history simulations produced by commercial publishers, the educational broadcasting media, educational organisations, computer software publishers, international bodies or non-governmental organisations, and the range of simulations focusing on 20th-century European history is very small indeed.

Mention has already been made of the simulation of the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and more details on this can be downloaded from one of the Council of Europe's own websites (<http://culture.coe.fr/hist20>). This document also includes some very useful tips on developing and running a history simulation, particularly a large-scale one. It closely follows the model of the United Nations simulation which is held every year in the Hague and attracts delegations from all over the world. Some European nations have also run youth parliaments which simulate the procedures of national legislatures and the European Parliament.

History teachers with access to the Internet might also be interested to browse in the website developed by Past Perspectives, an organisation based in London which produces history games and simulations for educational purposes. For 20th-century history they have produced resources on the expansionist policies of the European imperial powers in the late 19th century and leading up to the outbreak of the first world war, and a game called the "July Crisis", which focuses on the roles of key leaders in Europe following the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. There is also a cold war simulation which focuses on the strategic planning of the superpowers and their allies. In their current affairs series there are also two simulations which may be of interest to history teachers: the "Bosnian Tragedy" and "Crisis in Binni", which is set in a fictional African country but mirrors the problems of Western intervention in countries such as Somalia and Rwanda. More details can be found on their website (http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Past_Perspectives/).

For other potential sources of history simulations, games and role plays try some of the Internet websites identified in the Chapter 12, particularly those developed by the educational broadcasting organisations.

However, for many teachers across Europe it may be more practical to think in terms of developing their own history simulations and role-play scenarios, particularly if they share the development work with colleagues from secondary schools in other European states. The approach adopted for the Paris Peace Conference and similar diplomatic and decision-making simulations is expensive. The Paris Peace Conference simulation cost approximately 2 456 euros to develop and run and required sponsorship, primarily because all of the participants were brought to one location. It should be possible, using electronic mail, telephones, faxes or even ordinary mail to develop and run a simulation at a much lower cost which still involves the participation of students in schools across the whole of Europe or in one particular region.

A number of pedagogical issues need to be thought through when designing a history simulation or role play. If it is to be successful there must be sufficient factual data to provide the basis for decision making, negotiation, argument or discussion. The details must be based on data which were accurate at the time. The students will need access to good reference material both during the preparation phase and during the simulation itself. For example, they may need good maps, relevant statistics about the period, and any other contextual data which may help them to participate effectively and reach a realistic outcome.

This raises a key question for any teacher designing a simulation or role-play scenario. Do you focus on an actual event or do you draw on several similar events to construct a fictional one which is highly realistic? Of course, to some extent, the topic determines the answer to this question. But sometimes to use an actual case entails a great deal of preliminary research and the actual example may prove to be too specific and may not involve all the factors which would be needed to generate subsequent discussions and understanding. This applies particularly to role-play scenarios but also sometimes to small-scale simulations. For example, a role play based on the lives of a particular family in St Petersburg in 1917 or in the Warsaw ghetto in 1943, or during the Prague spring in 1968 may prove too restrictive if it does not cover all the issues which the history teacher wants to focus upon when teaching these particular topics. However, it is still vital to create believable people – even if they are not real people – if the role play is going to encourage historical empathy.

Some educationists with considerable experience of designing and running simulations have argued that it is often better from an educational point of view to design simulations which require an outcome (a decision, an agreement, a treaty, a policy or even a breakdown of talks). If there is a definable set of alternative outcomes then it is easier to develop a clear set of procedures for operating the simulation or acting out the scenario. Totally

open-ended simulations and role plays can be stimulating when run with highly motivated and well-informed participants but they can also sometimes breakdown in total confusion and with no likelihood of any outcomes at all.

Finally, almost every home-made simulation has “glitches” in it: unanticipated problems, inadequate timescales, tasks that cannot be completed without further information being provided. It usually pays to have a trial run (perhaps with other colleagues) to sort out the problems before using it with the students for whom it is intended.

Evaluating simulations

Students like simulations and can become very involved and enthusiastic. They can be a powerful teaching and learning tool for the history teacher. But they need to be cost effective; the outcomes need to justify the time and other resources which will have been put into organising them (and possibly even designing them). The debriefing session after completion of the simulation needs to be used in part to evaluate the simulation, drawing on both the students’ perspectives and experiences and also the teacher’s own observations.

When deciding whether to make use of an established simulation (or to design and use a home-made one) the following kinds of questions need to be given some consideration: Before using it, determine:

- What are its objectives?
- Are the operating procedures clear and intelligible?
- What skills and knowledge does it require?
- What skills and knowledge will it develop or enhance?
- Is the factual information incorporated into the simulation accurate? are the roles or characters which the students will play authentic and believable?
- Are the operating procedures consistent?
- Is it appropriate for the age group you will be using it with?
- How long will it take a group of students (your group of students) to complete?
- What kinds of preparation work will the students need to do before they are ready to participate effectively in this simulation?
- What kinds of preparation work will you need to do before you run the simulation?
- How will you introduce it to the students?
- What kind of debriefing will you carry out after the students have completed the simulation?

Afterwards, determine:

- Did you complete it in the time allotted?
- What problems emerged? are they endemic to the simulation or just teething troubles that can be rectified?
- Did the students enjoy it? were they motivated to participate effectively?
- Has it succeeded in fulfilling its planned objectives? has their knowledge of the events been enhanced? have they further developed the requisite skills?
- Was there added value or could you have achieved your objectives more effectively using some other learning resource?
- Are there any ways in which the simulation could be improved?
- Will you use it again?

CHAPTER 10

MULTIPERSPECTIVITY IN HISTORY TEACHING

It is only in a few European states, such as Iceland and Portugal, that the territorial borders of the state and the nation coincide with a population which shares a single culture, language and religion. Most European states are characterised by ethnic, linguistic, cultural and/or religious diversity.

In some cases this diversity reflects the presence of indigenous or long-established ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities whose existence in a particular region predates the formation of the modern European State. We might include here, for example, the Bretons, Basques, Catalans and the speakers of Corse, Occitan and Alsatian (*Elsässerdeutsch*) in France; the Aragonese, Asturians, Catalans, Basques, and Galicians in Spain, the speakers of Friuli, Ladin and Sardu in Italy; the speakers of Gaelic, Irish and Welsh in the United Kingdom, and so forth. We might also add here the dispersed peoples of Europe, particularly the Roma/Gypsies and the Jews.

In other cases diversity emerged, particularly during the 19th century, as a result of the following factors:

- the movement of individuals and communities within the large multinational European empires (particularly the Napoleonic, the Habsburg, the Ottoman and the Russian empires);
- the migrations, resettlements, annexations and acquisitions of territories during the 19th century through the Congress of Vienna in 1815; through the treaties following the Crimean war (1856), the Austro-Prussian war (1866), the Franco-Prussian war (1871), and other localised cross-border conflicts; through the Congress of Berlin (1878); and also through the unification of Germany and, to a lesser degree, the unification of Italy in the third quarter of the century;
- the Jewish and Armenian diasporas across Europe;
- the increased levels of political and economic migration within Europe to the more industrialised regions, particularly during the last third of the century, and especially from Germany, Italy, Russia, Poland and Hungary, which more or less coincided with the increased levels of emigration by Europeans to North America.

Similar (and other) forces have been at work in the 20th century to perpetuate and increase the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the majority of modern European nation-states.

- the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 (and the other post-war treaties which followed it in the period 1919-21) did not apply the principle of national self-determination universally or consistently. Those who drew up the settlement were not interested in considering the aspirations of their own subject nationalities. At the same time the prevailing view that some claims to statehood were not politically and economically viable, and the perceived need to contain Germany and revolutionary Russia ensured that the claims to self-determination of some ethnic communities were not taken into account. As a result around 30 million people remained as national and ethnic minorities. Also the plebiscites which were organised at that time in the more ethnically-mixed regions often revealed significant groups of people from ethnic and linguistic minorities who actually opted to be citizens in states where another ethnic or linguistic community formed the majority (for example some Poles opted for Germany, some Slovenes opted for Austria);
- political and economic migration within Europe continued during the inter-war years;
- the post-war decisions taken at Yalta and Potsdam (February and June 1945), in addition to restructuring the political map of Europe, once again led to further significant population movements: the expulsion of 8 million Germans from Czechoslovakia and Poland, the westward migration of Poles from provinces annexed by the Soviet Union, and the re-population of the former German territories and of cities such as Königsberg and Breslau;
- the influx of immigrants into western Europe from the former colonies, particularly from the mid-1960s onwards, who have tended to settle in the larger conurbations and to retain their distinctive cultural, linguistic and religious identities;
- the influx of guest workers and economic migrants, particularly from Turkey, the former Yugoslavia and North Africa;
- the break-up of the Soviet Union and the related post-1989 political developments in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe have further highlighted the multinational, multi-ethnic and multi-denominational character of much of the region and heightened nationalist aspirations. Ethnic migration within, and to the Russian Federation from the former republics of the Soviet Union is now perceived as a growing problem. By the early 1990s it was estimated that some 25 million Russians lived outside the

Russian Federation. Around 1 in 5 Belarusians and 1 in 3 Armenians lived outside their own republics. In the Baltic states, especially Estonia and Latvia, there has been growing concern about the demographic decline of the indigenous populations and the rising levels of immigration from the Russian Federation. Migration has also been stimulated elsewhere, particularly from the east, by the adoption of de-Russification policies in some republics, the persistence in some republics of communist or one-party regimes, growth of inter-ethnic conflicts, and, in some cases, the rapid return to Islamic traditions.

In spite of this apparent diversity within most of the nation-states of Europe this characteristic has tended to be ignored in academic history and in history teaching in schools. Historically this has reflected the perceived need of newly-created states or states which have experienced long periods of annexation to create or regenerate a sense of national identity and to mobilise allegiance to the state or regime. The same concern emerged in many of the republics of eastern and south-eastern Europe after 1989 and has been reflected in the ongoing debates about the role of education and, in particular, the role of history and history education in forging a public sense of national identity and national loyalty.

However this tendency is not confined to those states which have long experience of colonialism, annexation or foreign occupation. The long-established nation-states of Europe also found it necessary in the late 19th century to generate a sense of national identity as the economy modernised, the political system became more centralised, the nature of war changed and required conscription, and the extension of the franchise required a new electorate to be more literate and more conscious of a sense of belonging to a nation and not just a region or locality. France, for example, is often regarded by historians as one of the longest-established nation-states in Europe. However, as Eugene Weber noted in his study of rural France in the late 19th century, at least 25% of the population at that time did not speak French and French was considered a foreign language by approximately half of the population who achieved adulthood between 1875 and 1900.¹

The characteristics of this mobilising process are commonplace. Typically there is a tendency to present the nation's history as if it were a seamless continuity linking the present to a long-distant past. Any historical discontinuities are presented as aberrations. The uniqueness of the nation is emphasised rather than the heritage which it shares with others. Homogeneity (of

1. E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the modernisation of rural France 1870-1914*, London, 1979, p.73.

people, culture, language and heritage) is emphasised and cultural and ethnic diversity is overlooked. There also tends to be a strong focus on conflicts – both those which highlight glorious victories and those which justify continued fear, defensiveness or hatred – rather than on periods of peaceful co-existence and mutual co-operation.

This is not to deny the value or legitimacy of teaching national history. As a report of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe observed:

No one can deny a national community's right to its history. The very existence of a group presupposes a historical evolution that determines its cohesion. It is therefore normal that each nation should have a national history and that historical awareness should underlie national political awareness...A problem arises when we move from national history to nationalistic history, as very often happens. History is then used for propaganda and indoctrination purposes. Whereas national history seeks unifying elements to explain its existence, nationalistic history tries to justify patriotic values by exacerbating the epic and mythical aspects of "national characteristics". It emphasises differences in relation to neighbouring countries, exalts uniformism, conceals the history of regions and minorities and always defines itself in relation to external enemies.¹

Even so, the dividing line between national and nationalistic history is far from clear-cut and even in the long-established nation-states school history curricula and history teaching can often be ethnocentric by default. It is taken for granted that the grand national narrative coincides with the history of (usually) the largest national grouping and dominant linguistic and cultural community. Like the history of women, the histories of minorities and their contribution to the development of the nation and national culture are overlooked. Also, as we have seen earlier in this book, in most nation-states European history (and world history) tends to be taught from a national rather than from a multinational perspective.

The solution to these two related problems – overtly nationalistic history teaching and ethnocentrism by default – does not necessarily lie in introducing more European history into secondary school syllabuses – although widening the scope and content of these courses could certainly help. Ultimately, the solution lies more in the way that history teachers teach and the ways in which their students learn. This is the focus of the rest of this chapter (and, indeed, of this book as a whole).

1. Report of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, "History and the learning of history in Europe", Doc. 7446, 1996, pp.20-21.

What is multiperspectivity?

Many of the developments in the study and teaching of history over the past 35 years have emerged in reaction to a perceived over-emphasis on political history and the contribution of political and economic élites. The growth of interest in social, cultural and intellectual history, the increased interest in European, regional and global history, the increased interest amongst historians in recovering the history of "the invisible", the economically and socially disadvantaged, the politically marginalised, and the national, ethnic and linguistic minorities are all testimony to this.

These developments have helped to broaden our historical understanding. Firstly, the historical record is more accessible now than ever before. This is partly because some public archives are far more open to scrutiny than they once were and there has been a rapid growth in the development of non-governmental archives – not least those maintained by the various mass media. As a result, and in spite of the limitations imposed on the individual by her or his grasp of foreign languages, it is easier now for historians – and history teachers and their students – to find out how events which may have been of great significance to their nation's history were also perceived in other countries. Secondly, we now have a clearer awareness of how many of the more significant events, occurrences and trends in the 20th century have impacted on the lives of ordinary people. Through oral history and the analysis of unofficial sources, historians have been able to provide us with a much more detailed picture of various aspects of everyday life than could be obtained from just official statistics and an analysis of government policies.

Furthermore, these developments have increased the potential for examining recent and contemporary events and situations from a variety of different perspectives and, in that sense, provide the raw material for an analytical approach based on multiperspectivity. But just having access to different perspectives on the same historical phenomenon does not, in itself, guarantee that the approach will be multiperspectival, although it does ensure that we have a broader evidential base from which to start our enquiries. Similarly the comparative method, focusing on the similarities and differences in the perspectives of different individuals, groups or nations, facilitates, but is not the same thing as, multiperspectivity.

Multiperspectivity depends on our being able to relate the different perspectives to each other. At the heart of this approach are the following assumptions:

- in circumstances where different accounts of the same event reflect different perspectives then it is not necessarily the case that one of these versions must be the correct one. Some, if not all of them, may be equally valid, reflecting different experiences, contexts and objectives;

- in some situations we would get a more accurate and comprehensive account of what happened if we perceived the different perspectives as pieces in a jigsaw or tiles which make up a mosaic;
- very few groups, cultures or nations could be said to be wholly autonomous. Their responses and scope for action in any given situation will be shaped and constrained by the interests and political influence of other groups, cultures or nations. Similarly they too may be in a position to influence or constrain the reactions of others;
- in this respect, perceptions of “the other” and the relationship between “the other” and “the self” (or one’s own group) is at the heart of multi-perspectivity;
- to understand each perspective it is necessary to contextualise it. In other words, to establish where the holders of a particular viewpoint “are coming from”: their social, political or economic situation, their specific objectives and priorities; their different obligations, the factors which constrain their room for manoeuvre or compromise, the extent of their power or influence, the support they can count on from others;

Multiperspectivity, within the context of history and history teaching, aims to achieve three things:

- to gain a more comprehensive and broader understanding of historical events and developments by taking into account the similarities and differences in the accounts and perspectives of all of the parties involved;
- to gain a deeper understanding of the historical relationships between nations, or cross-border neighbours, or majorities and minorities within national borders;
- to gain a clearer picture of the dynamics of what happened through examining the interactions between the people and groups involved and their interdependence.

The main learning objectives

Multiperspectivity ought to be an integral element of history teaching not an optional extra, particularly when focusing on the history of the 20th century. It also ought to be an integral element in the training of historians and history teachers. As noted earlier, it is a way of thinking, a way of selecting, examining and using evidence from different sources in order to unravel the complexities of a situation and work out what happened and why. If employed systematically when teaching history to secondary school students it should help them to understand that:

- it is not necessarily (or even usually) the case that there is a correct version of a historical event;

- the same historical event can be described and explained in different ways depending on the standpoint of the historian, politician, journalist, television producer or eye-witness, and each may be a valid though incomplete and partial account or explanation;
- the same piece of evidence can be interpreted differently by different historians depending on their perspective, the time when they are writing and the other pieces of evidence which they incorporate into their accounts;
- all historical accounts are provisional. The best account is the one which most closely fits the evidence currently available;
- the same apparently clear and unambiguous statement can still have different meanings for people, depending on their particular situations. As a result one of the most difficult tasks for the historian is to determine the precise meaning which particular statements and documents have for the people involved at the time. This calls for a process of historical empathy: stepping into the shoes of someone else and trying to understand how they would have perceived it, and why;
- sources of historical evidence (for example official documents, other records, broadcasting archives, eye-witness accounts, etc.) are seldom wholly impartial. They reflect both the standpoint of the person (or persons) providing the information and their perceptions of what other people want to know. This means that we need to scrutinise the source for possible bias, find out why it was produced and for whom, and analyse the context in which it was produced;
- different perspectives within a nation, a community, an ethnic group, a political party or an interest group may be as significant as those which divide two nations, two communities or two groups. For example, the illustration in **Box 1** below demonstrates these complexities very clearly and provides a useful antidote to what in many textbooks is often an oversimplified account of the relationships between majorities and minorities. A similar approach could be usefully applied to the experiences of revolution, decolonisation, the emergence of nationalism or the break-up of the Soviet Union;
- people have multiple identities (related to their age, gender, occupation, religion, first language, family relationships) and their national or ethnic identities do not necessarily dominate every aspect of their daily lives. Often their identities as a parent, daughter, woman, or doctor may be more significant in trying to understand their reactions to a particular situation or event. In those roles they may sometimes share more in common with people living in other countries or regions than they do with other people living in their own countries.

Box 1: The Jews in Prague

Dr Helena Krejcovà, in her study of the Jewish communities in the Czech lands has shown that in the 19th century a liberal movement gained influence amongst Jews in Bohemia and played a significant part in the social and economic changes which took place during this period. But liberal ideas were not universally accepted within the community and divisions emerged between liberal and conservative Jews, with the latter fearing increased assimilation and consequent loss of religious and cultural traditions. Jewish liberals joined in common cause with Czechs and Germans in the 1848 Revolution. Support for Czech nationalism, particularly amongst the Jewish students and intelligentsia led to a Czech-Jewish assimilation movement seeking to adopt the Czech language and to help create a common culture, economy and political system. Many liberal Jews actively participated in the establishment of the first Czech Republic in 1918. However, this also led to increased alienation and support for Zionism amongst the pro-German Jews and the traditionalists (who became a minority within a minority).

Source: Council of Europe, Mutual understanding and the teaching of European history: challenges, problems and approaches, (Strasbourg 1995)

Some potential constraints and problems

One of the arguments running through this handbook is that the scope for introducing a greater European dimension into the history curriculum will vary markedly from one educational system to another and will generally be constrained by such factors as official curriculum guidelines, the educational resources available for in-service teacher training and the development of suitable teaching materials, the number of hours of history teaching which the average student receives, the relative autonomy of the teacher and the extent to which school textbooks are officially prescribed and authorised. For that reason this handbook has focused less on what is taught and more on how it is taught and how students can be helped to acquire ways of thinking about and analysing historical events and developments from a more comparative and cross-national perspective. However, it is important to be realistic here and there are a number of constraints and difficulties which can limit the scope for multiperspectivity in history teaching and learning.

First, as suggested above, teaching for multiperspectivity is not just a case of exposing students to a greater range of perspectives, it is also about providing them with the analytical skills, ways of thinking and historical empathy that are necessary for using these different perspectives in order to examine a historical event and better understand what has happened and

why. These skills and ways of thinking need to be practised systematically and consistently. Since in most educational systems in Europe students do not study the 20th century until fairly late in their secondary schooling it is essential that a multiperspectival approach is also adopted when studying earlier periods of European and national history as well.

Second, the scope for multiperspectivity is clearly constrained by the availability of suitable teaching materials and other resources. In the course of the research for this handbook the author has examined some excellent textbooks from all over Europe and some good websites on the Internet developed by historians and history teachers which provide source material on the same events and developments from different national perspectives. In particular, there are some good resources on such topics and themes as the two world wars, the cold war, the spread of nationalism, the economic recession in the 1930s and post-war decolonisation. However, generally speaking, the heavy emphasis on national history and the tendency to examine European and global issues and themes from a broadly national perspective means students are often exposed to only one perspective on some of the important themes and issues of the 20th century, or it is implied that there several perspectives but only the national one is correct.

A third constraint which is linked to the previous one is that the scope for multiperspectivity is also limited in most cases by the number of modern languages in which the history teacher, and possibly her or his students, has some fluency and literacy.

The fourth potential constraint which needs to be taken into consideration is that it is not simply a matter of presenting students with new information representing a wider variety of perspectives. There is an affective as well as a cognitive dimension. Indeed, where students have firmly entrenched xenophobic or ethnocentric opinions and prejudices the provision of additional information may sometimes reinforce existing attitudes. History teachers also need to help their students to reflect on and critically evaluate their existing knowledge and their basis for asserting particular assumptions and opinions regarding other nations, cultures and groups.

In spite of the above constraints and potential difficulties it is still possible to introduce some teaching and learning activities that will help students to develop the analytical skills and attitudes which are central to multiperspectivity.

Evaluating the textbook

For many students in parts of Europe the textbook and the teacher are the only sources of historical information. Nevertheless, the textbook, even one

which focuses mainly on national history, can still provide opportunities for developing multiperspectivity. There is a teachers' guide for evaluating textbooks in Chapter 18 of this handbook but history students should also be encouraged to critically evaluate their textbooks and other learning resources. The main objectives here are:

- to see if it is possible to detect the textbook author's own perspective on particular topics and themes;
- to identify any perspectives on a given topic which are missing from the account on the textbook;
- to identify any examples of intentional and unintentional bias.

Some examples of the kinds of questions which students could be encouraged to ask when reading a particular chapter or extract from the textbook are included in **Box 2** below.

A similar approach could be applied to a television or radio documentary, or a newspaper or magazine article.

Box 2: Students' checklist to evaluate a textbook's treatment of a historical event

Does this extract look only at events from one point of view – your country's?

Does it seem to be suggesting that your country's position or viewpoint was right or wrong? What evidence is provided for this conclusion?

What reasons might other countries have for disagreeing with this view? Is there any discussion of these reasons in the extract?

Does the extract help you to understand the points of view, the motives and the concerns of the other nations, people or groups who were directly involved in the events described?

Does the extract refer to "the people" (for example "the French", "the Germans", "the Russians", "the Serbs", "the Turks", etc.) when it really means "the government" at that time?

Does the extract show how decisions being taken at the national level were being influenced by what was happening elsewhere?

Do you think this is a biased or a fair and balanced account of what happened? What evidence can you point to that will support your view?

Contextualising the perspectives

Some events, topics and issues in the 20th century clearly lend themselves to the multiperspectival approach, even in circumstances where only a very limited range of teaching materials are available. Wars and conflicts, internal revolutions, changes of regime and major changes and upheavals in people's lives are frequently presented in textbooks and television documentaries by including quotes from key actors in the events, eye-witnesses, historians and expert commentators. It is often possible to identify their points of view, their perspectives and their personal biases by analysing the language they use: the emphasis they give to some points rather than others, the points which are positive and the ones which are negative, the people they praise and the ones they condemn, and the loaded words which they choose to use (for example betrayal, misguided, evil, primitive, etc.).

However, as noted earlier, it is not always possible to identify the different perspectives on a particular event or development solely by reference to the specific content of a text. It is often essential to help the students to contextualise the various points of view which are being expressed. An example of this approach is given in **Box 3** at the end of this chapter. It relates to Algerian reactions to French colonial policy just before the second world war but the same approach could be adopted for the colonial policies of other European countries or adapted for studying other topics which are characterised by a multiplicity of organised groups, each with its own perspective.

This particular example provides a brief general outline of the context and then provides supplementary information to help explain the positions adopted by the leaders of three separate Muslim groups in Algeria during the late 1930s.

The pedagogy of deconstruction

To some extent this approach underpins the one on textbook evaluation referred to above. The idea basically is to offer teachers and their students the analytical tools necessary for countering the tendency towards the teaching of monolithic, monocultural, national (even nationalistic) history in European schools. The approach is most closely associated with the work of Professor Antonio Nanni and his colleagues at the Centre for Education in a World-wide Approach, University of Parma in Italy.¹ In essence the approach suggests that the way into studying topics and themes which are characterised by multiple perspectives is to begin with the perspectives of "the others". For example, they suggest that one should start a series of lessons on the Crusades from the point of view of the Arab chroniclers, or lessons on

1. See the journal, *CEM Mondialità*, which is produced by Professor Nanni and his colleagues.

the history of the heresies from the viewpoint of the heretics, or lessons on empires from the perspective of the colonised. It is already quite common to teach some topics in 20th-century history in this way. For example, the economic recession in the inter-war years, migration, decolonisation and the social changes brought about by two world wars and other themes from social and economic history are often taught in this way.

The approach represents a shift of emphasis which can help to prevent the perspectives of other nations or national and ethnic minorities from being marginalised. It can also help to prevent "the others" being presented as the problem which needed to be solved.

Establishing links with other schools around Europe

Many visits, exchange links and cross-border and cross-national history projects have been operating for some time now. Some of these links and projects have been concerned primarily with the learning of modern languages or with developing greater European awareness. The potential for collaboration in developing resource materials for teaching and learning European history from a multiplicity of perspectives has not really been fully exploited yet. However, since research has shown that some topics and themes in 20th century European history are taught in most of Europe's educational systems (see Chapter 1) there would seem to be some scope here for schools within specific regions or across Europe as a whole to share some of their teaching materials on these topics, particularly if these are extracts from primary and secondary sources. Electronic mail facilitates this exchange but even where this is not available to schools then postal correspondence or faxes can be just as effective.

The languages of exchange can, of course, present problems but there is considerable educational value in exchanging not simply teaching resources but material which when combined offers a range of different perspectives on the same events and issues. This can be further enhanced if modern languages teachers and their classes are also involved in providing translations into one or more languages, particularly those with widespread international currency.

Analysing media coverage

Other chapters (on the uses of television and contemporary written material in history teaching) look at the analysis of media coverage in more detail. The main problem, however, when looking at, for example, newspaper coverage of significant events and developments in the 20th century, is that teachers (and students) are constrained by the languages in which they are fluent. Also the archives tend to be restricted to national newspapers. One useful

source for those who have access to the Internet is the United States Department of State Media Reactions Archive. Five days a week information officers in each US Embassy around the world scan all the national newspapers (and some local ones as well) and produce a digest on all the main international issues of the day. The content tends to be restricted to issues relating to regional and national politics and international relations. The selected extracts are then translated into English and sent to Washington. There the US Information Agency produces an “issue focus” on each issue and these can be downloaded from their website: (<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/medreac.htm>). Their archives can be accessed directly from this site.

This source is particularly useful when examining developments in recent history that need to be explored from a variety of different national, regional and local perspectives. The documentation on the website not only tells you which newspaper or television or radio broadcast each quote is taken from but also its political orientation (for example whether or not the source is pro-government, whether it is associated with a particular political group or party, and so on).

When using this source it does need to be recognised that the extracts have been selected by a United States official who is aware of her or his own government’s particular interests in that issue but it does seek to offer a fairly comprehensive review of media reactions. There is an example of this resource in **Box 4** at the end of this chapter. This relates to the Cyprus issue, in this case the heightening tension between Greece and Turkey in January 1997 which arose because of the sale of Russian air defence missiles to the Greek Cypriot government. The issue focus produced by the US Information Agency included extracts from 36 separate sources drawn from 13 countries over a period of one month (January 1997). In spite of its limitations it can still be a valuable resource for studying (in this case):

- the Cyprus question;
- Greek-Turkish relations;
- the recent and long-term history of southeast Europe;
- the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato);
- post-cold war relations between the Russian Federation and an expanding Nato.

In recent years these archives have also been a very useful source for history teachers who can read English if they want to know how the media in different countries have reacted to the changes that have taken place in central and eastern Europe since the break-up of the Soviet Union, developments in the Balkans and developments within the Russian Federation itself.

The material provides the student with an opportunity to examine media reactions in the same way as they would examine any other source of historical evidence. For example:

- distinguishing factual information from opinions;
- distinguishing between opinions which could be substantiated from other sources and those opinions which could not;
- distinguishing between explanations, descriptions and conclusions;
- extracting relevant information;
- determining whether or not the writer is trying to give an objective and balanced account;
- identifying any statements, phrases or words which reveal the writer's bias for or against any group or persons;
- assessing the value of the source.

In addition, however, it also provides the means to compare and contrast the different perspectives, interpretations, assumptions and preoccupations within countries as well as between them. For example, it is interesting to note from the examples in **Box 4** that the British newspaper draws a parallel with the Cuban missile crisis of 1961; the Russian newspaper is more concerned that the Russian arms industry should be able to compete on level terms with the western manufacturers, while the Greek newspaper links the origins of the problem to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. One Turkish paper argues that the problem goes further back than that and another suggests that Russia's actions may be a reaction to Turkish support for the Chechens.

Providing students with opportunities to practice historical empathy

Finally, as noted earlier in this chapter, historical empathy lies at the heart of multiperspectivity. The students need to look beyond their own point of view or the point of view of their social, cultural or ethnic group, gender or nationality to try and understand how others might perceive and understand the major historical events and developments of the last hundred years. This can be done in a number of small ways. For example:

- looking at a cartoon or photograph in a textbook and writing captions for it from different perspectives;
- reading an extract from the text and imagining how (and if) students in other countries or from other groups might react to it or interpret it;
- looking at a newspaper's account of a particular historical event of international significance, identifying the journalists' or editor's perspective and

then looking at possible ways in which it might have been written differently by a journalist living in one of the other countries involved.

In circumstances where opportunities for students to access different perspectives on an event or issue are very limited then one other option is for the teacher or textbook writer to produce short “character sketches”, based on her or his reading about the topic, which the students can analyse and interpret using the knowledge they have acquired in lessons and from their textbook. An interesting example of the approach, produced by a British textbook writer is provided in **Box 5** at the end of the chapter. The author of these examples also suggests that they can be used for role playing the kinds of debates that were taking place at the time.

Conclusion

Over the centuries the nations of Europe have absorbed elements of other cultures in the form of peoples, traditions, ideas and beliefs. At different points in our histories this process of absorption has been the result of population migration, trade, the spread of religious movements and religious reforms, occupations, annexations, wars, shifting borders, resettlements, imperial expansion and the cultural exchanges which arise because of it. The mutual influences which come through sharing borders or through forging political alliances, the emergence of international institutions, the growing recognition in international law and practice of the rights of indigenous minorities, and, finally, the growing impact of globalisation.

These multicultural elements are an integral part of a nation's past and not aberrations to be omitted from the construction of the grand national narrative. Indeed, they are an essential and integral element in the forging of a people's national identity. An individual's identity is not predestined; it is always in a state of becoming; evolving in response to life's experiences. The same applies to national identity. It has been shaped by and continues to be shaped by shared experiences – both positive and negative, glorious and dark, admirable and shameful. Multiperspectivity in the teaching of national history focuses on how people have come to be what they are today.

Box 3: The Algerian response to French colonial policy (1936-39)

Maurice Viollette, who was appointed Governor General in Algeria in 1925 was committed to assimilating Algeria into France by removing restrictions on citizenship and introducing radical educational and social reforms. He won support from Muslim groups but was opposed by French settlers. He was recalled in 1927 and was subsequently elected to the Senate where he continued to argue his case about Algeria. In 1936 the Socialist leader, **Leon Blum** formed the Popular Front government and appointed Viollette as Minister for Algerian Affairs. Later that year a reform bill was introduced but by the outbreak of the war in 1939 it had still not been enacted. During this period those Algerian Muslims who also supported these reforms established the Muslim Congress. It contained within it different groups who had different aspirations regarding the future of Algeria.

| Algerian perspectives | Context |
|---|--|
| <p>In 1936 Ferhat Abbas was a committed assimilationist. At that time he wrote: "I will not die for the Algerian nation because it does not exist ... I have examined history, I questioned the living and the dead, I visited the cemeteries; nobody spoke to me about it. I then turned to the Koran and I sought for one solitary case forbidding a Muslim from integrating himself with a non-Muslim nation. I did not find that either. One cannot build on the wind ..." [Algerians] "must join their future to the French endeavours in this country."</p> | <p>Abbas came from peasant stock but his father had risen to be a local governor under the French and had been awarded the <i>Légion d'honneur</i>. He was educated at a French lycée and Algiers University where he became president of the Muslim Students Association. He described himself as being more comfortable with French than with Arabic. He worked for the Federation of Elected Officials. His first wife was a Muslim but he later divorced her and married a Frenchwoman. After the second world war he was an active supporter of the separatist movement in Algeria.</p> |
| <p>Abd el Hamid Ben Badis was spokesman of the reformist Muslim clerics. He rejected Abbas' view that the Algerian nation did not exist. He asserted that the "Muslim Algerian nation has its culture, its traditions and its characteristics, good or bad, like any other nation on earth ... the Algerian nation is not France, cannot be France, and does not wish to be France". Although rejecting assimilation into France he did not argue at this time for Political independence. Instead he called for a free Algeria which would be a dominion of France.</p> | <p>Ben Badis belonged to a group of Muslim clerics who were critical of the conservative Islamic leaders in Algeria who, along with the French educational system for Muslims, were blamed for allowing Islamic Algeria to become backward and superstitious and therefore unable to govern itself. They founded a network of Muslim schools that were independent of the French. For Ben Badis politics was always secondary to religion and he emphasised the pan-Arab and pan-Islamic identity of the Algerian people rather than their nationalism.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 3: The Algerian response to French colonial policy (1936-39)

| Algerian perspectives | Context |
|---|---|
| <p>Messali Hadjj and his followers were separatists who called for the national independence of Algeria. Although members of the Muslim Congress they were strongly opposed by the other groups, all of whom favoured reform rather than independence.</p> | <p>Hadjj had been a founding member of a whole series of nationalist organisations beginning in 1925 with the Etoile Nord-Africain. He had support from the French Communists and this influenced his policies. He favoured the redistribution of property owned by the French settlers. He won more support for his position from Algerian migrant workers in France than he did in Algeria itself at this time and in the municipal elections in Algiers in 1937 his party failed to win any seats.</p> |
| <p><i>Main source: H.S. Wilson, African decolonisation, London, 1994</i></p> | |

Box 4: Media reactions to heightening tensions in Cyprus in 1997**Russian Federation: *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 9 January 1997**

The beginning of the year was marked by a major scandal that erupted in the diplomatic circles of several countries at once. The participants were Cyprus, Russia, the United States, Britain, Turkey, Greece and several other states. The pretext for this loud outcry was a seemingly routine deal concluded on January 4 between the Russian company Rosvooruzheniye and the government of Cyprus on the delivery to the latter of a consignment of S-300PMU-1 air defence systems ... Of course, the actions of the United States, Turkey and other western countries that are Russia's competitors, evoke an understandable and legitimate critical reaction on the part of Russian government...Russia has no lesser rights than America, Britain and other arms manufacturers to maintain a vigorous presence on the armaments markets".

(continued)

Box 4: Media reactions to heightening tensions in Cyprus in 1997

Britain: the *Independent*, 23 January 1997

Like Cuba, another island involved in a missile dispute 36 years before, Cyprus could bring the world to nuclear confrontation. The world's most densely militarised confrontation zone may be about to explode ... In short, virtually all the ingredients for a bloody confrontation on Cyprus, sucking in Greece and Turkey, are present. All outsiders, from the United States to the EU to the United Nations, recognise the dangers. Indeed, many see Greece and Turkey, whose mutual antagonism long predates their alliance in Nato, as the most likely contestants in Europe's next war".

Greece: *Elevtherotipia*, 10 January 1997

Last night's reactions by Washington, with the statement of warning to Ankara (Turkey) from US State Department spokesman Burns, telling it to stop "threatening to use military violence against Cyprus", and by Moscow, with the firm statement by its ambassador in Nicosia (Cyprus), saying "his country will not remain indifferent", create a new picture. These reactions justify Cyprus's view that it has the right to care about its defence, which is being threatened by Attila (Turkish forces in Cyprus) with continuous provocation ... Amid talk of a US initiative on Greek-Turkish relations and the Cyprus issue, Washington cannot put aside the Turkish provocation and aggression. It cannot ignore that Ankara acts like a terrorist and a scoundrel in the area".

Cyprus (Greek-speaking): *Nicosia O Agon*, 14 January 1997

How is it possible for Washington not to see the Turkish aggressiveness that has its eyes on the Greek territories? Why is it not disturbed by the occupation of 22 years and why does it accept that weapons given for Nato's needs are being used to reinforce the occupation force?"

Turkey: *Yeni Yuzuil*, 21 January 1997

The S-300 crisis ... is escalating slowly. It does not seem likely that the crisis will end while our Greek Cypriot and Greek friends do not accept the existence of two communities on the island, refuse to see that the problem goes further back than 1974, and attempt to change the status quo with missiles and military methods, and base their calculation on Turkey's instability. Every step to be taken by them to push Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus into a corner will escalate the crisis, and will push the solution of the problem farther from the type of solution they want.

Turkey: *Cumhuriyet*, 9 January 1997

The Greek Cypriot side has been heedlessly buying arms. It has recently concluded an agreement to buy missiles from Russia, missiles that can hit Turkey. It is common knowledge that "Cyprus is Turkey's soft belly". So Ankara has had to adopt a decision against the negative development, which will pose a threat to Anatolia... Obviously there is an international aspect to the crisis in the southern Mediterranean. Has Russia decided to supply missiles to south Cyprus as a reaction to Turkey's support for the Chechen people?

Box 5: How does it look from someone else's point of view?

Study these character sketches of imaginary Russians living in 1917. On the basis of your work on this topic, decide who they would have been supporting in the Autumn of 1917 in the period leading up to the October revolution. Who do you think would have been supporting:

- **Lenin** and the Bolsheviks?
- **Kerensky** and the Provisional Government?
- **General Kornilov** and his supporters within the army?

What clues did you find in each character sketch to support your decisions?

Olga Smirnova – peasant. Husband killed in 1915 in Poland. Like most of the families in her village she has no land of her own. She has not been able to grow enough food because so many peasants have been conscripted to the army.

Count Alexei Checkhov – landowner. Owns 100 000 hectares in Minsk province. Two sons serving as officers in the army, one killed in 1914. Supported Provisional Government at first, but now very worried about illegal land seizures and the general breakdown of law and order.

Boris Krasnov – soldier. Served in the army since being called up from his village in 1915. Has seen many of his comrades killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Elected to his company committee recently. Worried about what is happening back home in the countryside.

Lev Plakhanov – factory owner. Enthusiastic supporter of the March Revolution and Kerensky to begin with. Factory recently occupied by militant workers led by Bolsheviks. Two of his managers recently beaten up. Worried about breakdown of law and order.

Anna Leonovc – factory worker and housewife. One of the demonstrators on first day of the March Revolution. Married with two children aged 9 and 12, husband a prisoner of the Germans. Worried about food shortages and rising prices. Recently made redundant when factory closed due to shortages of raw materials. How will she feed her family?

Nikolai Volkhov – factory worker. Married with four children aged 3, 5, 8 and 10. Worried about rising prices and food shortages. Member of Menshevik-led trade union, but is concerned at the government's slowness in calling a Constituent Assembly and in dealing with the issue of war or peace.

Source: D. Armstrong, *People and power: Russia*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1993, p. 35

CHAPTER 11

OUT-OF-SCHOOL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

In history teaching, out-of-school learning can mean a number of different things:

- a visit to a local, national or specialist museum;
- a project aimed at collecting oral evidence from people living in the locality of the school;
- a case study of a local person or community of people, who have played a significant part in the history of the locality, region or nation, which involves accessing a variety of sources of information and evidence outside the school;
- carrying out a historical transect across a city, town, village or rural landscape, looking for traces of the recent past and changes over the last hundred years;
- visiting sites of special historical significance. This may be a battlefield, factory, dockyard, railway station, place of religious worship, or public building where momentous events took place in the 20th century, or it may simply be a site which is representative of important social and cultural changes in the lives of ordinary people;
- school twinning and link projects that involve: sharing information about the recent histories of the locality or region in which each school is situated; focusing on shared and contrasting experiences in relation to a common theme or topic, such as transport, technology or immigration, and examining historic links between the different places and how these have changed over time.

Some of these activities and approaches, such as oral-history projects and link projects, are discussed in other chapters. This chapter concentrates on local history, visits to sites of historical significance and museums (including school museums). Many history teachers already make good use of these kinds of out-of-school activities in their teaching. Although there are a number of pedagogical issues that can be highlighted concerning their educational value and impact on the learner, a key issue for this handbook is how local history, site visits and historical museums (which tend mainly to be concerned with local or

national history) can contribute to students' understanding of 20th-century European history. How can the essentially local or national focus of these activities be used to make cross-national and European-wide connections?

Local history

It is possible to read a town or city like a historical document. The traces of the past are present in the architecture and former functions of buildings, the street names, the bridges, the monuments, the names of shops, cafés and restaurants, the ways in which the town or city has developed, the location of public and private housing, whether or not minorities are dispersed or living in their own quarters, and whether or not war-damaged districts have been reconstructed exactly as they used to be before the war or built using new architectural styles and building materials.

The rural landscape can also be read like a historical document. Many history teachers do this already but usually for examining earlier historical periods, such as looking at how the land was apportioned during feudal times, or how farmland was enclosed during a period of agricultural modernisation.

What of the European dimension in these local studies? The first point to stress is that the locality can indeed be studied for its own sake but it can also be studied as a case study of changes and developments which have taken place across Europe, or across regions within Europe, albeit at different rates. So, for example, photographs or postcards in the local museum of well-known streets, local factories or local farms taken at different times in the century can be used to identify aspects of continuity and change in the town or district. They can also be used to chart the gradual impact of global developmental processes: the impact of electricity (street lighting, shops, etc.), the impact of mass production on urban transport, the mechanisation of agriculture and the impact of pollution on the environment.

Also no locality is wholly insulated from outside influences. Geography teachers often approach this by having students carry out street surveys, looking at, for example, the countries of origin of the vehicles on the streets, and of the different products in the stores to demonstrate the impact on the locality of a developing transport infrastructure, national and international trade and the dependence and interdependence of local economies. Through using local museum collections, local newspaper archives, local records offices, official statistics and photographs and memorabilia collected by the students' families, it is possible to introduce a historical dimension into these studies. This is a useful way of charting the political and economic changes and upheavals which have taken place during the last century. The source for the evidence may be local but it helps to illuminate the political and economic history of the continent or of a region within it.

For example, a comparison between today and the 1980s regarding what is and was available in shops in many towns in eastern Europe, their countries of origin, how much they cost and what proportion of a person's income was needed to purchase them would offer interesting indicators of the positive and negative impacts on the lives of ordinary people of the changes which have taken place in those countries since 1989. A similar analysis might prove equally illuminating if it were carried out in any of the member states of the European Union.

As noted in the chapter on "Multiperspectivity in history teaching", most nations and communities in Europe have also experienced periods of emigration and immigration during the 20th century. There is a double value in exploring the experiences of second and third generation migrant families.

First, students come to understand that such groups have made a contribution to the history of the community as a whole and are an integral part of that community's (or nation's) past. They have helped to make the community what it is today.

Second, the study of these groups can also shed light on events and developments which may have had European-wide significance at particular periods during the 20th century. The brief case study in **Box 1** below should help to illustrate both points. Textbooks on the history of Scotland tend to give emphasis to the emigration of Scots in the 18th and 19th centuries to North America, Australia and New Zealand and the immigration of Irish Catholics from the south of Ireland and Protestants from the north of Ireland to the industrialised south of Scotland in the 19th century.

However, during this period there were also significant influxes of migrants from Italy, Poland, Lithuania and Jews escaping the waves of pogroms in the Russian Empire. These peoples mostly settled in the largest urban centres in Scotland: Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. They had a significant impact on their adopted communities but they also often retained links with their homelands which also had political and social consequences during some of the most significant events of the century.

The example in **Box 1** focuses on the experiences of the Italian community in Scotland.

It should be possible to help students to jointly conduct similar diachronic surveys of the histories of immigrant groups within other communities that would highlight the mutual influences and also the wider historical contexts which touched the lives of these communities and affected their relations with the indigenous populations.

Box 1: The Italians in Scotland

In 1881 the census for Scotland recorded 328 people of Italian extraction. By 1914 numbers had increased to around 4 500 and identifiable Italian communities had emerged in Scotland's main cities, particularly in Glasgow. In 1891 the Società de Mutuo Soccorso was founded to provide welfare assistance. In 1908 the community started its own newspaper, aptly entitled *La Scozia*. They opened shops, cafés, restaurants, and ice cream parlours and "fast-food" outlets.

However, modern Italian migration to Scotland can be traced back to the figurini who first came over to England and Scotland in the 1850s as itinerant craftsmen making and selling statuettes and figurines for homes and churches. Some established themselves as padroni (employers or patrons) who brought over new migrants, paid their fares and offered them employment. Most of the migrants came from two regions, Lucca in northern Italy and Lazio, south of Rome.

When Mussolini came to power in Italy he introduced a policy through which all Italian emigrants would be full members of a reborn Italian state. Fasci, or fascist clubs were established in the immigrant communities, usually led by prominent local citizens. The fascio in Glasgow was founded in 1922. A census by the Italian government in 1933 which included emigrants as well as Italians residing in the homeland, revealed that nearly half of those who responded from Scotland were registered Fascist Party members.

Just a few hours after Mussolini declared war on Britain on 10 June, 1940 Italian-owned shops and restaurants in Glasgow and Edinburgh were attacked, smashed and looted. This was partly due to anti-Italian feelings and also partly due to anti-Catholic feelings amongst the Protestant communities within those cities. Italian resident males between the ages of 17 and 60 were interned and many were transported overseas, particularly to Australia.

Since 1945 there has been no significant immigration to Scotland from Italy and the population has become more dispersed and assimilated, with many of the younger generation marrying Scots. However, this has not wholly eliminated a sense of Italian identity as any visitor to Glasgow or Edinburgh would soon notice.

Source: T. Devine, *The Scottish nation 1700-2000*, (London, Penguin Press, 1999) pp. 512-518.
© T.M. Devine, 1999

The inclusion of local history in the secondary school history curriculum brings added value. Its immediacy arouses the students' interest (places and people they know, events they have already heard of) and it adds another dimension to the study of national, regional and international history. However, it also provides interesting opportunities for students to work with local historians and to work as historians applying key historical concepts, using investigative methods and developing their interpretative skills. In addition, it often gives them valuable insights into the problems which historians face when trying to explain or interpret a particular event or development. Students often assume

that if someone was there at the time and witnessed the events in question then their evidence must be more reliable than the observations and comments of someone who was not there and may be writing about it at some later date. (“She was there, she ought to know what happened!”).

To some extent historians and history teachers encourage this assumption through their distinction between primary and secondary sources. However, anyone interested in local history will be familiar with the strange phenomenon of distorted communal memory. Again and again one finds that people, when asked about a particular locality, will say that when they were children “it was all green fields around here”. However, contemporary photographs, an examination of the local architecture and some documentary analysis in local records offices often reveal that when these people were actually children the area could not have been as they now remember it. What they “remember” is what their parents and neighbours have told them about the area when their parents’ generation were children. Or perhaps these reminiscences too are an example of this process of communal mis-remembering. In either case this can be a useful exercise in historical investigation and interpretation, with the important additional lesson that people’s memories and eye-witness accounts are not infallible and need to be subjected to the same rigorous analysis as any other source of historical evidence.

It is also feasible increasingly to introduce a comparative dimension into local history, particularly when seeking to compare cities. It is possible now to access via the Internet detailed street maps and virtual tours of most of Europe’s capitals and major cities. Most of these virtual tours include photographs and brief histories of all of the major buildings and historical sites. They provide opportunities for comparing architectural styles and cultural influences and for looking at how different countries and city governments have chosen to commemorate the same event.

Visiting sites of historical significance

An important distinction needs to be made here between those visits which are intended essentially to focus on taking students to see those buildings and monuments that are generally considered to be representative of the nation’s heritage and visits which engage the students in a historical interpretation of these sites and an analysis of them as sources of historical information. An example of the interpretative approach is reproduced in **Box 2** below. This is a brief description of how one history teacher took his students on a visit to cemeteries in France where American, British and German soldiers who had died in the Normandy campaign of 1944 were buried. The overall question that the students were seeking to answer was: What do these cemeteries tell us about how Germany, Britain and the United States

have interpreted this event in their respective national histories? The students took extensive site notes at each cemetery and used them to answer specific questions about each site. They then interrogated their site notes and other sources to do a comparative analysis of how the three countries had commemorated their war dead and what this told them about how each country viewed this part of their recent past.

The same approach could be adopted for a variety of different kinds of site and not just those which are related to wars. If limited resources rule out the possibility of visits to similar sites in different countries then it may be possible instead to set up links with schools in other countries for exchanges of photographs and information around a common theme or topic. Alternatively once again much useful information for comparative purposes can be downloaded from the Internet.

Box 2: A visit to cemeteries commemorating the dead of World War II

A group of British secondary school students visited three World War II cemeteries in Normandy in 1998. These were the American cemetery at Colleville, the British cemetery at Ranville and the German cemetery at La Cambe. During each visit the students took site notes organised around the following questions:

- What did you find out about America and American soldiers in 1944 from the cemetery at Colleville?
- What did you find out about Britain and British soldiers from the cemetery at Ranville?
- What did you find out about Germany and German soldiers in 1944 from the cemetery at La Cambe?
- What are the similarities and differences between these sites (Write about size, status, colours, landscape, design, people).

Then, using these site notes, other evidence and notes from class discussions answer the following questions:

- Why have Britain, the USA and Germany commemorated their war dead in different ways?
- What does this tell us about how they viewed this part of their past?
- What does it tell us about the citizens of these three countries and what they faced following World War II?
- Finally, what did studying these 3 sites make you feel about this war and these countries? Would you have represented the dead in the same way if you had to design these cemeteries again?

Source: M. Murray, "Three lessons about a funeral: second world war cemeteries and twenty years of curriculum change" in *Teaching history*, 1999, Issue 94, pp. 6-11.

Museums

The range of topics which history museums now cover is quite remarkable. The traditional local or national history museum, with its different rooms for different periods and often designed so that the visitor starts in the pre-historic period and finishes in the 20th century, still predominates in much of Europe. However, over the last 30-40 years we have also seen the emergence of more specialised museums which focus on themes which are often particularly relevant to the history of the 20th century – such as museums on transport, science, technology, industry, war and militaria, culture and art, photography, film, journalism, childhood and ethnography, to name but a few. As was pointed out earlier, these are themes which focus on pan-European trends and developments. Some museums have also been established which are dedicated to the culture and way of life of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities.

At the same time the design and operation of exhibitions within these museums has characteristically moved far away from a rather arid presentation of paintings, artefacts and extracts from documents to offer the visitor an array of multimedia and multi-sensory exhibitions with reconstructed settings, slide-shows, computer terminals, film, music and other sound recordings as well as opportunities for interactive learning. Increasingly the visitor is being encouraged to use the museum in a menu-driven way.

The combination of media and the reconstructed settings help to create a sense of historical period, while the interactive approach and the multiplicity of routes through the museum, help to facilitate independent as well as group learning. As Helena Friman, a museum educator in Stockholm, has pointed out: “At the museum ... the children can see, touch and smell; they can hold tools and use apparatus. Here one can approach history in a spirit of investigation”.¹ A brief example of the approach to which Ms Friman is referring can be found in **Box 3** below. We could perhaps add to her case for history teachers making full use of museums as an educational resource that a good exhibition also encourages the visitors to exercise empathy, reflect on history and draw comparisons between the past and the present.

However, every museum has to meet the needs and interests of a diversity of customers. It may have an educational function but this is not its sole or primary purpose. Its exhibitions have to be entertaining as well as informative. The need to attract visitors will inform every decision:

- which exhibits to show and which ones to consign to the basement archives?
- where to site them?
- how to display them?

1. Quoted in Stefan Seidel, *The museum as a resource in history teaching*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1997.

- how to relate each exhibit to the others?
- should the exhibition follow a clear and structured narrative or be designed so that visitors are encouraged to browse (sometimes described as “cultural window shopping”)?
- how much contextual information to provide on individual items and on the exhibition as a whole?

Increasingly museums are seeking to build a bridge between what they have to offer and what schools want. To this end a growing number of museums have established educational departments. Their functions tend to be some combination of the following:

- liaising with schools about up-coming visits;
- consulting with teachers before putting on a new exhibition;
- consulting with local teachers and teachers’ associations on how the museum can effectively relate its exhibitions to the school curriculum;
- organising specialist guided tours and events for schools;
- developing pre-visit and follow-up teaching materials for schools;
- running in-service training courses for history teachers.

Box 3: The Blockmaker’s house

The city Museum of Stockholm in Sweden has reconstructed a Blockmaker’s house as it would have been in 1917. The students spend a day there and through a sequence of role plays recreate the life of an ordinary day in 1917. They wear period clothing and are assigned various tasks which are strictly gender-typical for the period. During the course of the day they stay in role, move about in an historical setting, use furniture characteristic of the period, perform typical duties and tasks and discuss what would have been the news of the day in 1917.

Some of the comments from the students would seem to indicate that the experience has made a strong impression on them and provided insights into the everyday lives and ways of thinking of a former generation:

I felt like I had been transported back in time when we cooked food and when the talk round the table was about politics and the bad times.

You never had a spare moment. They had to stand and work in the most awkward ways! It felt nice coming home, seeing the lovely dishwasher in the kitchen.

You really start to think: Was life actually like this when grandma was young? It is important to see how miserable and fun things were back in olden days.

Source: Stefan Seidel, *The museum as a resource in history teaching*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1997, pp. 5-6.

Box 4 below illustrates the work of the education department at one museum, the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, England. A similar programme of educational activities has been developed by the French museum, the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne in Picardy. Staff at the Historial have developed pedagogical dossiers which are sent to teachers before they bring their students to the museum. These dossiers include ideas for pre-visit preparation, possible supporting activities for students, and follow-up activities. The dossiers are not prescriptive. Teachers are free to choose how best to use them to meet their own particular needs and the needs of their students. The educational staff also run training courses for teachers on handling discussions about the issues, and on developing their own supporting, preparatory and follow-up activities.¹

Box 4: The work of the education department at the Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester

The education department provides:

- guidance on how schools can design their own tour of the museum, suggestions on how the unit of work which includes the museum visit could be structured, ideas on suitable learning resources, arrangements for special demonstrations, etc.
- lesson plans on science and industry which could be incorporated into different elements of the National Curriculum;
- worksheets tailored to the specific needs of schools;
- a range of events for subject teachers.

The education department has also teamed up with the Schools Service of the British television company Channel 4 to provide a series of in-service training sessions for teachers between 4 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. when admission to the museum is free. Each session targets a different area of the national curriculum. The museum also runs full-day in-service training events where the teachers and education officers explore possibilities for projects and practical activities both in the museum and at school. Teachers attending these courses receive a voucher giving them free admission for their class provided it is accompanied by another class who pay the normal admission charges.

Source: Museum of Science and Industry brochure

1. Based on a presentation given by Anita Dujardin and Francis Poquet of the Historial at a Council of Europe seminar in Budapest, December 1997.

From an educational point of view a museum has the potential to make the following contributions:

- it is an additional source of historical information;
- if it covers an extended period of time (or even just a single century) then it can provide clear evidence of both change and continuity in people's lives;
- through links with museums in other countries it can provide an additional, European dimension: joint projects and exhibitions, website links, etc. A good example of this is a joint initiative between the four capital city museums in Stockholm, Tallin, St Petersburg and Helsinki;
- it can provide insights into people's lives in any given period in ways which are often more vivid and memorable than the conventional textbook treatment;
- it provides opportunities for visitors to empathise with people living at a particular time or in a particular way;
- it can provide opportunities for both group work and individualised learning;
- it can be a useful source for students' projects and investigations;
- it can encourage reflection and a questioning approach by the students who visit it. As a curator from the Historial put it: "we want to pass on the memories but also plant questions and elicit reflections in the minds of the visitors";
- it is a source of evidence that can be interrogated and analysed in exactly the same way as any other source of historical evidence. Selections are made, decisions are taken on how to present exhibits, connections are made, perspectives are offered, implicitly and explicitly. The older history student needs to consciously examine the curator's approach as well as using the museum as a resource. Some museums, for example, the Helsinki City Museum, have also involved school students in preparing material for exhibitions – a useful insight into the work of the curator.

These and other museums seeking to develop their educational provision emphasise the same two messages to history teachers.

First, the museum should be contacted before a visit. Teachers should inform the museum of their needs and the museum will make every effort to accommodate them. Second, the visit to the museum needs to be integrated into teaching. That requires both preparation and follow-up work. Otherwise it is little more than a nice outing from school with little educational value.

However, many history teachers in various parts of Europe may not have access to history museums which provide this level of support. At present, museums in northern and western Europe are more likely to have education

departments. In such circumstances what can the history teacher do to maximise the learning potential of a visit to a museum? To quote Helena Friman again:

An introductory effort is required, in which the teachers visit the museum, make themselves at home and think over how the exhibits might be used in their own teaching. I know several teachers who use museums in an independent way. Together with the children, they look at exhibits which they themselves have chosen and present the objects in their own way. Sometimes a class can come for just half an hour to look at one single thing. On another occasion they might stay for half a day, going through a whole exhibition.¹

Another possibility is to help the students to carry out independent research in the museum. To do this the teacher may need to supplement the museum's own guidebook in order to facilitate an investigative approach and help the students to formulate their own questions prior to the visit.

Finally, of course, many teachers in parts of Europe, particularly the more remote rural areas, may have no opportunities to visit a museum. In some parts of central and eastern Europe schools have been encouraged to develop their own museums. **Box 5** below contains an abbreviated version of a paper on the development of school museums written by Piotr Unger, who has much experience in this field.

Box 5: School museums and teaching history

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All teachers of history agree that teaching and learning history requires utilisation of numerous sources of knowledge and that museums (specialised institutions gathering diversified relics of the past and making them available to a general audience via exhibitions) can play an important role here. Over 30 years of experience shows that school museums can be important for this process, too. In Poland there are currently almost 500 school museums and they possess approximately 111 000 objects in their collections.

The term "school museum" refers to a collection of objects, documents, photographs, etc. collected by students, their parents and teachers, gathered at school, described and catalogued, and, if possible, exhibited in a dedicated space. It should

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1. In Stefan Seidel, op. cit. pp. 11-12

be emphasised that the collection is established as a result of activities undertaken by all members of the school community, and that students' involvement in their development is particularly important.

Experience shows that all school museums begin by collecting relics of the past from the school's immediate neighbourhood. With the growth of the collection, the interests of all involved broaden both in terms of the time frame and the subject matter of the museum. However, the collection is always focused on the region in which the school is based, presenting its history against the background of the history of the country.

To create a school museum it is not only necessary to collect relics of the past, they also need to be described, catalogued and presented as a permanent or temporary exhibition. All these activities can, and should be fulfilled with the maximum involvement of students. Obviously, the degree to which they are involved, and the kind of tasks they are entrusted with, depends on their age, knowledge and skills. Younger pupils (elementary school) can, and are eager to, search for objects, documents, photographs, etc. for the collection, which can often be found in their homes, and which are often forgotten or under-appreciated. Older pupils should additionally be involved in describing and cataloguing the collection, designing and developing the exhibition, and playing the role of museum guides.

Such tasks require pupils to broaden their knowledge of local, national and general history, which will allow them to do a selection and evaluation of objects in the collection, and to design the exhibition. This in turn develops their ability to analyse and interpret written, visual and material historic sources, a skill which is of great importance in historical education.

It is equally important to set in context, with the help of the school museum, the history of the region against the background of events and processes of broader impact (national and international). This has two outcomes. First, many important problems can be presented in examples which are emotionally close to pupils, and thus are more concrete. Second, one can show that history stands not only for big events which are described in textbooks, but also for everyday life, in each and every place, even those which are remote from the big centres.

An exhibition devoted to the life experiences of a local community, or pupils and graduates of a given school during the second world war and its impact on the community is a good example of this. The exhibited items do not come from anonymous people, but from the recent ancestors of current pupils, that is from people who are much more real. In this way the past ceases to be anonymous, it refers to real people.

Lessons conducted in a school museum in one of the schools in a small town in the south-west of Poland demonstrate another way of using a museum in the process of teaching history. The school, on the occasion of its 250th anniversary, has created a school museum documenting its own history. When teaching about Polish culture between both world wars, the teacher of history conducted a lesson in the school museum which presented "the culture-creating role of a grammar-school and secondary school in our town in the years 1918 – 1939". Discussing the subject in the context of culture changes in Poland and in Europe, she was able to move away

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from the typical, very general presentation of cultural phenomena and replace it with very specific examples and a demonstration of the role of educational institutions in the development of culture. Another example concerns lessons devoted to citizen education, and precisely the role of legal regulations in the life of a human being and of the society. The school statutes regulating the school life in the 18th century, in the period between the first and second world wars and currently, served as the basis for discussing the subject. One of the most important conclusions of the lesson was to demonstrate to pupils what impact democratisation of social life has on the life of each individual. At the same time, it was possible to show that there are some universal values, which exist regardless of historical changes.

An ethnographic museum, established in a secondary agricultural school in central Poland, is used for many educational purposes. Among them is a collection of a few hundred photographs presenting people from the region and buildings of rural character, erected between the end of the 19th century and the second world war. Collecting, sorting and describing the collection created a unique opportunity to educate pupils on many aspects of social and cultural history and about changes which took place in the Polish rural areas, related to the development of civilisation. It is of particular importance that pictures presenting Jews, their occupations and customs constitute a substantial part of the collection. These pictures are used to discuss the coexistence of the Polish and Jewish community and the tragedy of the Holocaust. The role of the collection was expanded due to the fact that the exhibition won one of the main awards in a national exhibition "Peasants in Photography".

The above examples present two issues which are key for school museums: firstly, that the subject matter of the museum depends on the needs specific to a particular school, and secondly, that regardless of its character, a school museum can be used for a variety of educational purposes.

Establishing a school museum is only possible when all members of the school community understand and accept the concept: pupils, teachers, parents, organisations and institutions supporting the school, and, above all, the association of its graduates. Because a school museum can only be established and maintained when pupils are fully involved, it is important to create an appropriate atmosphere around it. First and foremost, this means generating interest in the subject matter of the museum and making students passionate about collecting items for it. In practice, it is easier to create such an atmosphere when a museum is established for a special occasion: a school anniversary, a new school patron, or even opening a new school building. Therefore a large number of school museums contain items which are related to the history of the school or to the person of its patron. Often, school museums are created to commemorate people who played a particular role in the history of the region where the school is located. Such exhibitions often include relics of the past of the region, of the struggle to keep and regain national independence.

One of the basic questions is: what kind of relics of the past are of interest for those who want to establish a school museum. Applicability and importance for the needs of the school are the main criteria. Quite often such objects present low value for professional museums, however they can be particularly useful for a school one.

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Such common objects as a pen or ink pot, virtually unknown to today's pupils are a good example. School certificates from various times are a good way to show changes in the curriculum. For example, one of the school museums organised an exhibition of school certificates received by the inhabitants of Łódź in the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century. The exhibits in the collection demonstrated a few interesting phenomena: changes in the educational system, and personal history of the inhabitants who received their certificates in various circumstances and in various places in Europe. With appropriate explanation the collection was shown to present the relationships between lives of individual people and the history of Poland and Europe.

Since the main objective of a school museum is to enrich the range of teaching methods and to make school work more diversified, the museum has to respond to the needs of the pupils as far as the layout and design of the exhibition are concerned. Many schools, in the time when the exhibition was being planned, announced competitions for pupils, the subject matter of which was a vision of the future museum. In many cases pupils' proposals were used as a basis for the structure of the museum. It is also natural for pupils to be involved in the physical preparation of the museum. They can be involved in any works related to exhibition changes or designing temporary exhibitions.

A school museum is also very useful for extracurricular activities. There is always a group of pupils who are particularly interested in the subject matter of the museum, who not only try to add to the collection, but also enrich their knowledge on the subject matter. From this group one can recruit the museum guides and the museum can be a starting point for their own research. Pupils can interview people who participated in the local developments, they can collect local stories and legends, look for information in local archives, etc., in this way not only learning about topics which they are interested in, but also practising the basic methods of scientific work.

Conclusions

1. A school museum can play an important role in the school educational programme, provided it is included and synergised with the operation of the school (for example by being included in the school statutes) and its operation is supported by all teachers. This means that the museum should be used on a regular basis and be a permanent element of teaching and learning.
2. The subject matter and the ways of using a museum in the process of teaching history of the 20th century should be adjusted to the needs of a particular school.
3. The richness in the subject matter of the school museums is an element which makes the educational process more diversified, since it helps to broaden pupils' interests and it demonstrates that local history constitutes a part of the national history, or of the history of Europe.
4. A school museum can be established in any school which is interested in this form of activity.

CHAPTER 12

USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES: HISTORY ON THE INTERNET

The Internet is quickly becoming a new teaching and learning resource for the history classroom. Its great strengths are that much of the material on the Net is regularly up-dated at relatively low cost and the information available is in digital format so that text, images and sound can be downloaded for use in the classroom or for importing into the school's own website.

More than any conventional textbook could ever hope to do, the Internet can provide history teachers and their students with access to:

- extracts and whole transcriptions from a wide range of primary source documents;
- a multiplicity of resources (documents, articles from newspapers, magazines and journals, letters, postcards, diary extracts, memoirs, photographs, posters, clips from films, newsreels and television documentaries and current affairs programmes, and other relevant audiovisual material);
- a variety of secondary sources on the key events and developments of the 20th century (some of which are contemporaneous with events and others which are written with hindsight);
- a multiplicity of perspectives from different historians, different countries, different times.

Through access to such a diversity of sources and perspectives the Internet can also provide the history student (and the teacher) with opportunities to practise the skills of the historian. Effective use of the Internet requires a systematic search strategy and good enquiry skills. The searcher needs to understand the distinction between primary and secondary sources. The information to be found on any website needs to be checked for its authenticity and reliability and for the authority of its sources. It may need to be cross-referenced against other sources. Potential biases and distortions need to be detected and taken into account. The searcher needs to be aware of what is missing as well as what is available on any given site. In other words the student of history using the Internet needs to apply the same methods as

she or he would apply when examining documents in an archive, reading eye-witness accounts, analysing records or studying the memoirs and diaries of people directly involved in a particular historical event.

Perhaps more than any other resource the Internet reflects the pluralism that characterises the study of contemporary history. The study of the 20th century is no longer the sole preserve of the professional historian (or indeed of those working in the other academic disciplines which make up the humanities and the social sciences). The history of the period has also been produced by archivists (who have decided what “residues of the recent past” should be retained and what should be discarded), journalists, broadcasters, filmmakers, photographers, voluntary organisations and associations, government information departments, writers and publishers. Also, increasingly, history is being produced by the public at large and the Internet has been an important means of encouraging this.

Log into any of the major search engines on the Internet such as **Yahoo** or **Alta Vista** and then type in keywords representing any significant historical event of the 20th century. You will quickly find not only the websites created by university history departments, international consortia of historians, museums and reputable publishers but also websites created by amateur historians, amateur archivists and other individuals who have some photographs, postcards, letters and memorabilia relating to a particular period or event which they think might be of interest to the rest of us. Much of this material would be ignored by publishers as not being sufficiently commercial to cover the costs of publication. However, now that this material is freely available on the Internet it often provides the historian, the history teacher and the student with useful insights, particularly into everyday life and how ordinary people reacted to the important happenings of their times.

Nevertheless, much of this material is highly selective and some of it has been put on the Internet with the deliberate intention of disseminating misinformation or of providing propaganda on behalf of a particular cause or political group. Inevitably some of the keywords that a history student will use when carrying out a search on 20th-century European history (for example national socialism, fascism, Holocaust, genocide, colonialism) will identify websites which have a highly dubious provenance, offering propaganda and misinformation purporting to be factual information. Some history teachers, recognising this risk, have established link sites on their schools’ computer networks which have links only to websites that have been evaluated and verified by the teacher. Others download the material they want to use in their lessons and then either make it available to their students in printed form only or locate the material in a directory which can be accessed offline by the students.

Another, more subtle, bias lies in the fact that most of the main search engines are American-based and the majority of the history websites have been set up by universities in the United States. As a result, a lot of the sites which deal with key developments and events of the 20th century, such as the Russian Revolution, the economic depression of the inter-war years, the second world war and the cold war, do so from a specifically American perspective. Care has to be taken to ensure that other websites are accessed which will provide alternative, European perspectives as well. Again, however, as with the sites which intentionally seek to propagate a particular point of view, there is scope here for the student to practise the critical enquiry skills of the historian, provided that this is part of an ongoing, systematic strategy for developing those skills.

This chapter has five main aims:

- to review use of the Internet to support teaching and learning about the history of 20th-century Europe;
- to suggest an approach aimed at helping history students to develop an effective search strategy when using the Internet;
- to provide a short, evaluative guide to the relevant history websites that can be found on the Internet;
- to look at some of the problems associated with using Internet websites in history teaching;
- to provide a short glossary of relevant terms.

The potential uses of the Internet in history teaching

Although the Internet has considerable potential as a mechanism for delivering in-service training through distance learning (particularly for teachers working in the more remote locations) we are concerned, essentially, in this chapter with two user groups: history teachers and secondary school students in the 14-18-year age range.

The history teacher

There are many possibilities open to the history teacher. They may include simply using the Internet to access relevant websites and download the material to use as a supplementary teaching and learning resource, and using electronic publishing software to create attractive and imaginative teaching materials into which have been imported material downloaded from the Internet, including text, photographs, maps, graphs, posters and other kinds of archived resources.

Knowledge can be up-dated through accessing primary and secondary evidence in website archives, online history books, electronic history journals

and the latest scholarship on specific themes and topics. Already many history departments in American universities put academic articles on to the Net. European universities have not been quite so quick to recognise the potential but there are signs of developments here too. Also, increasingly, the organisers of academic conferences are now beginning to put the papers which have been presented on to the Internet.

A number of history teachers (sometimes with the active assistance of their students) have also created their own websites, combining their own notes, worksheets and student handouts with material downloaded from the Internet and usually including links to other websites that they regard as useful for their students. (See the Cherwell school address on p. 185).

One of the great advantages of these purpose-built history websites is that they can be designed in such a flexible way that they can be accessed by students in lower and upper secondary stages, and can provide core material for several courses and supplementary material for extension work by the most able students and those with a particular interest in the subject as a whole, or in specific themes and topics.

Electronic communications technology can also be a useful vehicle through which an individual history teacher can establish links with other history teachers to share ideas, lesson plans and teaching materials and to plan collaborative projects. The technology can often be an effective means of supporting already existing relationships (for example teachers within a particular education authority, or members of a history teachers' association) but it can also encourage complete strangers to communicate with each other and share information and expertise.

The most obvious means of doing this is through Internet electronic mail (e-mail), particularly now that most modern e-mail packages enable you to attach a wide variety of files (text, photographs, graphics, and audio and visual material) although this may require all the colleagues involved to have the necessary software to compress and de-compress the larger files and/or to make use of a dedicated **file transfer protocol**¹ facility. It will also enable you to create your own group addresses and mailing lists so that each member can easily communicate with the whole group and not just individual members of it.

An alternative electronic means of collaboration-at-a-distance is through **closed conferencing**. This provides you with more versatility than e-mail but it does require that all the members of the collaborative group have access to the same software. Basically the closed conference works like a set

1. See the glossary at the end of this chapter for a definition of terms.

of electronic bulletin boards, each assigned to a different topic area. You can go online to download the most recent messages which interest you; then prepare your response offline, then go back online to place your latest message in the appropriate topic board for others to pick up and read later. The messages can be archived so that you can see how a discussion has progressed. Web-based conferencing is now beginning to emerge, which has the added bonus that it is multimedia and not just restricted to text-based communications. The Microsoft browser, Internet Explorer, now has one such facility, **NetMeeting**, which is free to educational users.

One other possibility worth mentioning here is **Internet relay chat**. Here channels are established around specific themes and topics and a group of contributors can engage in a real-time discussion using text as the main form of communication. Generally IRC tends to be dominated by friendship groups and discussions on trivial topics. However, its educational potential is now being recognised. Some universities and teacher training institutions are now using IRC as a means of holding online discussions for part-time students who cannot attend seminars in person.

Finally, the Internet in general, and electronic mail in particular, has extended the possibilities for projects where history students based in different schools and in different countries, can collaborate by exchanging information, ideas and examples of primary and secondary source material. A number of cross-European projects have been developed in recent years and most of them began through postal communications, then sending faxes to each other, and then e-mailing messages and transferring files. Now there are possibilities for sending each other non-text-based material as well as documents through the Internet and even collaborating to develop joint websites.

The history student

For the student the Internet offers extensive opportunities for independent learning. Even when the student is working offline on materials which have been previously downloaded by the teacher, the approach is still essentially interactive and student-centred. Also, students are often motivated to look into a topic more deeply when it is possible to click on to so many hyperlinks to other relevant websites and documents. In many respects this opens up the subject for the student, enabling them to see the events or developments they are studying in a wider context and, through primary source materials, to see what people were thinking at the time and how they were reacting to these events as they were actually happening.

It is also worth noting that, unlike most history resources that can be used in the classroom, most Internet websites are not designed for a particular learning level. There may be materials on a specific site which are particularly

relevant for students in upper secondary school but the site may also contain material for university students and academic scholars. However, if the secondary-school student is browsing online there is nothing to stop her or him from following their interests as far as they wish. It may be that some of the younger students will not be able to fully understand all that they read but this does allow the most able students and those particularly interested in a topic to “read around it” and not just rely on the limited range of materials normally available to them.

In the introduction, we explained the importance of helping young people to understand the movements that have shaped this century, to appreciate the rich diversity of European history and to understand the historical roots facing Europe today. In what ways can access to the Internet help to achieve these objectives, at the same time developing research skills and critical thinking?

For a student to be able to understand the forces that have shaped the continent during the 20th century they need to develop an overview of that century, a framework that will help them to establish connections between events and developments and a sense of the dynamic processes underlying these events.

The overview comes from being able to place events and developments into a broader context. This may involve placing an event into a broader chronological context, or placing political history into a broader social and economic context; or having a sense of what is contemporaneous, that is what is happening at the same time in different parts of Europe and elsewhere in the world. In this way an overview helps the student to make links and connections by, on the one hand, having a sense of the order in which events occurred and, on the other hand, by understanding that there may be links and connections between events and developments which may otherwise appear to be unrelated. There are several websites currently available which help the student to do this, usually by providing timelines with commentary and links. A good example of the genre is **hyperhistory** which can be found at <http://www.hyperhistory.com>.

Hyperhistory offers parallel timelines for different regions of the world (including Europe) and, through a colour-coded system, enables the user to focus on information relating to people and events, science and technology, culture, religion, politics or war.

A sense of the dynamic processes also comes, in part, through having an overview, particularly an understanding of the connections between events. But an understanding of the dynamics also comes from being able to relate the small stories to the bigger picture – whether these small stories be the experiences of a private soldier in the trenches during the Great War, or the

changing social role of a woman working in a munitions factory in the second world war, or the experiences of a refugee family in central Europe in 1945. Again there is a lot of relevant material on the Internet which can help to illuminate the big picture in this way, provided that the teacher ensures that students have an appropriate framework that guides their Internet searches. Also, students can get a sense of these dynamic processes by obtaining insights into people's thinking at the time an event was actually happening. Of course textbooks often include short extracts from the diaries of key figures as source material but the Internet offers a much wider range of sources to choose from, including the perceptions of ordinary people.

Potentially the Internet can also help the student to appreciate the richness and diversity of European history in the 20th century. There is a growing number of websites, particularly those originating in Europe rather than in the United States, which can be accessed in several languages, usually English, French and German. See, for example, the website of the **Deutsches Historisches Museum** at <http://www.dhm.de> or **Les archives de guerre** at <http://www.ina.fr/Archives/Guerre>. Some websites make use of the translation facility provided by Alta Vista. This enables the user to access the same website in six languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish). The Internet, as we have already seen in this chapter, is such a rich mine of primary and secondary source material drawn from all over the world that the student can quickly access a multiplicity of perspectives (official and unofficial, contemporary and with the benefit of hindsight) on most of the major events and developments of the 20th century. In this respect the Internet has a great potential for making a valuable contribution to the teaching and learning of multiperspectivity in the history classroom.

To a large degree, understanding the historical roots of the contemporary situation in Europe today requires the development of a chronological overview as outlined earlier and there are a number of websites which provide timelines for specific events and developments rather than for the century as a whole. It is possible to access websites that provide, for example, a chronology of the events and factors which led up to both world wars, or a chronology of the changing role and circumstances of women in the 20th century, or a chronology of crises and changes in the Balkans (for example the US news channel ABC news has a useful timeline on the Balkans at http://abcnews.go.com/sections/world/balkans_content/). However, chronologies, while they describe the sequence of events and developments, do not necessarily explain why things happened *as they did* or why they happened *when they did*. The coverage of contemporary issues by the mass media tends to be ahistorical or to concentrate on the short-term causes and the triggers which sparked off the present crisis or conflict. With a few notable exceptions, the mass media is therefore a poor source for students

trying to understand the long-term causes or roots of the situation in present-day Europe.

Much of the material on the Internet suffers from the same problem. In the mid-1990s it was possible to find a lot of websites on events in Bosnia. Most of these were superseded in the late 1990s by websites on Kosovo. Sometimes the connections between the two crises are made, sometimes they are not. In most cases there is only a cursory attempt to trace and analyse the long-term causes. Again, therefore, history teachers need to help their students develop effective search strategies and frameworks for helping them to identify and analyse underlying causes and contributing factors.

One possible way of doing this is to get students to undertake a mini-enquiry on the relevant websites on the Internet of a specific event, crisis or development that is likely to have long-term as well as short-term causes or contributing factors. The example in **Box 1** below is of the ongoing crisis in the Balkans in the 1990s. Using appropriate keywords, the students search for relevant information in each selected website and then plot the results on a matrix which has a timeline across the top and different rows for each website. They can then compare and summarise the information to see if this helps them to trace back the underlying causes of recent events as well as the short-term causes which seemed to spark it off.¹

Box 1: Underlying causes of the crisis in the Balkans

1. Create a 6 x 6 matrix of boxes. The headings for each column are "Sources", "1906-14", "1918-39", "1939-45", "1945-80", "1980-99".
2. Now access each of the websites on the Balkans in your links list.
3. Devote a row of boxes to each website.
4. Then, for each period identify the main crises, tensions and conflicts in the Balkans and note what each website says about the causes and contributing factors.
5. Compare what you have found in each website and make a note of the main similarities and differences.
6. Make a summary of what you think were:
 - the short-term causes and contributing factors for each crisis;
 - the long-term causes and contributing factors that seem to have shaped development in the Balkans throughout the 20th century.

1. This is based on an approach recommended by Gary Howells, "Being ambitious with the causes of the first world war", *Teaching History*, Issue 92, 1998, pp.16-19.

Essentially this kind of approach has four main objectives:

- to give shape and form to the students' use of the Internet;
- to help consolidate their knowledge and understanding of a particular topic or theme or period;
- to enable them to use the Internet to carry out their own individual enquiries;
- to give the students a "sense of ownership" of the enquiry.

This kind of approach can also be used to develop an overview of a theme, topic or period; or to provide opportunities for comparing and contrasting a range of different perspectives on a particular historical issue or question. It can also be a useful means of developing and practising relevant enquiry skills.

Finally, by providing so many opportunities to interrogate primary and secondary sources, the Internet enables the history student to engage in asking questions; analysing and thinking critically; drawing inferences; developing reasoned explanations of what happened and why it happened; recognising that the evidence available may be incomplete and inconsistent, or biased; and understanding that the evidence may be open to more than one interpretation.

Now at one level, the difference between using the Internet and using textbooks, topic books and source books to develop the student's historical skills is primarily one of scale. Partly for design reasons and partly for copyright reasons, textbook authors and publishers usually include only quite short extracts from primary and secondary sources – often no more than a sentence or two per source. On the Internet students may be able to access whole texts, often in translation, and a variety of other supporting material.

At another level the difference is qualitative. If the history curriculum permits it, and the teacher and students have sufficient time for some in-depth historical enquiries, then the approach adopted is much more like the way a historian actually works and thinks. Where the textbook approach may require the student to answer specific questions about the source material, the researcher on the Internet also has to consider important questions about the nature of the sources used. For example:

- is it a primary or secondary source?
- who wrote the document?
- what does the document tell us about the position and thinking of the writer?

- who was it written for?
- why was it written?
- what sort of document is it?
- what are the main messages which the writer is trying to convey?
- can the information in this document be verified from other sources?
- is the information accurate?
- what does the document not tell us about?
- is there any evidence of the impact of this document on the people it was written for?
- were any other documents produced in response to it?
- why has the document survived?
- why has this document been included on this particular website?

However, leaving students to search through the Internet in an open-ended way as part of an independent or group enquiry assumes that they already have the necessary enquiry skills, know which questions it would be appropriate to ask of a particular source or collection of source materials and have the necessary Internet search skills. Research of this kind needs to be structured and students need opportunities to systematically develop and practise the prerequisite skills. There are some suggestions for helping students to develop effective Internet search skills in **Box 3** further on. This section concludes with one example of a relatively small-scale enquiry that could be carried out by individual students or small groups in the time required for one or two lesson periods (see **Box 2** below).

The Internet websites on the Great War are particularly rich in examples of the propaganda posters used to persuade people to enlist in the armed forces, mobilise support for their country's entry into the war, explain the reasons for the war, raise money, mobilise the work force to support the war effort, maintain morale at home and at the front, and demonstrate how allies are working together for victory. Posters can be found from nearly every combatant country thereby providing good opportunities for comparison as well as providing insights into people's preconceptions and attitudes and the contemporary psychological climate in each country at that time. This particular classroom activity provides one way in which students, using the Internet (either online or by accessing an offline site established by the teacher), can not only seek answers to specific questions about the posters but also ask questions about posters as a source of historical evidence as well (see **Box 2**).

Box 2: Propaganda posters in the first world war

You will find a range of posters at the following websites:

- <http://www.worldwar1.com/posters.htm>
- <http://www.worldwar1.com/fracgal.htm>
- <http://www.worldwar1.com/rep.html>
- <http://www.pma.edmonton.ab.ca/vexhibit/warpost/home.htm>

Look at each poster in each WWI collection, note its title and country of origin then for each poster answer the following questions:

1. Who is the poster aimed at?
2. What is it trying to persuade people to do?
3. What images and symbols does it use?
4. Are there any images and symbols that you do not recognise or understand?

Now group your notes by country and compare them:

5. What are the main similarities and differences between (a) the messages and (b) the images used by each country?

Finally, in your groups discuss the following questions:

6. Why were posters such an important means of communication in 1914-18?
7. How could you measure the impact that these posters had on the people they were aimed at?
8. Would they work as propaganda today?

Developing a search strategy

Regardless of whether history students are searching a database or catalogue in a conventional library, or searching through a CD-Rom collection, or working offline in a directory of websites downloaded by the teacher, or searching the entire Internet, they still need to employ an effective search strategy. However, this is particularly critical when they are working online independently and trying to steer their way through the vastness of the World Wide Web. For example, and depending on which search engine is used, a search initiated for "20th-century European history" will identify over 3.5 million web pages and a very wide range of categories.

Even a search focused on a much more tightly defined topic, such as "the Great Depression", can still elicit over 36 000 web pages. But even here care still needs to be taken in the choice of keywords. Roughly comparable terms, such as, "the Wall Street Crash of 1929", "the world economic slump", "the New Deal", "the economic crisis of the inter-war years" will not necessarily identify the same websites.

So the first stage in helping students to employ an effective search strategy is to encourage them to spend some time before logging on to the Internet in thinking about what precisely they are looking for. This is a process that needs to be practised and, initially, students may need help by being given a set of questions that will help them to focus more clearly on what they want to look for (see **Box 3**).

Box 3: The Russian Revolution on the Internet

1. Which one are you interested in: 1905 or 1917?
2. If 1917, then is it the February or the October revolution?
3. Are you looking for primary sources or secondary sources?
4. Are you looking for documents, articles, letters, photos, maps or cartoons?
5. Are you interested in a particular event or a particular person?
6. Are you interested in finding out about the causes and contributing factors or the chronology of events or the results?
7. Are you interested in what people in Russia thought about the revolution or what people outside Russia thought about it?
8. Are you interested in the circumstances of a particular section of Russian society (aristocracy, middle class, workers, peasants, the army, the navy, etc.)?
9. Are you interested in a particular political group or party (e.g. liberals, social revolutionaries, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, anarchists, etc.)?
10. Which search engine will you use, and why?

Having clarified what it is they are interested in, students are better placed to determine whether they should use a subject directory or a field search using keywords or one of the specialist history indices or directories of the kind described in the next section of this chapter. Surfing the Internet can be done in a fairly systematic way. For example, whilst keying in the phrase "the Great Depression" might identify 36 000 web pages a more systematic user of the indexing system can produce a much narrower and more useful list. The following search was done on Yahoo. The figures in brackets represent the number of websites identified at each stage:

Arts and humanities/humanities (28 114)
History (15 371)
Time period (2 083)

20th century (1 318)

1930s (6)

The Great Depression (4)

However, the four websites identified all related to circumstances in the United States rather than Europe so it was also necessary to use other search engines as well, and to think about whether there might be more than one keyword or key phrase that might describe what we are looking for in a European context.

The student also needs some clear criteria for evaluating each website not only in terms of whether or not it covers the topic they are interested in but also whether or not it is reliable and accurate, relatively objective and relevant to their particular needs. An evaluation checklist for websites is included in this handbook and although it is designed specifically for teachers a number of the evaluative questions could also be applied by students (see Chapter 19).

Students should also be encouraged to use more than one search engine. But, since every search engine uses a different method for indexing web pages it is also important that they realise that a keyword which works well with one search engine may not work well with another. As they use the Internet more they will begin to understand how each search engine works.

Finally, since searches are time-consuming students should be encouraged to use the **bookmark** (in Netscape) or **favourites** (in Internet Explorer) facilities for saving useful websites and web pages for easy access in the future. Key tips for history students using the Internet are summarised below.

Tips for history students searching the Internet

- make sure you know exactly what you are looking for;
- think of several keywords that clearly describe the topic you are interested in;
- if your first search does not produce useful results think again about your choice of keywords;
- try other search engines;
- if your search produces too many results this is probably because your keywords are too general. Think again;
- always keep your search focused on your topic;
- use your checklist of questions (for example as in **Box 3**) to evaluate what you find;
- if you get an error message stating that "404 file not found" try removing the end part of the web address from right to left until you get to a web

page that works. If you still cannot get to the file, the address has probably changed or the website is no longer available;

- if you think you will want to return to a particular website, bookmark it.

Some useful websites for teaching and learning 20th-century European history

It would not be possible to attempt to produce a comprehensive list of relevant websites here. The Internet is constantly growing and changing. Instead a range of possibilities is provided, all of which have been accessed, used and evaluated for their educational potential by the author. Some of these sites are suitable for secondary school students to access with preparation, others are more useful for the history teacher.

Online encyclopaedias

Several publishers of encyclopaedias now have online versions which either provide a free search facility, usually for abstracts of articles or brief answers to factual questions, or enable you to apply for a free trial option of the full version. In the case of the **Encyclopaedia Britannica**, for example, the free trial offer is for 30 days. The usual trial period offered by publishers is seven days. For a more American interpretation of recent European history try Microsoft's **Encarta**. However, schools might find it more useful and cost-effective to buy the CD-Rom versions of both encyclopaedias. Another electronic encyclopaedia which offers some useful coverage of 20th-century European history, and is particularly good on the second world war, is **Grolier Online**. These encyclopaedias may be accessed at:

Encyclopaedia Britannica: <http://www.eb.com/search>

Encarta: <http://Encarta.msn.com>

Grolier Online: <http://gi.grolier.com>

European history websites

A good starting point for primary sources is **EuroDocs**. This site was established by Brigham Young University, Utah, and includes a wide range of documents, which appear in facsimile or have been transcribed. English translations are provided. While the collection ranges from medieval to modern times most of the material relates to the 20th century. The site contains documents on most western, northern and southern European countries but little on central and eastern Europe.

Sites which provide useful **chronologies of the Soviet and post-Soviet eras** are maintained by the history department at Bucknell University, Philadelphia. Although the main purpose of each site is to provide the user with a timeline of the key events and developments both sites also have links

to other sites for specific topics. There is also some useful material, particularly documents, on the website which was created for the **Soviet archive exhibition** which was held in the mid-1990s in Moscow and Washington.

Another useful starting point for the history teacher is the **Modern history sourcebook**. This is maintained by Paul Halsall of the history department at Fordham University, New York City. It includes primary and secondary source material and useful links to other sites on such topics as the first world war, the Russian Revolution, the inter-war years, national socialism, the second world war, the Holocaust, the cold war and post-1945 Europe.

The website of the **US Library of Congress** has been described as the seventh wonder of the Internet. The web pages entitled **American memory**, as the name suggests, concentrate mainly on American history but there are also some excellent sites relating to 20th-century European history. The website of the **Deutsches Historisches Museum** in Berlin also has a good selection of documents, photographs and militaria relating to this century and, as noted earlier, is available in German, English and French.

To get an idea of what schools can develop for themselves see the history website set up by **Cherwell school** in Oxford, England.

EuroDocs: <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs>

Chronology of Russian history (Soviet era): <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/chrono3.html>

Post-Soviet era: <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/chrono4.html>

Soviet archives exhibition: <http://sunsite.unc.edu/expo/soviet.exhibit/soviet.archive.html>

Modern history sourcebook: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbookfull.html>

Library of Congress: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem>

Deutsches Historisches Museum: <http://dhme.de>

Cherwell school history site: <http://www.rmplc.co.uk/eduweb/sites/cherwell/history/history.html>

Indices and directories

There are several websites which do not contain primary and secondary sources but do provide a wide range of links to useful sites on 20th-century European history. One worth browsing through is **Horus' H-GIG**, which is maintained by the department of history at the University of California. Apart from links to sites on regional and national history there are also interesting links to sites on oral history, women's history and cultural history.

Another useful directory is the **European history resources index**. This was set up initially for history and social studies teachers in the United States but it has developed into a resource for a much wider group of users now. It is particularly useful for modern and contemporary history.

History teachers might also find it useful to browse in the online resources on European history at the website established by the **Institute for Historical Research**. Again, this is a good resource for gaining access to primary source material. For teachers looking for source material on central and eastern Europe and the Russian Federation it might be worthwhile accessing the directory set up by the **School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES)** at London University. However, it should be noted that this online index is designed to service a wide range of courses and not just the needs of history students. A good search strategy will be needed. Another directory site worth exploring is the **History Resources** site which is located on the Magellan search engine. Once in the website use the search facility to explore "Modern links". There are some links here to useful sites on the two world wars, the Holocaust and the inter-war years but little that could not be obtained through the more specialised sites. Finally, the University of Minnesota's **History Text Archive** also serves as a useful directory for accessing websites on modern European history, including sites with maps.

Horus' H-GIG: <http://www.ucr.edu/h-gig/horuslinks.html>

European history resources: <http://www.execpc.com/~dboals/boals.html>

Institute for Historical Research: <http://ihr.sas.ac.uk>

SSEES: <http://www.ssees.ac.uk/general.htm>

History Resources: <http://www.liv.ac.uk/~evansjon/humanities/history/history.html>

History Text Archive: <http://www.msstate.edu/Archives/history/europe.html>

Timelines and chronologies

Mention has already been made of **HyperHistory Online**. It is worth noting that this website has been designed specifically to meet the needs of secondary school students. However, it is an American site and in some cases the interpretation of events and developments differs from interpretations that might be found in European textbooks and websites. Also worth looking at is **WebChron** the site of the "Web chronology" project established and maintained by the history department of North Park University, Chicago. This includes a world history chronology, regional chronologies and cross-cultural chronologies on themes such as technology and religion. There is also an interesting **Women's history timeline**, which has been produced by the Gale Group of publishers of academic and educational books.

HyperHistory: <http://www.hyperhistory.com/>

WebChron: <http://campus.northpark.edu/history/WebChron/index.html>

Women's history timeline: <http://www.galegroup.com/freresrc/womenhist/index.htm>

Specific topics in 20th-century European history

Most of the sites already listed cover many if not all of the topics and themes outlined in the first part of this handbook. However, there are some interesting specialist sites that history teachers and their students might want to visit.

Websites on the Great War abound and by no means all of them would be suitable for educational purposes. Two useful starting points would be the **Great War website** and the website of the **Great War Society**. See also the website, **Trenches on the Web**, which includes maps, photographs, text and extracts from *Relevance*, the quarterly journal of the Great War Society. History teachers and older students may find the **The Great War interviews** site useful. It comprises interviews with leading European and American historians on diverse aspects of the first world war and the different perspectives of the combatant countries. Brigham Young University has an online **World War I document archive** which includes conventions, treaties, official papers, personal reminiscences, image archives and a biographical directory. YITM, a multimedia publishing company, has a website called the **World War I Archive**, which includes illustrations of battlefields, examples of letters home, propaganda and eyewitness accounts.

The Great War Web: <http://www.pitt.edu/~pugachev/greatwar/ww1.html>

The Great War Society: <http://www.worldwar1.com//tgws>

Trenches on the Web: <http://www.worldwar1.com>

The Great War Interviews: <http://pbs.bilkent.edu.tr/greatwar/interviews/index.html>

WW I Document Archive: <http://www/lib-byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1916.html>

World War I Archive: <http://www.yitm.com/yitm/ww1/index.html>

There are a number of websites on the second world war which are also worth exploring. There is a the **WW 2 Timeline** which is useful for giving students an overview of the war and it also includes a variety of useful documents and links to other sites. **WW II Maps** can be found on a cartographic site set up by Indiana State University. The **Avalon Project** at Yale University has many primary source documents as has the international relations department of **Mount Holyoke College** in the United States. **Les Archives de guerre** is a particularly useful site, maintained by the Institut National de l'Audiovisual, if you are looking for photographs and video clips relating to

1940-44. Finally, teachers can also access a range of interesting second world war photographs at the **WW 2 Photo Gallery**.

WW 2 Timeline: <http://ac.acusd.edu/History/WW2Timeline/start.html>

WW II Maps: http://www.indstate.edu/gga/gga_cart/gecar127.htm

Avalon Project: <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/wwii/wwii.htm>

Les Archives de guerre: <http://www.ina.fr/Archives/Guerre>

Mount Holyoke: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/>

WW 2 Photo Gallery: <http://www.visitorinfo.com/gallery/military.htm>

One particularly interesting website, the **World Wars – A Comparison**, compares the two world wars from the point of view of the experiences of the soldiers and civilians, with a special feature on women's changing role in society and the economy (<http://carmen.murdoch.edu.au/~jjones/war2.htm>).

There are a lot of websites on the **Holocaust** and not all of them have a specific educational function. Below is a short selection of those which have some educational materials and/or teacher guides.

Anne Frank Online: <http://www.annefrank.com>

Holocaust Teacher Resource Center: <http://www.Holocaust-trc.org>

A Teachers Guide to the Holocaust: <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust>

Cybrary of the Holocaust: <http://remember.org>

Learn Holocaust Genocide Project: <http://www.igc.apc.org/learn/projects/hgp.html>

Another specialist topic on which there are many websites offering a variety of perspectives is the cold war. A particularly useful starting point here is the website created for the **CNN** television series on the cold war. It includes programme scripts, interviews, a selection of historical documents and some video and audio clips. There is also an accompanying classroom guide maintained by **Turner Learning** (CNN). Another useful site is **Cold War Policies: 1941-95**, a site with documents and outline notes maintained by the University of San Diego history department. History teachers looking to extend their knowledge of this topic might find it helpful to browse in the website set up by **Cold War International History Project (CWIHP)** at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Learning in Washington, DC.

CNN television series: <http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war>

Turner Learning: <http://turnerlearning.com/cnn/coldwar/index.html>

Cold War Policies 1941-95: <http://ac.acusd.edu/History/20th/coldwar0.html>

CWIHP: <http://cwiHP.si.edu/default.htm>

There are several good websites on women's history. A good starting point is the **Internet Women's History Sourcebook**. **Spartacus Educational** also has a website on the emancipation of women but it is predominantly concerned with the history of British women.

IWH sourcebook: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/women/womensbook.html>

Spartacus Educational: <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/resource.htm>

For websites on post-war developments in western Europe see the **Historical Archives of the European Communities** and on broader issues see the site **History of European Integration** which is maintained by the University of Leiden. This has a good range of primary source documents on the Marshall Plan, Nato, the Treaty of Rome, the European Union and the Council of Europe. For an interesting perspective on developments since the destruction of the Berlin Wall see **Europe in Motion**, an interactive site related to an exhibition organised in Paris and Berlin by sVo Art. The historical notes and accompanying photographs and graphics have been compiled by two specialists in contemporary European studies, one from France and one from Germany.

Historical archives of the EC: <http://www.warc.iue.it/eharen/Welco-en.html>

History of European Integration <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/history/rtg/res1/index.htm>

Europe in Motion: <http://berlin1989.com>

Some useful television websites

BBC online has an educational website devoted to modern world history which is linked to its educational output. The History Channel has several websites, each of which has a search engine to help you find the commentary notes which accompany specific television programmes on the 20th century.

BBC Online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/modern>

The History Channel: <http://www.historychannel.com>

History Channel UK: <http://www.historychannel.com>

Some potential problems in using the Internet in the history classroom

Most of what is on the Internet is not specifically curriculum-related in the way that most other teaching materials tend to be. There are some exceptions (which were referred to earlier) but generally history on the Internet comprises those fragments or residues of the past that seemed relevant or interesting to the compilers of particular websites when they were constructing them. Sometimes the decisions about what to include and what to omit from a site appear to be highly idiosyncratic.

Perhaps the major problem or constraint when using the Internet for teaching purposes is time. First, teachers need time to become familiar with the search facilities; time to browse for potential sites and then evaluate them; time to download relevant information and material; and time to prepare this information so that it can be used in the classroom. The extent to which they make use of the new technologies in their teaching may well depend on how much time is allocated on the school timetable for history and how crowded the history syllabus is.

Students may well be more familiar with the Internet and electronic mail than many of their teachers but they may not be used to using it for systematic historical research. Again, as already noted, they need time to acquire and use an effective search strategy and to develop the necessary enquiry skills. There is potential scope for much independent learning and project work and for students to do extension work on topics of particular interest to them, but again much depends on the structure of the curriculum and the history syllabus within it. However, the same point could also be made about history teaching and learning in classrooms where computers are not available.

Searching for useful material on the Internet is only as effective as the indexing systems employed by the search engines which you use. None of the search engines has an index that covers the whole of the Internet and each search engine uses different search techniques and methods of building an index. Some just index the titles of website homepages, some index headings, subheadings and hypertext links, and some index the contents of entire documents. **Yahoo** and **Alta Vista** are probably the two search engines most commonly used. Strictly speaking Yahoo is a subject-based tool whereas Alta Vista enables you to use keyword searches. According to the *New Scientist* magazine, Alta Vista is not only one of the leaders in indexing technology it is also the fastest. It is constantly surveying the Internet, scanning a thousand sites at a time and every word on each page is indexed. However, the bigger the database to be searched, the greater the number of hits and the more irrelevant information you have to sift through.

Indexing technology is constantly developing. A number of search engines now make use of Boolean operators which enable the searcher to specify certain words while ignoring others and to search for combinations of keywords and this has increased the efficiency of Net searches. The search engine **Excite** uses what is called **intelligent concept extraction** which seeks for relationships between words and concepts. However, at present there is no substitute for giving a lot of thought prior to the online search as to how it can be as precise as possible. As one recent guide to doing research on the Internet has put it, "while surfing (jumping from one site to another) is fine enough as a diversion on a rainy Sunday afternoon, it is of very little value for ... research. You will have to learn how to mine the Net, rather than surf it."

Glossary of terms

Download: this is when a file is transferred from a website on the Internet to the individual's own computer for subsequent use.

E-mail: electronic mail sent via the Internet using an Internet service provider (ISP).

FAQ: this often appears in websites and the sites set up by newsgroups. The main purpose of a FAQ is to provide answers to **frequently asked questions**. This is mainly for the benefit of new users of a site.

FTP: this stands for **file transfer protocol** which enables you to upload and download files from one computer to another or from the Net to your computer. Most web browsers, such as Netscape and Internet Explorer, enable you to do this without even realising that you are downloading from an FTP site. However, some dedicated FTP packages are quicker at loading files than using a web browser and therefore make sense if you need to transfer a lot of files on a regular basis.

GIF: this stands for **graphic interchange format** and is one of the most commonly used formats for putting graphics and other images on to the web. See also JPEG for photographs.

Homepage: a homepage can be the first page your browser shows when it starts up or it can be the first page of a website.

Hyper text markup language (HTML): this is the computer code used to create web pages. This is why most documents in websites have the suffix **.html** or **.htm**

Hypertext: a means of formatting computer text so that documents can be linked to each other. The hyperlinks in a document are usually highlighted in blue and underlined. A single click of the cursor on the hyperlink will access the document it refers to.

Internet service provider (ISP): a company which you subscribe to in order to obtain access to the Internet.

Internet relay chat (IRC): a means by which people can communicate with each other in real time on the Internet. It is an Internet version of a telephone conversation and is still mostly used for informal chat. However, it has educational potential for distance learning and also for projects involving two or more schools since they can all use the Internet to communicate with each other at the same time. If real time communication is not necessary then ordinary e-mail serves just as well.

Java: the programming languages which can be used to create interactive multimedia effects on the Web.

JPEG: This stands for **joint photographic experts group** and is a way of formatting and compressing photographs so that they can be displayed on the Web.

Link: a connection between one web document and another or one website and another.

Newsgroups: online forums where people can discuss subjects in which they have a shared interest.

Offline browsing: a way of downloading web pages so that they can be read whilst offline. The main purpose for doing this is to reduce the costs of using the Internet. But it can also be a useful way by which the history teacher ensures that the material accessed by the students is appropriate, relevant, authentic and reliable.

Search engine: a program which enables Internet users to search for pages on the Web which contain particular keywords.

SMTP: this stands for **simple mail transfer protocol**. The shared computer language which is used to send an e-mail message from one computer to another.

Surfing: the process of accessing a range of websites looking for something of interest.

Upload: the opposite of download. It refers to transferring files from your computer to another computer in a different location.

Universal resource locator (URL): an address given to the provider of a specific type of website, whether it be a company, university, government department, voluntary organisation, etc. (for example **.org**, **.com**, **.ac**, **.edu**)

Web pages: a document, usually formatted in HTML, which contains text and sometimes photographs, illustrations, animations, sound and/or video.

Website: a collection of pages put on to the Internet by an individual, institution or company.

CHAPTER 13

APPROACHES TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

It may seem slightly odd to have a specific chapter entitled “Approaches to teaching and learning” when whole sections of this handbook are concerned with exploring a variety of ways of approaching teaching and learning in the history classroom, such as:

- evidence-based teaching;
- enquiry-based learning;
- teaching for multiperspectivity;
- teaching controversial and sensitive issues;
- helping history students to make effective use contemporary sources such as the Internet and television.

However, two key questions have underpinned much of the discussion in this book: in what ways might teachers and students approach the history of 20th-century Europe, and why? and what residue of historical knowledge and understanding would we like our students to retain when they have completed their formal education?

The attempted answers to both questions have led to an emphasis here on the development of an overview of the century which is comparative, partly chronological and partly thematic: a sense of the main trends and recurring patterns, an interest in and understanding of how contemporary events and developments have their roots in the past, some understanding of the forces which have shaped the century, a conceptual framework and some transferable analytical and interpretative skills and ways of thinking which will help them develop this overview and be of use to them in trying to understand the world they will experience in the 21st century.

In western and northern Europe many history teachers and those responsible for the training of the next generation of history teachers will be familiar with the issues that have fuelled the debate between those who favour the so-called “new history”, with its emphasis on skills and ways of thinking, and those who are more traditionalist, wishing to retain a strong emphasis in their

teaching on narrative and the importance of the acquisition of factual knowledge. Indeed the debate has been ongoing for so long now that the “new” history has become rather “middle-aged”. To a large degree the value of helping students to acquire an analytical framework and to develop transferable skills has become widely accepted in those countries and the issue now is more one of how to establish an appropriate balance between course content and skills development.

However, in parts of southern Europe and now, particularly, in many of the former communist states of central and eastern Europe, the need to reform history curricula in schools and teacher training has led to the debate being resurrected and acquiring a new urgency. In many instances this led in the early 1990s to the development of new, reformed history curricula, often developed by academics who had no experience of teaching history to school-aged students, which were rich in content but gave few indications about pedagogical reforms. The assumption was that the requisite knowledge would be transmitted didactically by the teacher and through the new generation of textbooks, also written by academics.

At the same time a vanguard of history teachers and teacher trainers was emerging in most of these countries, who were interested in new approaches to history teaching and wanted to see a greater emphasis on the development of skills and ways of thinking. In 1995 the Council of Europe initiated a series of national, regional and multilateral seminars and conferences in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States designed to provide opportunities for administrators, curriculum planners, teacher trainers and history teachers to meet with consultants from other countries in order to discuss the planned reforms and to look at ways of implementing wide-ranging curricular changes.

At virtually every one of the subsequent series of seminars the participating teachers and teacher trainers expressed concern about history curricula and textbooks which, in their view, were overloaded with content leaving little scope for them to develop their students’ analytical and interpretative skills, or to adopt a longer time perspective or to introduce a comparative perspective into their teaching.¹ They recognised that a change of approach along these lines would take time and would necessitate major changes in pre-service and in-service teacher training that would have far-reaching implications for how teachers interpreted their role in the history classroom, how they evaluated and reflected upon their classroom practice and how they assessed what their students were learning.

1. See Robert Stradling, *The Secretary General's New Initiative: the reform of history teaching and the preparation of new history textbooks*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 1999.

I want to finish part two of this handbook by exploring some of these implications in more detail. There is, of course, a limit to the extent to which one can do this when looking at history teaching and the training of history teachers across the whole of Europe. The provision for teacher training varies greatly in both form and content. At one end of the continuum is the Anglo-Saxon model of postgraduate teacher training for history graduates where the emphasis is primarily on the pedagogy of history teaching. At the other end of the continuum is an approach where the emphasis is almost wholly on academic training in the discipline and where a focus on pedagogy tends to be general rather than subject-specific. Where there has been a recent significant shift in the balance between the academic and the pedagogic in both pre-service and in-service training the indications have been that a sizeable group of teacher trainers and serving teachers have found it difficult to change well-established practices and, indeed, to change their students' expectations.

However, in spite of these variations in practice, different stages of development and different contexts within which change is being implemented I think it is still possible to make one or two general points about the role of the history teacher and the processes of student assessment.

The role of the history teacher

Hopefully it has been possible in part two to show that history teachers can provide students in the 14-18 age range with opportunities to learn how to apply certain historical skills and ways of thinking by undertaking, individually or collectively, a wide variety of analytical and interpretative exercises which expose them to different kinds of source material and evidence. It is often assumed that the teacher therefore needs to be a classroom facilitator, someone skilled in structuring opportunities for students to learn through doing, through enquiry, through actively engaging with the raw material of history and through discussion. For example, Joaquim Prats i Cuevas has asserted that an approach to teaching European history which seeks to combine the teaching of content and subject-related skills, is:

... unworkable where the learning process involves total pupil passivity and pupil's role is confined to receiving chunks of evaluated, processed and pre-digested knowledge. The teaching approach we suggest – without dismissing the possibility of others equally effective – is one of discovery learning, involving students in the use of information sources and making it possible for the students to assemble their own knowledge of historical facts and concepts with the teacher's help and guidance. In accordance with this approach, we regard the student as the main actor in the education process

and not as a mere receiver of instruction. The teacher's role mainly consists in steering, co-ordinating and initiating the learning process¹

The pedagogic philosophy of this handbook is broadly in sympathy with the position adopted by Prats i Cuevas. However, I would want to add four caveats to this.

First, students who were educated previously through a more traditional, teacher-centred pedagogic model need a period of adjustment. They need time and a structured learning process through which they can develop the skills, attitudes and expectations which are central to the alternative model. This is particularly the case in circumstances where there is little opportunity for reinforcement of learning because their other subjects continue to be taught through the traditional model. In such circumstances innovative teaching approaches need to be gradually phased in.

Second, the extent to which a teacher can be innovative will always depend to some degree on the context in which that teacher has to operate: the official syllabus or curriculum guidelines, the degree to which what one teaches and how one teaches is controlled by the requirements for external assessment and examinations, the size and ability range of the class, the availability of suitable resources. An enquiry-based approach, for example, requires a well-resourced bank of materials, including extracts from primary and secondary sources, reference material, access to photocopying, and new technologies, and a classroom setting designed to facilitate individual and collaborative investigations and projects. In some schools in parts of eastern Europe the only resource other than the teacher may be a limited supply of out-of-date textbooks each of which has to be shared by two or three students. Even in this situation the resourceful and innovative teacher is able to develop materials and learning activities which can support a skills-based approach to teaching but such teachers are operating under constraints that most history teachers in western Europe would regard as intolerable if not impossible.

Third, the personality and individual skills and qualities of the teacher cannot be overlooked. Some history teachers have a gift for narrative that sustains the interest of their students and motivates them to want to learn more. Some teachers have refined their question-and-answer techniques and their student assignments and worksheets to such a degree that their essentially teacher-centred approach still ensures that the students do not adopt a passive approach to their learning. Similarly, some teachers can embrace every pedagogical innovation without stimulating their students to become active,

1. Joaquim Prats i Cuevas, "Selection of syllabus content in the learning of history" in *History and its interpretations*, ed. S. Jeleff, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 1997, p.60.

critical and enquiring learners. There is no blueprint to good teaching which, if slavishly followed, will always produce the right results. Ultimately, for most teachers the issue is how best to strike an effective and appropriate balance between teacher-directed and student-centred learning.

Fourth, to some extent decisions about teaching and learning approaches (and assessment techniques and strategies) need to reflect the purposes for which they are to be employed. This point is further elaborated below.

Whole-class teaching

Some advocates of the skills-based, investigative approach to school history tend to equate whole-class teaching with instruction or “frontal” history teaching, characterised by the teacher standing at the front of the class to “transmit” knowledge through exposition, combined with questions and answers designed to elicit pre-digested answers, and with giving instructions related to specific tasks such as reading or class assignments. Like all stereotypes it may have some basis in fact but it is also a caricature. Whole-class teaching certainly includes teacher exposition and closed questioning but it also encompasses:

- whole-class discussions;
- role plays and simulations;
- audiovisual aids and the use of television documentaries in the classroom;
- students working on the same task or activity in the school’s computer room or multimedia centre;
- a whole class of students working their way through the same section of a textbook, a resource pack or a worksheet;
- visits to museums and sites of historical interest.

The key pedagogical questions concerning the use of whole-class teaching in history lessons relate to when it is employed and why. Even when history teachers organise most of their teaching around group activities and opportunities for independent learning there are still key points in the learning process when whole-class teaching in the form of exposition, questions and answers and instruction can be useful. Some examples of these are discussed in the following.

Introducing new topics, themes or periods, or reviewing work that the class has just completed. However, when starting a new topic, period or theme it may also be necessary to produce some kind of learning organiser which outlines what will be covered, how the content will be structured, how it might

connect with earlier learning, the intended learning outcomes, the relevant sections of the textbook and other teaching resources, and even some key questions raised by the topic or theme.

Establishing connections with earlier learning. It is clear from much of the research on learning that effective teaching and learning relates to and builds upon what the students have already learned. The links and connections have to be made explicit.

Making comparisons. It was noted in Chapter 2 that teachers may have limited opportunities for introducing a European-wide or comparative dimension into their history teaching, either because their syllabus may already be overcrowded with content or because the teacher is unable to access good comparative resources on recent European history. In such circumstances the teacher (or the textbook or a television documentary) may be the main source of comparative and multiple perspectives on a particular event or development. Where the teacher (or the textbook) is the main historical resource care needs to be given to how best to convey the comparative perspectives and how to build in opportunities for students to discuss and analyse this new information and incorporate it into their own thinking.

“Telling a story”, or providing a narrative account of events in sequence. If done well it provides an overview of events, helps to bring history to life, appeals to students of all ages and abilities and promotes good listening skills. If done poorly it can be counter-productive. The narrative delivered by the teacher, the textbook or the broadcaster is not necessarily an alternative to enquiry-based approaches. It can complement them, particularly if the teacher encourages students to question whether her or his version is the only one or even the least biased one.

Stimulating historical imagination. This is clearly linked to narrative but relies more on the teacher's ability to directly re-create a sense of the times, the way people were thinking and what coloured their perceptions of events, or to make use of other resources to do this effectively.

Providing a model approach. It is quite common for teachers of other subjects to do this. Science teachers demonstrate experiments and in so doing also demonstrate scientific methods and thinking. Mathematics teachers do the same when using an algebraic formula to solve a problem. Teachers of modern languages not only teach grammar and vocabulary, they model the accent as well. This “modelling” approach may be much less common amongst history teachers. And yet it can be very useful not only to demonstrate how to plan a historical investigation or

how to set about interpreting a document or a photograph but also to use these opportunities to make the teacher's own thought processes explicit to the students. After all, to a large degree history as a discipline involves the application of certain ways of thinking and questioning to specific historical phenomena.

Whole-class discussions. Classroom research has shown that teachers who rely a lot on whole-class teaching often spend as much time facilitating discussion as they do in talking at their students, giving instructions or asking closed-ended questions to assess whether the students are listening or can recall what was said in an earlier lesson. Done well it can stimulate the students into making connections, exploring ideas, sharing knowledge and addressing historical problems and puzzles.

Of course all teaching methods and strategies have their limitations and a reflective, self-evaluative approach is an important element of good practice. Teachers who rely heavily on instruction and exposition need to monitor its impact on learning and evaluate its appropriateness for specific teaching and learning purposes. Is exposition offering the students something that they cannot get from reading a textbook? Is the textbook being read solely to acquire necessary information and understanding or are the students also learning how to read it critically? If whole-class discussion is being employed then are all the students engaged in it or would there be higher levels of participation if the discussion groups were smaller? Perhaps the main concern, however, is that whole class teaching, particularly if it relies heavily on frontal teaching, is not a very effective way of developing higher-order thinking of the kind which is central to the development of historical understanding.

Generally speaking research on the use of exposition and whole-class directed reading suggests that the average secondary student's attention span starts to decline markedly after about ten to fifteen minutes. This would suggest that a change of activity (even a temporary one) is useful after about fifteen minutes to restore active learning. Also, brief periods of consolidation after "frontal" teaching can enhance retention. Perhaps the most common technique here is the worksheet, where students, singly or in groups, answer questions on the content of what they have just been reading or listening to. An alternative strategy, which can help them to think about the content and not just memorise it, would be to get the students, working in pairs or small groups, to devise their own set of questions about the content, questions for clarification, questions that would help to identify any further information that is needed regarding the topic, and even questions to test the other groups' understanding of what they have read or heard.

Individual learning

The emphasis throughout the second part of the handbook has been on the educational value of employing teaching and learning activities that enable the student to:

- identify and evaluate primary and secondary sources of evidence and information, including documents, eye-witness accounts, visual sources and statistics;
- plan and carry out historical enquiries and investigations, and formulate relevant questions about them;
- analyse and interpret the evidence;
- contextualise what they have learned by relating it to their previous knowledge and by comparing it with information obtained from other sources;
- provide a synthesis of what they have learned, and presenting it in an appropriate format.

Essentially these are the study skills of the discipline of history. They are transferable skills. They are learned through doing and through having opportunities to practice them on different kinds of historical topics, issues and problems.

While it is possible, as suggested earlier, for history teachers to “model” these skills – and this may be essential when students are being introduced to new applications, such as analysing historical photographs or interpreting evidence from someone’s diary, or planning a project involving the collection of oral testimony – it is also critically important that students get opportunities then to develop and apply these skills and ways of thinking through independent work, even if all are working at the same time on the same topic, task or set of structured activities.

There is an additional reason why history teachers need to think about providing opportunities for independent learning. Most teachers would probably accept that their students tend to learn in different ways: some like to work on their own, some like to work collaboratively, some like open-ended learning activities, others prefer to be given a structured sequence of tasks. They have different preferred styles of learning and whilst it is important to encourage them to use the most efficient methods for particular tasks it is also useful to try and accommodate these different styles as well.

Providing structured opportunities for independent learning not only enables students to utilise their own preferred styles of learning it also provides the teacher with more opportunities for facilitating individual learning through talking to individuals about their work, setting them individual targets and

diagnosing and responding to any difficulties they are having in understanding some aspect of a particular learning activity. It also provides opportunities for extension work with the most able students or with those who show a particular interest in history and may wish to continue studying it after completion of formal schooling.

One of the main difficulties for those involved in delivering pre-service and in-service teacher training, who are trying to redress the balance in classroom teaching between knowledge transmission and skills development, is to persuade teachers and student teachers that differentiation along these lines is an integral part of the teaching process and not something which gets in the way of "real" teaching.

However, independent, active, enquiry-based learning needs to be resourced. The students need to be able to access extracts from primary and secondary sources and these extracts need to be evaluated for suitability to the task in hand and to the age and ability levels of the students. This may have implications for the layout or design of the classroom; it will certainly require access to photocopying facilities and perhaps to other specialist equipment such as a computer with Internet access.

It also tends to be the case that history teaching which entails a considerable amount of independent learning of this kind is time consuming. Students have an opportunity to study topics and themes in depth but teachers often find that scope for the approach is constrained when they are required to teach a content-rich, overcrowded syllabus.

Group work

By group work I mean here the organisation of classroom activities through which students can support, challenge and extend their learning *together*. The emphasis is on collaboration and co-operation. It may involve them in planning and carrying out a specific investigation, or discussing a particular historical question or puzzle, brainstorming ideas regarding the cause and consequences of a particular event or development, or planning and carrying out a role play or simulation.

The small groups may all be working on the same tasks, in which case opportunities need to be provided for each group to report back to the class as a whole and for comparing and contrasting their conclusions. Alternatively, especially, for example, with larger-scale investigations, it may be better to get each small group to work on a different set of tasks, which will eventually complement each other. This provides each group with an opportunity for exploring some aspect of a particular topic or theme in greater depth (for example one group analysing wartime propaganda, another group interpreting

evidence of life under foreign occupation, another group looking at the impact of technology on warfare, and so on). Here it is vital to ensure that at the end of this activity all of the students are still able to develop an overview of the topic or theme.

Like independent learning, the main value of this kind of group work is that the students are actively engaged in their learning rather than passive recipients of pre-digested knowledge. By setting them collaborative tasks the students have to use their knowledge and not just absorb it, they have to apply their skills and they have to take into account other students' perspectives as each individual's ideas get "bounced around" the group, they negotiate their approach and draw up their conclusions.

Carmel Gallagher¹ has described the role of the teacher as facilitator of effective group work in the history classroom as follows and advocates teachers bearing in mind that:

- the tasks set and the organisational structure of groups allow for the maximum amount of interaction;
- appropriate stimulus materials, pitched at the right level, may be needed, including, where possible, artefacts, visual evidence and written documents;
- clear guidance, in appropriate language, should be given to enable all students to participate effectively;
- extension activities should be available for any group which completes its task early.

However, group work of this kind suffers from the same potential limitations as much independent work. It is time consuming, the different members of each group may not necessarily be learning at the same speed and the students need to learn how to work collaboratively if the approach is to prove effective.

Summary

The relationship between what students learn and the strategies which the history teacher employs for organising and managing her or his class is not a simple linear one. It would be absurd to assume that just because a teacher happens to rely on exposition at a certain point in a lesson that therefore the students inevitably "switch into" the mode of being passive learners. Whether they are passive or not will depend in part on the nature of the exposition and the skill and personality of the teacher. It will also depend on

1. Carmel Gallagher "History teaching and the promotion of democratic values and tolerance", Doc. CC-ED/HIST (96) 1 Council of Europe.

what the students have been doing before the exposition and what they will be required to do afterwards. For example, students are more likely to be active listeners if they know that in ten to fifteen minutes time they will be expected to make use of the information now being imparted to them in order to carry out some specific tasks. Similarly the effectiveness of active, enquiry-based learning will depend on its purpose, how it is structured, and the feedback that the students get from the teacher at the end of each activity.

Some assessment issues

Generally speaking the aims and objectives of a particular history course will be undermined if they are not also reflected in the students' assessment tasks and exercises. Students soon learn to value those learning outcomes which are formally assessed and to downgrade the value of those intended learning outcomes which are not assessed. At its most basic level this means that a course which aims to develop appropriate skills and ways of thinking will require a variety of assessment activities where students formally apply these skills to source material. To rely solely on assessment through essays where students are required to recall factual knowledge and reproduce the teacher's or textbook's interpretation of those facts will be counter-productive. To some extent this caveat remains valid even where the essay question demands more of the student than just recall. If much of the history teaching is undertaken through activity-based learning then the assessments need to be designed around the processes which are involved in those learning activities. In other words, if students are asked to analyse and interpret extracts from documents then their skill at doing so should be directly assessed – and not just indirectly through assessing the quality of an essay on the topic to which those documents refer.

This leads on to a second point, namely, that an important criterion in designing assessments is fitness for purpose. For example:

- essays and other open-ended assignments, if well-designed, can test the student's ability to demonstrate an overview of a topic or period and to draw upon relevant evidence in order to develop a coherent argument and narrative;
- providing students with a single item of stimulus material – an extract from an official document, diary, newspaper account or history book, a photograph, cartoon, or letter – can test their analytical and interpretative skills and their ability to enter imaginatively into the past;
- providing students with several items of stimulus material relating to the same topic can test their ability to sift out what is relevant, cross-check information in one item with information provided elsewhere, relate this

information to their previous knowledge and identify different perspective on the same event.

- asking students to take on the role of historical “detective”, using evidence from a variety of sources to look for clues to the motives of the people involved and then to look for corroborating evidence from other sources;
- asking students to carefully examine an extract from a source and then list a series of questions to which they would need answers before deciding how reliable that source was;
- providing students with “blind” stimulus material – that is extracts from sources which they have never seen before (and even on a topic where they did not use sources of this kind) – can test their ability to transfer their analytical and interpretative skills and questioning to something they have not previously encountered.

Finally, because we have stressed here, and throughout the handbook, the importance of students learning historical skills and appropriate ways of thinking as well as acquiring historical knowledge it also needs to be kept in mind that skilled performance requires reflection on that performance and a capacity to adapt one’s skills to different circumstances and tasks. But reflection and adaptability depend upon the learner having the ability to assess her or his own capabilities.

Essentially this involves asking the students at the end of a topic or a project or a specific assignment or task: What did they learn from it? What did they find difficult? What would they still like to know or have clarified for them? What did they do well and not so well? How does what they have learned here link up with previous learning? How interesting was it? Teachers who have made little use of student self-assessment techniques tend to think that it is not very reliable and that students will give themselves inflated scores. In fact the research evidence available suggests that students are often harsher critics of themselves and their abilities than their teachers.

I think there are three key points about self-assessment which need to be kept in mind when deciding when and whether to use it. First, it works best if you as a teacher ensure that students are aware of the learning objectives of the course as a whole and of the particular topic and assignment they are working on. Second, self-assessment is a state of mind as much as a learned skill. It involves a willingness to question and challenge one’s own assumptions about oneself as well as the assumptions of others. However, like most skills it has to be practised. Finally, self-assessments provide highly useful feedback to the teacher for evaluating the aims, content and teaching approach of a course, unit or lesson.

THIRD PART:

SOURCES AND RESOURCES

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION

Part three focuses on the uses of different kinds of source material for teaching the history of 20th-century Europe to secondary-level students.

As the saying goes, "The historian is only as good as her or his sources". Inevitably, when exploring the history of the 20th century we have access to a wider range of sources and a greater volume of publicly accessible source material than ever before. The amount of published material generated by official sources is much greater now than even 25 years ago, and we have much more access to audio and video recordings, newspapers, documentaries, the private papers of key figures in this century, the diaries and memoirs of people who were close to events and, thanks to major improvements in public health there are still plenty of elderly people around for the oral historian (or the history student) to interview, even about events in the early part of the century.

Also there is now much more material that is readily available in the archives and public records and as and when these become accessible to the public it is usually the case that the broadsheet newspapers and broadcasting news media summarise key items for broader dissemination. Increasingly such material has provided insights not only into government thinking and policy at the time but also into what they thought was useful to preserve, since governments now generate such vast quantities of paper that they can only preserve a selection of it within official archives. In this respect there has been much interest not only amongst historians but also the public at large, in the contents of the public files retained by government departments in the former communist states.

Chapters 15-17 include a number of short evaluative guides on the educational value and the difficulties entailed in making use of some of these sources in history teaching, including getting students to conduct their own enquiries using such sources.

Oral history

One of the main achievements of oral history has been that it has helped to reconstruct our recent social history, particularly the history of groups and

peoples who have been marginalised by the state, or society or historians themselves. Women's history has relied heavily upon oral sources, often because of the relative lack of official information about them if they were not officially designated as "breadwinners" or "heads of families". Oral history has also proved to be a particularly helpful means of studying inter-generational social change, looking, for example, at different generations' experiences of childhood, class, crime, education, work and social mobility. This chapter also looks at some of the problems involved in enabling students to collect their own oral evidence and the methodological problems involved in interpreting it.

Use of contemporary written sources

The written document is still the main source of evidence for the historian. Without the documentary record of the actors involved in any historical event we would not be able to understand their feelings, their motives, their intentions and their perceptions of other people's feelings, motives and intentions. This applies as much to ordinary people as it does to political leaders, generals and the people who advised them. At the same time there is obviously a major difference between private diaries and other documents which the writer never expected anyone else to read and those documents which were written for some public purpose. The task of the historian (or the student working as a historian) is: to interrogate the document and contextualise it, that is find out why it was written, what purpose it served, who had access to it, and so forth. Then it must be analysed and interpreted: what does it say, what messages are being conveyed, what has been left out. Then the historian must cross-reference it: is it supported or contradicted by other sources of evidence?

Students need to understand this process and perhaps the best way of doing that is to practice it themselves. This chapter includes some examples of this kind of active learning.

Television as a source

Television archives contain a wealth of potential evidence for studying 20th-century European history, particularly since 1945. Also, at the end of the millennium the main television companies across Europe celebrated the event with programmes and series reflecting on the century as a whole and the key events and developments which shaped it. In addition to the archive material from newscasts and the current affairs programmes and documentaries television is also a source of evidence on public opinion and on how a society at any given point in time defines itself and interprets its own situation. At the same time, like every other source the evidence is selected for purposes other

than explaining history and the processes by which it does this need to be understood by students if they are going to make use of television as a source for evidence on the history of this century. This chapter includes examples of how archived television news material can be used in history lessons and the strengths and limitations of using television documentary series such as *The world at war* or *The people's century* – both series which have been shown in a number of European countries and used by history teachers.

Part three concludes with two short guides for evaluating the usefulness of history textbooks and new technologies. In each case the evaluation guide examines what to look for in terms of content, educational value, pedagogy and user-friendliness.

CHAPTER 15

ORAL HISTORY

Background

Oral history was a widely used means of gathering knowledge and evidence until well into the 19th century. The French historian, Michelet, for example, referred to “living documents” as the source for his history of the French Revolution,¹ arguing that this approach was necessary in order to counter-balance the official sources. However, by the late 19th century oral history was out of favour as the so-called Rankean view of the discipline of history became the dominant paradigm, with its emphasis on political history, narrative and the use of documents as the primary source of evidence.²

However, at about the same time non-historians were beginning to recognise the potential value of asking people with direct experience of events about their experiences, their understanding of what happened and why. Journalists began using the interview technique and writing up “eye-witness accounts” of major events from the mid-19th century onwards. Social investigators interested in social reform and in drawing attention to the living and working conditions of ordinary people began to collect evidence through interviews from around the turn of the century. But, with a few exceptions, it is only in the period since 1945 that oral history has begun to emerge again as a fruitful and legitimate source of historical evidence. In part, this reflects a growing interest in social, economic and cultural history, and an accompanying shift within the discipline on what constitutes the basic subject matter of history. Since the 1960s, for example, we have seen the emergence of historical studies of childhood, education, death, mental illness, medicine, the family, hygiene and gender – topics which had not previously been thought to be relevant by historians or even to “possess a history”.

The re-emergence of oral history also reflects a growing interest in what has come to be known as “history from below”: the historical testimony of ordinary people, particularly those whose life experiences and perspectives have

1. Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution française*, Chicago, 1967 edition.

2. Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886).

been virtually omitted from the historical record, such as the ordinary soldier, working-class women, indigenous peoples, cultural, ethnic and religious minorities. To investigate the lives of ordinary people historians have had to resort to a wide range of sources, including letters, photographs, newspaper archives, the oral evidence collected by social investigators and official committees of inquiry and the personal reminiscences of individuals.

In the last fifty years oral history has developed into a specialist field, with its own journals and databases, and some other specialist areas within the discipline, such as women's history, Black history and cultural history, have initiated major oral history projects. A number of museums now have archives of oral testimony; there are CD-Roms based on collections of oral evidence which are now available in various languages on different aspects of social life; there are websites which incorporate transcripts of eye-witness accounts of major events in the 20th century; there are audiovisual archives of oral testimony retained by universities and broadcasting companies, and, finally, many of those minority groups whose histories were previously ignored, have initiated their own oral history projects. Whilst changes in the discipline have clearly encouraged the growth of professional oral history it should also be acknowledged that the emergence of the portable cassette recorder has also been an important stimulus to the collection of oral evidence.

However, in spite of this growth, many historians still express doubts about the validity and reliability of oral evidence compared with the evidence available through the analysis of documents. This is not just because of their concerns about the reliability of people's memories and the problems involved in using uncorroborated evidence and hearsay. Documents, especially archived official documents, are valuable not just for what they contain but also because they are part of a sequence or series of documents. They can be cross-referenced with other documents thus providing the historian not only with a means of verifying the authenticity of each document but also with a context for interpreting its meaning. Often the official document itself refers the reader back to earlier documents so that a chronology can be established which outlines the sequence of decisions and thought processes.

Nevertheless, any historian studying the recent past has to rely increasingly on sources other than documents. This is partly because most governments are secretive about recent decisions and policies and therefore do not allow public access to relevant documents until much later (often twenty-five to thirty years later). Even then access may be denied to particularly sensitive papers. But historians of the recent past also need to supplement the documentary evidence through other sources because of the increasing use of communications technology. Now, they find that they are examining a document which refers the reader not to other documents but to telephone

conversations and e-mails for which a record is not available. In such circumstances they have to make use of other sources including interviews with the people who produced or received these documents.

What is oral history?

Essentially oral history is the recording and analysis of spoken testimonies about the past. It can take a variety of forms. It can focus on:

- the shared knowledge of the past which was passed down from the previous generation (oral tradition);
- a narrative of events within an individual's life which have helped to shape that life and give meaning to it (an oral biography);
- the personal reminiscences of an individual about certain events, issues or experiences they lived through at some time in their past;
- oral eye-witness accounts recorded during or immediately after an event.

Oral history has tended to be used for two distinct purposes. The first is to help to reconstruct the past: to find out what it was like to be an ordinary soldier in the trenches, or a refugee crossing Europe in 1945, or to find out what difference contraception made to the life of a young mother. The second purpose is to help to understand how people interpreted the past. Oral sources tell us not only what people did, what they saw and what happened to them, they also tell us what people thought and felt at the time, what they believed they were doing and why, what they assumed other people were doing and why, what they wanted to do, and (equally important) what they *now* think they did.

Oral history in the classroom¹

It is worth reiterating the point that oral history is about the recording and analysis of oral evidence. History teachers often think of oral history mainly as the process of getting their students to interview people (usually parents, grandparents, neighbours and local characters) about a particular event or life experience. As such, oral history is often seen as a useful but probably optional extra in the study of the history curriculum and mainly restricted to social history or even local history.

However, the definition serves to remind us that students are also *doing* oral history when they analyse oral evidence. In a growing number of European

1. This section draws partially upon the material prepared by Phil Ingram for the teaching pack *Teaching 20th century women's history*, Ruth Tudor, op. cit.

countries it is now possible to obtain access to oral testimony on various dimensions of social life and on specific events through audio cassettes of material originally compiled for documentary radio programmes and video cassettes of television documentaries. Some university departments which specialise in collecting oral tradition and oral history have published material from their archives and, in some cases, produced CD-Roms which enable the student not only to read transcripts or excerpts from transcripts but also listen to the interviews and view photographs of the persons interviewed and the events they are talking about. Also, from time to time, organisations initiate projects to collect oral testimony and then publish it, often to coincide with the anniversary of an event. Finally, a number of the Internet websites listed in Chapter 12 of this handbook also contain oral testimony, some of which can be listened to as well as read. The range of themes and topics covered is fairly limited but there is, for example, some useful material from the Western Front in the Great War, from the home front in the second world war, and relating to the economic depression in the inter-war years.

As we have seen in other chapters of this handbook, the analysis of other historical sources, such as photographs, cartoons, television, film and Internet websites, requires:

- those skills of critical analysis and interpretation which a historian applies to any kind of evidence;
- the knowledge and understanding which will help to set the evidence into its historical context;
- opportunities for verification of the authenticity and reliability of the evidence by cross-referencing it with other sources;
- understanding of the processes through which the evidence being analysed has been created.

The analysis of oral history is no exception. Given the volume of oral evidence available on the 20th century, particularly the last four decades, it is important that the history student understands the processes involved in the creation of oral evidence and knows how to apply these analytical and interpretative skills to the material generated by the collector of oral history, whether that be the student, a historian or others.

Providing students with opportunities to collect oral history and to analyse oral evidence is educationally valuable at a number of levels:

- it gives students access to the experiences and perspectives of ordinary people;
- it offers a richly textured perspective on recent history which can put “flesh on the bare bones” of the textbook account and often has a sense

of immediacy of experience which the student cannot get from second-hand accounts of what happened;

- it provides students with information on people and groups that are usually ignored by their textbooks;
- it can serve as a useful check on the evidence provided by other sources (especially if those sources include the mass media);
- it can act as a useful counterbalance to the historian's interpretation of events (that is it can show how people actually experienced the event);
- oral history, particularly in the form of the personal reminiscences of people alive today who are looking back over the century, can often be a useful way of helping students to explore and apply the key concepts of historical continuity and change;
- students examining oral evidence need to apply the same principles and analytical processes as they would apply to any other kind of evidence (selection, cross-checking, detecting biases and distortions, handling contradictions and incomplete accounts).

Students collecting their own oral evidence through interviews also have opportunities to further develop:

- enquiry skills, particularly the skills involved in formulating a sequence of effective questions;
- communication skills (putting their interviewees at ease, engaging with them, listening, prompting and probing to elicit more information);
- skills of empathy with people from different generations, backgrounds and with different perspectives, experiences and assumptions;
- ability to sift through the evidence, assess its relevance and accuracy, and then construct a narrative or a chronology or to formulate conclusions about what happened or why;
- ability to produce valid and reliable records of the oral evidence and to use them to construct an account of what has emerged.

What students need to know about oral history

Students need to understand that most historical sources are independent of the historian and the history student. They can only interpret it. However, anyone collecting oral testimony and eye-witness accounts (the historian, the history student, the social scientist, the official, the journalist or the broadcaster) plays an active part in the construction of that evidence. What appears on the historical record depends a great deal on the kinds of questions that the interviewer chooses to ask and to avoid, the personal relationship and

rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee; and the process through which the interview is edited before being made publicly available. As a result, when the student examines oral evidence she or he also needs to examine the process through which it was collected (Was this a leading question or a neutral one? What was the interviewee talking about before this question was asked? Is this the complete reply or an edited version of it or an excerpt from a longer response? How can we tell? Can we cross-check this answer with any other relevant evidence from other sources? And so on.)

It is also important that they understand the limitations of memory and personal observation. Just because someone was present at an event does not necessarily mean that their account is therefore correct and authentic. (Students need only to be asked to think about the contradictory evidence of eye-witnesses in most of the criminal cases that appear before the law courts). Historians are often concerned about the difficulties involved in relying on people's memories of events that may have taken place many years before. Although the scientific study of memory is still in its infancy research does seem to suggest that long-term memory, particularly amongst older people, is often more precise and stable than medium-term and short-term memory. However, when examining oral history there is also the added problem of selective amnesia and the tendency of people to misremember not because they wish to forget or to deceive the interviewer but because they have adjusted their memories to fit their preconceptions and assumptions. (see **Box 1** below). On the other hand we should not necessarily assume that documents and other sources are not susceptible to the same problems. Documents are not always written immediately after something happened or was decided and the officials and others who produce such documents (as political scandals and enquiries often reveal) are by no means immune from the desire to re-write history.

Box 1: A case study of misremembered oral testimony

The Italian historian, Alessandro Portelli found that oral evidence from workers in Terni, an industrial town in the north, about the murder of Luigi Trastulli, a 21 year-old steel worker, by police revealed a discrepancy as to when he died. Some said it was 1949 (the correct date) and others said it was 1953, which would have coincided with a mass industrial strike in the town. Portelli concluded that those who had dated the death to 1953 did so because it felt right that a fellow worker should have died for a major cause that they believed in.

A third related point here is that memory is not simply a passive depository of facts. When people are providing the interviewer with personal reminiscences about their life experiences they are not simply offering eye-witness accounts – albeit with inconsistencies, mistakes and omissions. They are also trying to make sense of the past and to give shape and form to their lives. In other words they are creating personal historiographies, where their experience has been ordered, interpreted and composed into a narrative for the benefit of the interviewer. What is included and what is omitted is not just the result of memory loss; it is also the result of an act of conscious selection. It is important, therefore, that when students examine oral evidence they ask the same kinds of questions as they might ask of other kinds of historical evidence. In addition to examining what the interviewee actually says, they also need to ask:

- what sort of person is speaking?
- what kinds of statements are they making. Are they observations about what happened or why it happened? Are the statements disjointed or unconnected responses to each question or are they trying to tell a story? Do they ever go off at a tangent? Are they trying to justify themselves and their actions? Are they trying to justify someone else's actions? Are their answers mainly anecdotes?
- are they trying to answer the questions seriously? Do they seem to be uncomfortable about answering some questions? Are they reticent in their answers? Are they offering up “sound bites” for the tape recorder or the television camera?
- what assumptions do they seem to be making?
- can you detect any biases and prejudices?
- are there any ways in which you could independently check any of their answers?

Suggestions for using oral history in the classroom

Themes and topics

Social and economic history can be a rather dry subject for many history students if it concentrates mainly on policies, social problems and aggregate statistics and focuses on people in the abstract rather than on their everyday lived experiences. People, in this approach to history, often come to be seen as little more than “one of the problems which government has to handle”.¹ The social historian and the economic historian make implicit and explicit

1. E. P. Thompson, “History from below”, the *Times Literary Supplement*, April 7, 1966.

judgments with the benefit of hindsight, often from a particular political or ideological standpoint, and with a view to relating an understanding of the past to contemporary concerns and issues. But often reality is more complex and multi-faceted and sometimes oral history can help to recreate the multiplicity of perspectives that existed at the time when the events actually happened. This can apply not only to social and economic history but to political history as well (See **Box 2** below).

Box 2: Historical reality is complex and multi-faceted

The historical record regarding the evacuation of British and French troops from the beaches around Dunkirk in the summer of 1940 shows that 68 000 soldiers were killed, nearly 340 000 were evacuated, 240 small boats were sunk, 120 000 army vehicles and 2 300 guns were abandoned. Most military historians, when writing about Dunkirk, refer to the merciless shelling and strafing of the beaches, particularly by the Luftwaffe. But eye-witness accounts from soldiers on the beaches suggest that the level of bombing varied considerably depending on which sector they were in.

Most of the diachronic themes outlined in the introduction to Chapter 1 (that is which focus on some aspect of historical development over an extended period of time) lend themselves to a pedagogic approach which includes the use of oral testimony. For example:

- How have people's domestic and working lives changed as a result of technological development?
- How has family life changed during the century?
- How have the roles of husband and wife (and parents) changed?
- How has sexual behaviour and sexual mores changed? How were single mothers treated 50 or 60 years ago? What difference has contraception made?
- How has the idea of childhood and adolescence changed?
- How has housing changed during the century?
- What difference has the growth of urban areas made to people's lives in the towns and in the rural areas?
- How has work in different occupations changed over time (decline of some jobs and industries, creation of new ones, increased mechanisation and automation, etc.)?

- How have relationships between the generations changed?
- How have people's recreations, cultural interests and pastimes changed?
- In what ways have changes in transport and communications affected the way people live?
- In what ways have changes in medicine changed people's lives?
- How have our ideas changed? (for example ideas about religion and faith, crime and punishment, poverty and welfare, education, art, fashion, the role and responsibilities of the state and of the citizen, national identity and patriotism, etc.)

In addition to providing useful evidence and insights for exploring continuity and change over the 20th century, oral history can also help the student to understand what it was like to directly experience some of the major events and developments of the century: the experiences of total war, occupation and liberation, being a refugee, being an immigrant or an emigrant, moving from the countryside to the town, re-building their lives after a war, the experience of living through the end of dictatorship or totalitarianism, and so forth. Here too, oral history not only helps the students to re-construct what it was like, it also helps them to challenge their own assumptions and, in some cases, the assumptions made by mass media, textbook authors and, indeed, their history teachers.

Some possible approaches

This and the next section are mainly concerned with facilitating the involvement of students in projects to collect oral evidence. This can be time-consuming and often requires resources which may be in short supply, such as tape recorders, cassettes and facilities for transcribing and storing the interviews. For many history teachers, faced with an already crowded history syllabus, an oral history project may have to be seen as an optional extra. However, it is worth reiterating again that we live in an era when a great deal of oral testimony has already been collected by historians and social scientists, journalists and broadcasters, government departments, museums and archives and opinion poll organisations. Much of what has been collected is now available in one form or another and can usefully be incorporated into textbooks, multimedia educational resources and materials developed by the individual teacher.

For obvious reasons most school-based oral history projects tend to be conducted in the local community and often focus on local history. Interviewing local residents about the changes that they have witnessed in the locality during their lifetimes can often be more effective if the interviewers have a stock of stimulus material to "jog" their interviewees' memories, such as

photographs and postcards of a main street, a farm, a factory, a local landmark, or local people. Maps and extracts from local records and copies of articles taken from old newspapers about particularly significant local events can also be helpful. This approach can be used to record continuities and changes within the community as a whole, or within one segment of the community, or it can be used as a means of conducting an in-depth study of the community at a particular time.

However, people have a lot more to offer than just personal reminiscences about local life. They have lived through and witnessed the major events which are covered in the students' textbooks. Sometimes they have been directly involved, sometimes their lives have been changed irrevocably by what happened. They have their own perspective which can be compared and contrasted with the perspectives covered in the textbooks and radio and television documentaries. One possibility here is to start with the textbook account or the account given in a television or radio programme, and then find out what local people remember of the event and whether their reminiscences and interpretations of what happened coincide or conflict with the version offered in the textbook or documentary. The purpose is not to question the validity of the author or broadcaster's version. Rather it is to help students understand the complexity and the level of consensus or the multiplicity of perspectives that may have existed at the time when the event occurred.

There are several possible variations on this approach. One is to set up free-ranging life history interviews where the individuals concerned talk about the important events that have happened during their lifetimes and their own reactions to them both then and now. Another variation is to use oral history interviews to chart each interviewee's family over the century: where they came from, what their grandparents, parents and offspring did to earn a living, where they lived, how their lives changed, how they were affected by wars, military occupation, economic depression, changing standards of living, and so on.

A third variation on this approach is for students to gather evidence on how mass media portrays a particular decade or era of the 20th century (in a history series, in documentaries and in drama and comedy programmes) and then follow this up with oral interviews with a generation which lived through that period.

One other variation on this approach is to ask people where they were, what they were doing, and how they reacted when they first heard about something which proved to be momentous. The classic example of this is the assassination of President John Kennedy. It is often claimed that people who were adults or adolescents at that time still remember vividly what they were

doing, how they reacted, and their fears for the future. Are there other events in 20th-century European history which spark off memories in this way for a whole generation? Some examples could be:

- the death of Stalin in 1953;
- Russian tanks entering Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968;
- the launching of Sputnik into space in 1957;
- the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961;
- the Cuban missile crisis in 1962;
- the first woman in space in 1963;
- the first moon landing in July 1969;
- the death of Franco in 1975;
- the return to civilian rule in Portugal in 1976;
- the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989;
- the attempted putsch against Gorbachev and the reform policies on 19 August 1991.

Since historians doing oral history have often regarded themselves as doing history from below or helping to uncover the history of the invisible (the groups whose history tends to be ignored by the mainstream historian) it is sometimes tempting to do something similar in a school-based project, especially if these “invisible” groups are well-represented amongst the school population. Potentially this is a highly sensitive area for schools to get involved in and needs careful planning and negotiations with community representatives of these groups. One way in which some academic historians and social scientists have approached this is to establish a collaborative project with the community or group itself. Students and members of the group work together in the planning, data collection, analysis and presentation of the findings. This often involves both one-to-one interviews and group discussions, with the latter acting as a useful means of verification of factual information and checking and developing chronologies and narratives. The end result can be a resource which is both useful for students of history and a valuable record for the group or community. It is also a valuable practical exercise for students in the whole process of historical enquiry and interpretation.

Within almost any oral history project there is a potential for encountering controversial and sensitive issues even when these are not intended to be the subject of the interviews. For example, in some regions, interviews about early experiences of work may trigger off experiences about racial, ethnic or religious discrimination. Interviews in other countries and regions about

neighbours and relations within the community might trigger off memories of collaboration with or resistance to occupying forces. In such circumstances teachers need to ask themselves whether the potential benefits of students doing some oral history outweigh the potential discord that might arise. If they feel that it will then it will be necessary to do some careful preparation, anticipate the areas of questioning where sensitive and controversial issues might arise, and provide students with strategies and protocols for dealing with them. In particularly sensitive areas it may be better if the interviews are conducted in the school under the direct supervision of the teacher or even conducted by the teacher.

It is also worth exploring the potential for inter-school collaboration on an oral history project. This might be regional or nation-wide, cross-border or European-wide, or a project which focuses on a particular group which has settled in several neighbouring countries. If the project focuses on a common theme or event then it provides a unique opportunity for all of the participating students to compare and contrast a multiplicity of perspectives and interpretations of similar experiences.

Some guidelines on organising an oral history project

- Do some background research on the community, group or social categories to be interviewed. Find out about any organisations, history societies, residential homes for the elderly, or voluntary associations that might help or be interested in the outcomes of the project. Check for any anniversaries of key dates that might serve as a stimulus for the project. Try to assess the likely response to the idea of an oral history project.
- Ensure that there is sufficient background information available for students to examine before they start the project. Check on the ready availability of relevant evidence from other sources to cross-check with the interview data.
- Evaluate the resource implications. How long will it take to prepare the students, complete the interviewing, process the information, interpret the evidence, present the findings and evaluate the outcome. Where will the interviews be conducted? How will the interviews be recorded? Will the results be worth the costs in terms of human and material resources?
- Are the students sufficiently motivated to do the interviews to a satisfactory standard?
- Teachers often get the students to find the interviewees but there are also advantages in doing this yourself. In explaining the project, and before committing yourself to interviewing a particular individual, it

provides an opportunity to check on their recall, their ability to talk about an event or aspect of their lives as well as their willingness to take part in the project. They should also be told about the purpose of the oral history project and what will happen to the interview material once it has been collected.

Students should undertake the following preparation work:

- background research on the topics or themes to be covered by the oral history project;
- background research by the students on the group from whom the interviewees will be selected: what do we know about the relevance of this theme or topic to their lives? What kinds of relevant experiences are they likely to have had?
- listen to some examples of people talking about the past or look at one or two transcripts (or excerpts) so that students can get a feel for what an oral history interview is like.

Once they have done the background research each student should be asked to think of three to five research questions which could form the basis of the interview. (Research questions are not the same as the actual interview questions. They represent what the students would like to find out). This should be followed by a brainstorming session to get an agreed set of research questions. Each research question could generate several interview questions so it may be necessary to encourage the students to prioritise and to justify their selection. In doing this they also need to think about how long the interview could realistically be.

Box 3: Evaluating a taped interview or transcript

- Does there seem to be a good rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee?
- Is the interviewer listening and responding to the interviewee?
- Is it a good interview? Why?
- How useful is the interview as historical evidence?
- How could we find out if the information provided is accurate?

Designing the interview schedule

The next stage is to convert the research questions into interview questions. In helping students to do this, they should think about the following:

- what background information they will need about each interviewee (for example where they were born and when, current or past occupation, what they were doing at a particular time in their lives, where they went to school, where they lived at a particular time, etc.);
- the best or most appropriate sequence of questions to ensure that the interview flows and is not disjointed;
- the importance of avoiding leading questions (for example: You must have been very angry about that?) and not asking questions that will just elicit a “yes” or a “no” response;
- the importance of ensuring that the questions are clear and unambiguous;
- how to encourage the interviewee to talk and yet at the same time, how to get them back on track when they go off at a tangent;
- how to start and finish the interview;
- what to do if the interviewee “dries up” over a particular question or before the interview is completed;
- if there are any ways to check on the accuracy of the interviewee’s recollections?

In discussing these issues beforehand it can be useful to get students to think about “probes and prompts”. A probe is a follow-up question to get more information or to check up on what the person said. A prompt is a device for either re-phrasing the question if the interviewee does not seem to understand or for “jogging” the interviewee’s memory. It can be useful to think of prompts and probes for most of the questions in the interview.

They also need to think about “evidence checkers”. A few simple follow-up questions can be very effective in this way, for example: How old were you at the time? How did you hear about that? Were you there yourself or did someone tell you about it?

Conducting the interview

Make sure students check that the tape recorder is working and that they have a blank cassette before going to the interview. If the interview is not going to be electronically recorded it might be worth thinking about students working in pairs and sharing the task of asking questions and taking notes.

The key points for conducting the interview are:

- be on time, be prepared, be polite;

- listen. Do not ask a question which the interviewee has already answered in her or his answers to other questions;
- be patient. Give the interviewee time to answer in their way. Do not argue or correct the interviewee;
- keep the interviewee on track but try not to interrupt them too often;
- if you think it would be useful to ask a follow-up question which you had not previously planned do so and make a note of it for future reference;
- end the interview by thanking the interviewee. Send them a thank you letter afterwards.

A rehearsal with students taking it in turn to be interviewers and interviewees is advisable. A feedback session after the first round of interviews is also useful as a way of checking on the effectiveness of specific questions and determining how to respond under particular circumstances.

Analysing and interpreting the interview

Here students need to decide as a group whether each taped interview should be transcribed in full or whether they listen to them carefully several times and then write down the main points of interest? They should consider the potential gains and losses of taking either option.

Then in reading the transcript or notes they need to think about:

- Did the interview answer the kinds of research questions they had originally set out to find answers to?
- How good was the interviewee's memory?
- Did the interviewee provide contradictory information?
- Are there any ways in which the accuracy of the responses can be checked?
- Were there any signs of clear bias in any of their responses?
- How useful is the interview as historical evidence?
- In what ways could the interview have been better?

CHAPTER 16

USE OF CONTEMPORARY WRITTEN SOURCES

Documents and other kinds of written source are at the heart of all historical study. Of course, we may know from long-accepted chronicles, memorials and other physical traces when and where a battle was fought, who won, the losses on both sides, the names of the key figures, and so on. But without primary documentary evidence in the form of dispatches, letters and eye-witness accounts it can be very difficult to understand the actions of individuals involved, the decisions they took, the orders they gave, the tactics they employed and their reasoning and motivation unless they or people close to them wrote about it at the time or soon after.

The student of contemporary history has a wider range of primary and secondary sources to draw upon than students of any previous era: not just the written word but also film, news broadcasting, television documentaries, sound archives, electronic records, and physical artefacts. However, the written document is still critically important to any understanding of the history of the 20th century. There are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, during this century we have seen a massive growth in the functions of central and local government. Indeed this expansion has been so great that now only a small selection of the official papers generated by government departments can be preserved in the public records or archives.

Secondly, the mechanisation of the processes of collecting, storing and retrieving information and the resulting publication of official statistics, has meant that we now know much more about people's everyday lives (for example their financial status, the taxes they pay, their consumption habits, births and deaths, health, education, housing, etc.).

Thirdly, the expansion in public education has meant that it is possible now, on almost every significant event and social development of this century, to access the views and experiences of a much wider and more socially representative group of people through their letters and postcards, their diaries and through interviews with them in the popular press.

Finally, the massive expansion in publishing and print media has meant that we can now access many more perspectives on any event or development.

In fact the problem now is that the student of contemporary history is often faced by the problem of too much information. As one historian has put it:

We know a thousand times more about the collapse of France (in 1940) than we know about the collapse of Carthage. We know a thousand times more about the evacuation of Dunkirk than we know about the Battle of Hastings. We can meet and discuss matters ... with men who were at Dunkirk. Would not a true medievalist give up his whole life's research for the value of one interview with one Saxon who fought beside Harold at Hastings? ¹

Where the medieval historian or the historian specialising in the first millennium is often confronted by the problem of insufficient or incomplete evidence the contemporary historian is faced by the problem of selection: what to select out of the great mass of information available which will shed light on what happened without presenting a biased or skewed account because significant evidence has been omitted. This can be a problem for any student of 20th-century national history but it is even more of a problem for the student of European or world history.

The main aim in this chapter is to look at how and why written material (official papers, statistics, diaries, journals, memoirs, biographies, newspapers and magazines) can and should be used in the classroom when teaching about the history of 20th-century Europe. Most modern history textbooks now include extracts from all kinds of written sources and it is possible, increasingly, to download from the Internet a wide range of useful primary source materials on most of the major events and developments of this century for students to critically examine and interpret.

Why provide opportunities for students to examine primary written sources on 20th-century Europe? In practice the potential benefits of using written sources in one's teaching will depend on how interesting the material is, its length, the density of the text, the reading level required, the way it is introduced to the students and whether or not the learning activities which focus on the material actively engage the students' interest. For example, requiring students to read the entire text of the Treaty of Versailles (1918) or the Treaty of Rome (1960) for information rather than a short summary of key clauses reproduced in the textbook is unlikely to be regarded as a particularly stimulating learning experience by the majority of 16-year-olds.

However, with these caveats in mind, it is still possible to identify sound reasons for developing learning activities around the use of written sources, particularly primary sources.

- Carefully selected primary sources can help to make history come alive for many students as they reveal the personal experiences, the thought

1. G. B. Henderson, "A plea for the study of contemporary history", *History*, 26, 1941, pp.51-55.

processes and the concerns of people directly and indirectly involved in the events they are studying.

- Textbooks are always written with the benefit of hindsight. When this is combined with the need to produce succinct summaries of what happened, the student is often presented with an account which makes the decision makers look decisive and the outcomes inevitable. Written sources produced at the time, whether they be diplomatic dispatches, minutes of meetings, letters or diary entries, often help to highlight how decisions were really reached, under pressure, with limited and often contradictory information, and in real time.
- By working directly with written sources, students engage in applying key historical concepts, asking questions, analysing and interpreting information, drawing inferences and reaching their own conclusions which they can then test against the established narrative or explanation.
- Primary sources also provide students with excellent opportunities to put themselves into the shoes of people who were directly involved in the events they are studying.
- Access to primary written sources also exposes students to a multiplicity of perspectives on a particular event or development and an opportunity to compare accounts written at the time by participants, eye-witnesses and commentators with those produced subsequently by historians. Within the context of European history access to primary sources can be invaluable. For example, Internet history websites such as the World War I Document Archive (<http://www/lib-byu.edu/~idh/wwi>) or Eurodocs (<http://www/lib-byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs>) (see Chapter 12, which includes key historical documents from twenty-three European countries, provide excellent opportunities for the history student to investigate how the same event, crisis or decision was interpreted by governments in different countries.
- Access to a variety of written sources, especially primary ones, also provides opportunities for students to test the conclusions or interpretations which have been presented to them by their textbooks, their teachers or the mass media. More generally, regular use of primary sources alongside textbooks and other teaching materials helps to encourage the “habit” of cross-checking facts and interpretations.
- Looking at written evidence in sequence encourages the “habit” of critically examining how each new piece of information either supports or challenges information and understanding obtained from the other documents in the sequence. This is not simply part of the process of inducting students into historical method; it is also a means of further developing their general reasoning and thinking skills and providing them with an analytical framework which also contributes to their civic education,

since the same approach can be used to analyse the mass media's coverage of contemporary events and issues.

Issues to consider when selecting primary written sources

Accessibility. Most textbooks, topic-based and thematic booklets and student workbooks now include extracts from primary written sources. While some texts use these sources primarily for illustrative purposes the trend increasingly is to link them to activities and exercises which will require the student to practise some of the analytical processes and ways of thinking which the historian applies when dealing with evidence from sources. These include: extracting relevant information to answer specific questions, identifying biases, comparing sources to evaluate an event or an account of an event, assessing the value and relevance of sources, using several sources to construct a short narrative account or timeline, assessing whether the evidence confirms or refutes a particular interpretation or explanation, and so on.

However, the extracts in most contemporary textbooks are usually very short and sometimes of limited value for practising these ways of thinking about and analysing historical evidence. Other sources which can be used to supplement the textbook treatment of primary evidence include: local history societies, local newspaper archives, public libraries and museums, the Internet, biographies and other forms of non-fiction.

Time. Decisions here relate to three other issues. First, the structure and content of the history syllabus. The conventional argument is that the more content-rich a syllabus is the harder it is to find time for students to work with primary source material. The "thematic" and "patch" approaches to syllabus design provide more opportunities for looking at particular events, issues and developments in greater depth and therefore more opportunities to analyse primary source evidence. However, in practice it may be that the time available for students to analyse written sources is more directly related to the aims of the syllabus than to the content.

If the main aim within a content-rich syllabus is for students to acquire factual knowledge then it is probably the case that there will be only limited opportunities for accessing and analysing primary sources. If, on the other hand, the main aim is to develop understanding, interpretative thinking and historical consciousness then primary sources can be important vehicles for learning. The third issue to bear in mind here relates to how primary sources will be used in the history classroom. That is, how much time will you need to allocate for the completion of learning activities and tasks associated with access to primary source material.

Cost. In many parts of Europe the textbook is still, along with the history teacher, the student's main source of historical knowledge and understanding. In some regions educational resources are so limited that it is not even possible to ensure that every student has access to a history textbook. In such circumstances the idea of using primary source material may seem unrealistic and futuristic.

On the other hand, when teaching about the history of the 20th century it may still be possible to make effective use of local sources (oral history, family collections of correspondence and photographs, local newspaper archives). If the school has at least one computer with an Internet connection then it may also be possible to download primary source documents for developing student worksheets and resource boxes around different topics and themes. Links with schools in other countries through e-mail or faxes provides another opportunity for obtaining resource material to provide a multiplicity of perspectives. Indeed, with this problem in mind, the Council of Europe has started to run workshops for history teachers in some parts of Europe on "teaching history without textbooks".

Fitness for purpose. In essence before selecting written primary source material you need to decide why you want to use it. In particular which of the seven uses outlined earlier in this chapter seem to be relevant in any given circumstance. The greater the emphasis on analysing and interpreting history the more opportunities students will need to practise and transfer these ways of thinking.

Using extracts. Generally speaking, because of time and cost constraints, the mixed abilities of students, and the need to maintain interest and motivation, the history teacher, like the textbook author, has to provide students' with extracts from much longer documents. Therefore care needs to be taken to ensure that the original meaning of the source is preserved in the extract and that the shortened version does not distort or over-simplify the account or give undue emphasis to certain statements.

Balance. The use of primary written sources does not eliminate the need to ensure that students are presented with a balanced coverage of the different relevant perspectives and positions on a particular issue and event. This can often entail the teacher in doing some background research about potential sources. For example it is possible to draw on a variety of eye-witness accounts in several languages (by nationals and foreigners) of events in St Petersburg in the March and October revolutions of 1917. However, the use of one or more of these accounts could be very misleading if the students were not also made aware of the various sympathies and political allegiances of the writers.

Similarly it is possible to find on the Internet a lot of source material on the Spanish civil war but most of it is written by people who served in the international brigades and had Republican sympathies. However, it is not always possible to ensure strict, numerical balance when using documentary evidence. In such circumstances it is important to ensure that students interrogate the material in such a way that they can identify possible biases, sympathies and allegiances.

Reading level. It is always important to take into account the difficulties which students might experience when trying to read some primary sources, particularly official documents and dispatches. Sometimes the problem lies in the vocabulary used but often the problem is more that the writer assumes that the reader has knowledge of the context which the students may not actually have. However, rather than avoid using such documents altogether it is better to build into the learning process ways of helping students to read and understand the material. This might include, for example a glossary of terms, a set of accompanying notes that provide the context (such as P.F. are the initials of, the person to whom the this letter was sent was the Italian Ambassador in Washington, etc.), suggestions of where they could obtain additional, explanatory information.

Organisation of learning activities. How will the written primary sources be used? Will students use them to construct narrative accounts of what happened or to cross-check accounts in their textbooks or on a television documentary? Will they be incorporated into role playing or a simulation? Will they form the basis of small group projects, independent enquiry or whole class discussions?

Assessment. What is the planned learning outcome for using primary source material in your classroom and how will you know if that outcome has been achieved?

What students need to know about written sources

The distinction between primary and secondary sources. The common sense view of this is that primary sources are “the basic, raw, imperfect evidence” while secondary sources are the writings and reflections of historians, journalists, commentators and observers.¹ But in practice the difference between primary and secondary sources is often just a matter of degree and much depends upon how close the writer was to the events described, whether or not the account was produced at the time or later and the motives of the writer. For example, the autobiography of a politician, general or revolutionary leader may be regarded as a primary source when the book reflects on events

1. See, for example, the definition offered by A. Marwick, *The nature of history*, London, Macmillan 1970, p.132.

in which that person was directly involved. On the other hand, if it was written years later and was written mainly for the purpose of self-justification then it may be treated by later students of history as a secondary source, and perhaps an unreliable one at that.

Similarly, when writing about some aspect of the history of the 20th century historians, journalists and commentators may be writing about events they lived through and may have observed at first hand. The American historian Arthur Schlesinger had an insider's knowledge of the Kennedy administration in the early 1960s. The Italian historian, Benedetto Croce, a distinguished opponent of fascism, served as a minister in the Italian government in the early 1920s. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union there also seems to have been a remarkably high proportion of professional historians serving as government ministers in the newly emerging democracies of central and eastern Europe. When they write about the events they were directly involved in, the resulting books are likely to be a hybrid of primary and secondary source material.

However, whether the source is primary or secondary or a hybrid of the two, we need to use similar procedures for evaluating all three kinds of source. In particular, we need to ask:

- who it was written by, and why;
- how reliable a source the writer is, in what ways might she or he be biased and whether there is any clear evidence of bias and distortion;
- for whom the document was written, and why;
- where the information came from and how it was obtained;
- if it is consistent with other documents relating to the same subject.

We shall return to these kinds of questions later in this chapter because they are questions that any student of history (not just the professional historian) can and should ask of any historical source whether it be a textbook, a diary, a memoir or a diplomatic dispatch.

The problem as well as the benefit of hindsight. Students also need to be aware when they examine sources, particularly primary sources, that we are reading them with the benefit of hindsight but these documents were written without the knowledge of later developments and also, sometimes, without much idea of what was going to happen in the weeks and months to come. So, in a paradoxical way hindsight restricts our ability to understand the past by giving us greater knowledge than people of the time could have possibly had. For example, we are bound to interpret the significance of the Treaty of Versailles which restructured the borders of central and eastern Europe in 1919 or the Yalta Agreement in 1945 which again restructured Europe in a different way from historians who were writing about them in 1930 or 1950. This is not only because we have much more evidence to work

with, it is also because further consequences have unfolded that could not have been foreseen in 1930 or 1950.

Now this raises an important question. Can we understand people's actions (and the meaning they had for them) if we know the outcome. When we know the future of the past there is always the danger that we shape an account that will explain how things have turned out as they have done. In so doing it becomes harder to get into the minds and motives of the people involved at the time who did not have the benefit of hindsight. This can be a particular problem when students are examining the impact of major developments in society and technology on the lives of and perceptions of ordinary people.

The purpose for which a written source was produced. Textbooks and the other writings of historians and commentators are mostly written to give some coherence to the mass of potential evidence and factual information available about a particular event, development or period. Different historians with different perspectives may assemble the evidence in different ways or give a different emphasis to some facts rather than others. With official documents it is essential to understand who the writer was writing for, the context within which she or he was writing, and the shared knowledge they may already have. In history teaching this means that the use of a single document or extract from a document can pose problems because the student is examining it out of context and out of sequence. The background has to be filled in for them.

Diaries, memoirs, autobiographies and even letters can pose a different kind of problem. For example, to some extent, we can put more faith in diaries that were not written for publication on the assumption that usually – though not always – people are more open, honest and less concerned to justify themselves if the only person likely to read the diary is themselves. If they are writing with an eye to their memoirs being published at some later date then they may wish to justify themselves, cover up their mistakes and misjudgments, and so on. So, for example, the correspondence of ordinary soldiers writing from the western or eastern fronts during the first world war may be a better guide to the sentiments of the frontline soldier than the reports produced by the high command or statements issued to the press by political leaders.

Primary sources and screening. As the French historian, Marc Bloch, once wrote, "sources are simply the tracks left by our predecessors".¹ As noted earlier, governments generate so much paper now that only a fraction (albeit a large fraction) is saved and archived. Most countries choose to keep some documents secret, particularly if they relate to matters of national security –

1. Marc Bloch, *The historian's craft*, Manchester University Press 1954, pp.54-55.

and sometimes definitions of “national security” have been very broad. Most countries also delay the release of documents until they are no longer likely to be politically sensitive. Private papers are also screened. The owner of the papers decides what to keep, what to destroy, and what to make publicly available. Those who inherit the papers may also make similar decisions about what to keep and what to destroy. Publishers also screen biographies and memoirs in case any of the material may lead to legal action against them. A lot of other primary source material has simply survived by accident. In the context of European history, other factors intervene which have a similar effect. The historian, for example, is limited by the number of languages in which she or he is fluent, unless primary source material has been adequately translated into one of the dominant world languages, such as English, French, German, or Russian.

A framework for analysing contemporary written sources

When textbooks include extracts from primary and secondary written sources they also usually include exercises which ask the student some specific questions about the information supplied in the source. In this sense they are substantive questions (What does the writer say about.....? Compare the views of the writers of these two sources? What reasons did X give to support her or his actions? What does this source tell you about living conditions at that time?) A typical example of this approach can be seen in **Box 1** below.

Such questions call for careful reading on the part of the student and sometimes they also require the student to interpret the evidence and make judgments or draw conclusions. But they do not necessarily serve as a means of teaching the student a way of examining historical evidence. Mostly the questions are too specific and context-bound to serve such a purpose.

However, it is also possible to use source material like this to encourage students to ask some procedural or generic questions which they could apply to virtually any source. It is this kind of question that we are focusing upon when we refer to analytical frameworks. In the chapter on reading visual archive sources it was suggested that a set of generic questions could be applied to any historic photograph, and that these questions could be grouped into five broad analytical processes:

- description;
- interpretation and conclusions;
- links to prior knowledge;
- identification of gaps in the evidence;
- identification of sources of further information.

Box 1: Testimony of Hermann Goering

When the civil war broke out in Spain, Franco sent a call for help to Germany and asked for support, particularly in the air. One should not forget that Franco with his troops was stationed in Africa and that he could not get the troops across, as the fleet was in the hands of the Communists ... The decisive factor was, first of all, to get his troops over to Spain.

The Führer thought the matter over. I urged him to give support under all circumstances, firstly, in order to prevent the further spread of communism in that theatre and, secondly, to test my young Luftwaffe at this opportunity in this or that technical respect.

With the permission of the Führer, I sent a large part of my transport fleet and a number of experimental fighter units, bombers, and anti-aircraft guns; and in that way I had an opportunity to ascertain, under combat conditions, whether the material was equal to the task.

Questions

1. What evidence is there that Hitler and Goering saw German involvement in the Spanish civil war in 1936 as useful preparation for the wider European conflict that began in 1939?
2. Why did Franco seek air support from the Luftwaffe?

Source: Testimony of Hermann Goering, Air Marshall during the Third Reich, at the Nuremberg trials, Nov. 1945 to Oct. 1946

These same processes could be applied to any other kind of source, including written sources but the questions which students need to ask will be specific to the analysis of text-based evidence. A model analytical framework is found in **Box 4** at the end of this chapter.

Some of the questions in the framework will not apply to every source, some answers will have to be tentative, acknowledging limited or insufficient information and some may only elicit one word answers. Try the framework out for yourself on **Box 5**, which immediately follows it. **Box 5** is a diplomatic dispatch from Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador in London (1911-14) writing to Jagow, the German Foreign Minister on 24 July, 1914 about the reactions of the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey to the news that, following the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, Austria had sent an ultimatum to Serbia. The source has the added bonus that it also includes the Kaiser's own notes in the margin.

Now a source such as this raises a number of important and interesting substantive questions for students to consider. For example:

- what were Sir Edward Grey's main concerns regarding the likely consequences of the Austrian ultimatum?
- compare and contrast the language used by the German Ambassador and Kaiser Wilhelm II.
- given what we know about the situation in Europe after 1918, how accurate were Sir Edward Grey's predictions of the likely outcomes of a European War?

It is not being suggested here that the generic or procedural questions outlined in this framework are an alternative to these substantive questions. They complement each other. It is being suggested however that sources can be used in the history classroom both to enhance understanding of a specific event or issue and also to provide students with a transferable approach to analysing written sources of all kinds (including contemporary ones).

Learning activities based around written sources

Examining written sources in sequence. It is becoming increasingly possible to access archived official papers and documents relating to some of the most important events and developments of the 20th century. Some of these appear in published collections while others can be downloaded from history websites on the Internet. (For more details see the chapter on history on the Internet). For example, the diplomatic dispatch reproduced in **Box 5** is part of a whole series of dispatches between the German Embassy in London and the Foreign Office in Berlin during the period leading up to the outbreak of the first world war in 1914. The same website also includes other relevant documents such as the Austrian Government's ultimatum to the Serbian government and the Serbian reply and the correspondence at this time between the Kaiser and the tsar. This makes it much easier now to create resource files of primary source material for students to work on.

There are two potential advantages to using whole series of documents in this way. Firstly, official documents are usually dated, often have a reference number and may even have the time on them when they were dispatched and when they were received by the persons to whom they were sent. They may also include the reference numbers of other relevant documents. This helps students to be able to piece together the sequence of events or actions in order to better understand what happened, when and why. Secondly, a series of documents can also provide students with a better sense of the complexity of events and the ways in which decisions are really taken than the summary offered in a conventional textbook.

Written sources can also be a useful way of developing students' historical understanding when they are selected to give a sense of key actors' retrospective perceptions of what happened. For example, compare the sources in **Box 6** at the end of the chapter with the diplomatic dispatch from Prince Lichnowsky in **Box 5**.

Comparing newspaper coverage of a European issue. Many history teachers and textbook authors make some use of newspaper cuttings on significant events and developments, particularly when examining 20th-century history in their own countries. Inevitably the scope for doing this when examining the history of the continent from a European, rather than a national, perspective tends to be restricted to the use of newspapers printed in the main second (and perhaps third) languages which their students study at school and to newspapers produced in languages which may have regional currency, such as German and Russian. Undoubtedly the scope for doing this has increased and at the end of the 20th century a number of newspapers produced special editions which incorporated articles selected to reflect the main events of the century.

Again the Internet can provide a means of extending the range of written sources available to the history teacher. Some of the most influential newspapers across Europe now have electronic archives which are accessible through the Internet. However, this is a relatively recent enterprise and, mostly, they cover only the last five to ten years. Interesting newspaper cuttings can also be found on some of the Internet websites described in the chapter on using new technologies in history teaching on the Internet. Perhaps one of the most interesting and useful sources for the history teacher looking at recent developments in Europe (particularly since the break-up of the Soviet Union) is the Foreign Media Reaction website maintained by the United States Department of State (see Chapter 12). On a daily basis the press officers at every United States Embassy review local media coverage of the main events and issues, produce extracts, translate them into English and transmit them electronically to the American State Department where a weekly focus of foreign media reaction is produced and put on to the website. Inevitably the selection of items reflects the specific interests and concerns of the United States government but the report tend to be very wide-ranging and criticism of American policy is not filtered out. A typical report could include reactions from press, radio and television in thirty to forty countries. Consequently when looking at events and developments in Europe over the last ten years or so this can provide a useful means of:

- looking at the way in which different governments and newspapers with different political and ideological positions have reacted to a specific event;
- looking at ways in which the reaction of the media have changed as the issue has developed. In this respect this is a particularly useful way of

examining changing perspectives on Bosnia, Kosovo, Northern Ireland, Chechnya, Cyprus and Turkish-Greek relations, etc.

Comparing eye-witness accounts. Eye-witness accounts that have been published in memoirs, autobiographies and textbooks should be compared. There is a wealth of material available on, for example, the Holocaust, the March and October Russian revolutions in 1917, the Spanish civil war, the end of the dictatorships in Greece, Spain and Portugal, the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the Prague Spring of 1968, the building and pulling down of the Berlin Wall, and so on. It is also useful for students to be given an opportunity to compare these eye-witness accounts with later interpretations by historians.

Comparing secondary sources. A couple of days in a good library can produce a wealth of useful material here to demonstrate, for example, how historians of different nationalities may interpret the same event in very different ways. The two excerpts in **Box 2** below which relate to the German-Soviet Pact of 23 August 1939 (also known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact) show how this kind of activity can provide:

- a richer seam of evidence on a specific event or development;
- scope for looking at events from more than one national perspective;
- scope for examining the nature of historical interpretation.

Although it tends to be assumed that the study of historiography is too difficult for secondary school students it is still useful for them to undertake small-scale enquiries to find out if historians of different generations have looked at the same event or development in similar or rather different ways. For example, do contemporary British, French and German historians interpret the consequences of the Treaty of Versailles 1919 in the same way as their counterparts did in the 1920s and 1930s. Do contemporary historians living in the former colonial powers cover the end of colonialism in the same way as historians writing in, say, the 1950s?

Using unconventional written sources. It was observed in the chapter on reading visual archive material that cartoons, postcards, posters and some photographs can provide useful illustrations of and insights into the public mood of the times. Sometimes they can also encapsulate a policy, an ideology or a social movement, because that is what they were designed to do. Some written sources play the same role. For example, getting students to analyse some political or ideological slogans can be an effective way of helping them to understand the distinctive message which a particular group or movement was trying to convey to the public at large. In this respect a collection of slogans can be particularly illuminating. See, for example, the slogans produced by the Italian Fascist Party in the early 1930s in **Box 3** below.

Box 2: Secondary sources on the German-Soviet Pact, August 1939

Source 1: A Soviet historian writing in 1981

Why did Chamberlain and Daladier help Hitler to achieve his aims? They hoped to appease Hitler by giving him some Czech land. They wanted to direct German aggression eastwards towards the USSR ... As a result the USSR stood alone in the face of the growing Nazi threat. In this situation the USSR had to make a treaty of non-aggression with Germany....this gave the USSR time to strengthen its defences.

Quoted in R. Rees, *The Modern World* (Heinemann 1996)

Source 2: A British historian writing in 1996

In later years the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact was to be justified on the grounds that it gave the Soviet Union time to construct its defences. Given what happened two years later the argument looks plausible; but this could be yet another classic case of reading history backwards. In 1939 there was indeed a possibility that Hitler would turn on the USSR after defeating the West; but this was only one contingency, and not necessarily the most likely or the most immediate one ... two indications are important. First there is very little evidence to show that the Red Army gave priority after August 1939 to preparing defence in depth.... Secondly, studies of the Red Army's dispositions in the early summer of 1941 suggest that the two previous years had been spent creating a distinctly offensive posture.

Source: N. Davies, *Europe: a history* (Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 1000

Box 3: Political slogans as a historical source

"Believe! Obey! Fight"

"He who has steel has bread"

"Nothing has been won in history without bloodshed"

"Live Dangerously!"

"Better to live one day as a lion than a hundred years as a sheep"

"War is to a man what childbearing is to a woman"

"Fascism is the most formidable creation of an individual and national will to power"

"Fascism is an organised, centralised, authoritarian democracy"

"Fascism stands for the only liberty worth having, the liberty of the state and the individual within the state"

Using written sources to research life styles in a particular period. The popular press, advertisements, catalogues, cookery books, life style magazines all provide useful source material for students to research fashion trends, family life, people's social roles, which goods were considered to be necessities and luxuries, people's diets, perceived differences between social classes, what was considered to be appropriate social behaviour, what was considered to be "normal" and "abnormal" and public perceptions of people in authority. It can be more difficult to introduce a genuinely European dimension here but exchanges of material by post, fax or e-mail between schools in different countries can quickly build up an interesting comparative collection of resources on life styles at different times over this century.

Box 4: Framework for analysing written sources

Description: only answer these questions on the basis of the information provided. Do not try to guess. For example, only answer question No. 2 if the date or year is given. Do not assume it was written at the time of the event it describes.

Context

1. Who wrote this document (persons or positions)?
2. When was it written?
3. Who was it written for?
4. What sort of document is it?
 - a diary entry;
 - a letter;
 - official report or minute;
 - a diplomatic dispatch;
 - an extract from a history textbook;
 - an extract from an autobiography or biography.
5. Summarise the main points made by the writer.
6. Does this source contain any references to events or people which you do not understand?
7. Does it contain any words, phrases or abbreviations which you are not familiar with?

(continued)

| Box 4: Framework for analysing written sources | |
|--|---|
| Interpretation | Evidence: how do you know? |
| 8. Is this a primary or a secondary source? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the source written at the time the event happened or days, weeks, months or even years later? • Are there any clues in the document to show that the source is based on the writer's direct experience of or involvement in the events described? • Was the writer an eye-witness to what happened? • Was the writer in a good position to know what was actually happening? |
| 9. Are there any clues in the source as to how the writer got the information presented? | |
| 10. As far as you can tell does this seem to be a reliable account of what happened? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any clues in the text that would lead you to think that this is a reliable source? |
| 11. Why was this particular document written? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any clues (for example the author's name, position, address, title of the document) to help you identify why it was written? • Can you work out why the document was written from the way it was written, for example to provide someone else with information? To make a personal record of what happened? To reply to a request? To justify the writer's actions or decisions? To please or annoy the person receiving the document? |
| 12. What does the source tell us about the writer's own point of view or position? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writer just reporting a situation, passing on information or describing what has happened or does the source also contain opinions, conclusions or recommendations? |
| 13. Is the writer biased in any way? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writer trying to give an objective and balanced account of what happened? • Are there any statements or phrases which reveal the writer's prejudices for and against any group, person or viewpoint? <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |

Box 4: Framework for analysing written sources**Links to prior knowledge**

14. Are the facts in this source supported by facts you already know from other sources, including your textbook?
15. Does the source confirm or contradict the interpretation of events in those other sources?

Identification of gaps in the evidence

16. Are there any gaps in the evidence such as missing names, dates or other facts which would help you to answer the above questions?

Identification of sources of further information

Can you think of any other sources which would help to fill in the gaps and help you to check the information provided in this source or the writer's interpretation of events?

Box 5: Diplomatic dispatch from Prince Lichnowsky

Lichnowsky to Jagow
Telegram 151
D.D.157

London 24 July 1914
D. 9.12 p.m.
R. 25 July 1.16 a.m.

This would be desirable.
It is not a nation in the
European sense, but a
band of robbers

Right.

Sir E. Grey asked me to call on him just now. Minister was evidently greatly affected by the Austrian note, which, according to his view, exceeded anything he had ever seen of this sort before. He said that he had so far had no news from St Petersburg, and consequently did not know what they thought of the matter there. But he very much doubted whether it would be possible for the Russian government to recommend to the Serbian Government the unconditional acceptance of the Austrian demands. Any nation that accepted conditions like that would really cease to count as an independent nation. It was very difficult for him, Sir E. Grey, to offer advice of any sort to St Petersburg at the present moment. He could only hope that a mild and pacific view of the situation would gain ground there. As long as the matter concerned a localised quarrel between Austria and Serbia, such as Your Excellency laid stress on in dispatch 1055 which I employed in talking to Sir E. Grey, he, Sir E. Grey, had nothing to do with it; but it would be a different matter should public opinion in Russia force the government to proceed against Austria.

(continued)

Box 5: Diplomatic dispatch from Prince Lichnowsky

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Right for they aren't!</p> <p>Right.</p> <p>Then the Russians are not any better themselves.</p> <p>Which will certainly happen.</p> <p>He forgets Italy.</p> <p>Useless.</p> <p>This is superfluous, as Austria has already made matters plain to Russia, and Grey has nothing else to propose. I will not join in unless Austria expressly asks me to, which is not likely. In vital questions and those of honour, one does not consult with others.</p> <p>Nonsense.</p> <p>It may give Persia to England.</p> | <p>To my remark that one could not measure the Balkan peoples by the same standard as the civilised nations of Europe, and that therefore one had to use another kind of language with them – that had been proved by their barbaric manner of warfare – than one used, say, towards Britons or Germans, the minister replied that even if he were able to share this opinion, he did not believe that it would be accepted in Russia. The danger of a European war, should Austria invade Serbian territory would become immediate. The results of such a war between four nations – he expressly emphasised the number four, and meant by it Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany and France – would be absolutely incalculable. However the affair might come out, one thing would be certain: that would be total exhaustion and impoverishment; industry and trade would be ruined, and the power of capital destroyed. Revolutionary movements, like those of the year 1848, due to the collapse of industrial activities would be the result. What Sir Edward Grey most deplored, beside the tone of the note, was the brief time-limit, which made war almost unavoidable. He told me that he would be willing to join with us in pleading for a prolongation of the time-limit at Vienna, as in that way perhaps a way out might be found. He requested me to transmit this proposal to Your Excellency. He further suggested that in the event of a dangerous tension between Russia and Austria, the four nations not immediately concerned – England, Germany, France and Italy – should undertake to mediate between Russia and Austria. This proposal, also, he requested me to submit to your Excellency.</p> <p>The minister is evidently endeavouring to do everything to avoid European complications, and would not conceal his great regret at the challenging tone of the Austrian note and at the brief time-limit.</p> <p>I am told from another quarter in the Foreign Office that there is reason for the assumption that Austria is very much under-estimating Serbia's power of self-defence. In any event it will be a long and desperate fight, in which Austria will be excessively weakened and in which she will be bled white. They also claim to know that Roumania's attitude is more than uncertain, and that they were saying in Bucharest that they would be against anybody who attacked.</p> |
| <p><i>Source:</i> Documents section (1914) of the World War I website: http://www/lib-byu.edu/~idh/wwi</p> | |

Box 6: Sources on the responsibility for the outbreak of the first world war

Source 1: When Wilhelm II saw the Serbian reply to the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia in July 1914 he commented: “A great moral success for Vienna, but with it all reason for war disappears”.

(L.C.F. Turner, *Origins of the first world war*, Arnold 1970, p.103)

Source 2: Extract from the Kaiser’s memoirs (written after the end of the war)

Upon my arrival at Potsdam I found the Chancellor and the Foreign Office in conflict with the Chief of the General Staff, since General von Moltke was of the opinion that war was sure to break out, whereas the other two stuck firmly to their view that things would not get to such a bad pass, that there would be some way of avoiding war, provided I did not order mobilisation. This dispute kept up steadily. Not until General von Moltke announced that the Russians had set fire to their frontier posts, torn up the frontier railway tracks, and posted red mobilisation notices did a light break upon the diplomats in the Wilhelmstrasse and bring about their own collapse and that of their powers of resistance. They had not wished to believe in the war. This shows plainly how little we had expected – much less prepared for – war in July, 1914 ... Our entire diplomatic machine failed. The menace of war was not seen because the Foreign Office was so hypnotised with ... its belief in peace at any cost, that it had completely eliminated war as a possible instrument of entente statesmanship from its calculations, and, therefore, did not rightly estimate the importance of the signs of war.

Source 3: Extract from the memoirs of Prince Lichnowsky

It is shown by all official publications and is not disproved by our White Book, which, owing to the poverty of its contents and to its omissions, constitutes a grave indictment against ourselves, that:

1. We encouraged Count Berchtold to attack Serbia, although no German interest was involved and the danger of a world war must have been known to us...
2. During the period between the 23rd and the 30th of July, 1914 ... we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, under Russian and British pressure, had accepted almost the whole of the ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points at issue could easily have been reached and Count Berchtold was even prepared to content himself with the Serbian reply.
3. On the 30th of July, when Count Berchtold showed a disposition to change his course, we sent an ultimatum to St Petersburg merely because of the Russian mobilisation and though Austria had not been attacked; and on the 31st of July we declared war against the Russians, although the Tsar pledged his word that he would not permit a single man to march as long as negotiations were still going on. Thus we deliberately destroyed the possibility of a peaceful settlement.

In view of these incontestable facts, it is no wonder that the whole civilised world outside of Germany places the sole responsibility for the world war upon our shoulders.

CHAPTER 17

TELEVISION AS A SOURCE

Although, in Europe, television has only acquired a mass public audience since the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the archiving of television programmes has tended to be rather haphazard, it still has the potential for offering the history teacher a wealth of resource material for teaching about the political, social, cultural and economic history of 20th-century Europe.

Tele-history

The History Channel is now available in a growing number of European countries and some schools actively use it in their teaching, particularly for modern European and world history. Some public broadcasting channels also provide a schools education service which includes programmes on modern history. But perhaps to date the three main sources of tele-history have been:

- one-off programmes on specific events and issues, which teachers usually need to video for use in the classroom;
- historical reconstructions. These have been more commonly employed in television for programmes on earlier centuries but the further we move away from some of the key historical events of the 20th century the more likely it is that they will be presented in this way. From a teaching point of view they are valuable in a number of ways: they convey a sense of decisions being taken under pressure, they often offer multiple perspectives on the event and the dialogue is often authentic, based upon verifiable primary sources;
- the major television series which have tended to be produced to coincide with significant anniversaries, and are subsequently marketed as videos.

Many of the one-off programmes have been produced by small independent television companies; they have been relatively cheap to produce, relied heavily on still photographs as well as old newsreels, and made much use of "talking heads" (that is the oral testimony of eye-witnesses or key figures who participated in the events under discussion). Many were produced in response to the massive increase in demand for cheap programmes when the broadcasting companies extended their daytime viewing in the 1970s and early 1980s. Nevertheless, history teachers who took steps to record some

of these programmes now have a mine of resource material for teaching 20th-century history.

Perhaps two of the most ambitious and expensive series to emerge over the last twenty-five years have been Thames Television's *The world at war* (on the second world war), which was first shown in 1973 but for which it is still possible to purchase the videos, and the more recent series by the BBC, *The people's century*, which was first shown in 1996. Undoubtedly, the coincidence of the end of the century and the end of a millennium will have also generated a host of retrospective history programmes drawing on early newsreel footage and the television companies' own recording archives.

Documentaries

Some historians are now beginning to recognise that many television documentaries and current affairs programmes have been sources of wholly new evidence. In some cases this has been because the producers of a documentary have managed to persuade politicians and administrators to talk for the first time about a particular event or important decision. In other cases this has been because programme makers have gained access to more unconventional sources of evidence which are not always represented in written archives except as statistics: refugees, immigrants experiencing racism, victims of terrorism, terrorists and freedom fighters themselves, the victims of human rights abuses, and so on. As such, some documentaries have proved in retrospect to have been important social and political documents in their own right.

News programmes

In theory newscasts ought to be a major source of historical evidence for teaching about the late 20th century. In practice broadcasters archive very little of their news output and tend to preserve only those items which, at the time, they felt were likely to have long-term historical significance. So social studies and history teachers who want to use news items in their teaching have to rely mainly on their own recordings. Not surprisingly, therefore, teachers are more likely to use material from news programmes as a vehicle for enabling their students to analyse the medium rather than the message: the impact that production techniques and production values can have on the content and presentation of news programmes. While teachers of social studies, media studies and to a lesser extent, language teachers examine television programmes from this perspective, this has been virtually ignored by history teachers, except in the rather limited sphere of "the moving image as propaganda".

Infotainment

Tele-history and documentaries tend to focus on events, important people or specific periods of time. However, as we saw in Chapter 1 of this handbook,

secondary school history curricula in most European countries focus upon themes as well as topics when examining recent history. In this respect those so-called infotainment programmes which look at 20th century movements in the arts and culture, developments in science and technology, changes in social and sexual mores and changes in the ways we live and work can all make a useful contribution to history teaching.

Drama, soap operas and situation comedies

Drama, soap operas and situation comedies can all contribute to helping students to understand changes in public attitudes and changing social issues and concerns. For example, a look at extracts from the same soap opera over an extended period of time (say, ten to twenty years) can serve as a mirror of changing social attitudes to family life, gender-related issues, unemployment, drugs abuse, education, crime, the police and authority figures in general. Furthermore, these programmes are often readily available in video format because there is a greater market for them than, for example, history documentaries and reconstructions. However, because they cannot be used as a direct alternative to textbooks they do require more preparatory work on the part of the history teacher.

Also, of course, television is not the only source of moving images which have relevance for our understanding of the history of this century. Silent newsreels, with captions, were being shown in cinemas and other public places before the first world war. Indeed their potential impact was thought to be so great that some governments, particularly amongst the Great Powers, ran their own newsreel units during the war.

However, their real significance only emerged after the development of synchronised sound by Fox News in the United States in 1927. By the outbreak of the second world war around one third to a half of the population in most European countries was going to the cinema at least once a week. The circulation of even the most popular newspapers of the day could not compete with this. Moreover the newsreels were much more likely to reach a genuine cross-section of the population. For the first time the mass public was able to see what was happening in the world outside their town, village or region and formulate a point of view on it. At the same time, while the newsreel editors saw themselves in competition with the popular press, newsreels were shown as part of a cinema programme and therefore had to entertain as well as inform. This also meant that the editors were often at pains not to offend the cinema owners and the powerful film companies. They were also anxious to avoid offending political authorities and thereby finding themselves subject to more rigorous political control and censorship.

By 1960 the newsreels had ceased to be significant formers of public opinion, although some continued to operate for another decade or so. But they had had an influence on television news production which was still apparent into the 1970s when new technologies and techniques and increased competition changed news gathering and presentation.

Like any other historical source the newsreel and, subsequently, television, needs to be subjected to the same kind of stringent scrutiny and verification processes as any other primary or secondary source. For example, in the first two decades of the new century some unscrupulous producers of newsreels and allegedly non-fiction films produced faked studio-based "footage" of various battles, disasters, human tragedies, coronations and political assassinations.

A Council of Europe guide to using fictional films as historical documents is under preparation and offers a list of films with ideas on how they can be used in the history classroom. Teachers interested in ways of using film, particularly fictional films, in history classrooms are referred to that document. Film directors and producers, from the very beginning of commercial film making, have been interested in the representation of important historical events and the lives of important historical persons. These have ranged from complete fabrication to relatively authentic accounts. Similarly, films have often played an important role in glorifying a nation's history, minimising or justifying the more discreditable actions or even re-writing history for ideological reasons.

But perhaps the most fruitful area for the history teacher who is thinking of using film as a resource for studying the 20th century is to look at how films have identified and reflected almost all of the significant social, economic and technological changes that have affected people's lives: war, economic depression, the changing role of women, changes in family life, changes in the workplace, migration, urbanisation, the shifting role of religion, the emergence of the teenager and teenage *Angst*, and changing perceptions of what is right and wrong. In this respect it has often been the genre films, such as crime, horror, war films, westerns and science fiction which have brought these themes into high relief.

Why use television as a source for history teaching?

Educationally speaking, television programmes and extracts can do a number of things very well:

- they can present history in a highly stimulating way, often through using presentational techniques with which the students are familiar from other programme genres;

- they lend themselves to narrative and historical reconstruction;
- they help to give a sense of immediacy and concreteness to events which happened a long time ago or in places or countries of which the student knows very little;
- through old newsreels or reconstructions they help to give students a sense of a place and a period;
- they provide insights into the experiences, thoughts, feelings and attitudes of people directly involved in a particular event or historical development;
- and, as previously stated, television programmes are also a source of primary historical evidence about the 20th century.

Provided history teachers carefully evaluate television resources before using them in the classroom, have a clear idea of just exactly why they want to use a particular programme or excerpt and how it will relate to their overall learning objectives and plan learning activities around the programme or excerpt so as to maximise its educational value, then television resources can be a highly useful and effective educational tool in history teaching.

However, the history teacher also needs to take into account the potential impact which television can have outside the classroom. In a given week many students will spend as much time watching television as they spend at school. Whilst history programmes, documentaries and newscasts may not rank very highly on their lists of viewing preferences, television is still an important part of most students' everyday experience and informal learning. It is important, therefore, as one educationalist has argued, to try to shape and formalise that learning, by providing students with information about the medium of television and a structure or framework of questions and concepts for analysing its output.¹ In particular students need to understand that television is not as neutral, objective and transparent as it appears. That it is not simply "a window on the world", but that the images it presents have been selected and edited to fit certain criteria of "what makes good television" and, in some cases, to fit the political authority's criteria of what is appropriate and ideologically acceptable television. These are issues to which we shall return later in this chapter.

The key point to emphasise here is that we need to help students to understand that when using television programmes, newsreels and films as historical evidence then they need to go behind and beyond the on-screen images and the content of the sound commentaries to look at:

- the context within which these newscasts and films were made;
- the organisations which made them;

1. Len Masterman, *Teaching about television*, London, Macmillan 1980.

- the audiences they were made for;
- the purposes for which they were made;
- the processes through which evidence was gathered, verified, edited and juxtaposed with other evidence;
- the impact of the techniques and technologies used;
- and the producers and editors' perceptions of what makes a good programme.

The raw material may be very different from the kinds of primary and secondary evidence they are used to when looking at textbooks, official documents, diaries, letters, postcards, posters, cartoons, photographs and maps but the analytical procedures that need to be employed and the questions that need to be asked are not dissimilar from those asked of any other kind of historical source.

Problems and potential constraints

First, accessibility to suitable material is a problem. A lot of material that is over fifty years old has perished, having been produced on nitrate stock which deteriorated quite rapidly. Museums and film archives have tried to preserve much of what was left by converting it to more durable and stable formats but even the newer acetate-based stock deteriorates. At present no one seems to be sure what the "shelf-life" of video cassettes or CD-Roms will be. Newsreel and television companies, with a few exceptions, have not tended to see their products as historical artefacts that need to be archived for future historians and teachers. On the whole commercial criteria have determined whether a programme or series has survived. For the rest, with one or two exceptions, survival has often depended on chance factors. Much therefore depends on the motivation of the history teacher to video suitable programmes, then evaluate them for their educational potential, identify the excerpts to use and develop learning activities around them.

Second, the moving image is not the easiest educational resource to use effectively in the classroom. Realistically, if students are going to subject televisual source material to critical analysis (and not simply take it at face value as a kind of textbook substitute) then the teacher is faced with two options. The students are given the time to watch, take notes, re-wind to significant segments, discuss and interpret, or the teacher has to convert a film or television programme, or more realistically, excerpts, into some kind of written text describing specific shots, reproducing commentary, dialogue and questions and answers, and describing any other significant sounds, such as the music track and background noise.

Third, media specialists (including a growing number of programme producers) recognise that tele-history programmes, and most documentaries and current affairs programmes tend to have the following limitations as vehicles for historical education and as sources of historical evidence:

- they are not usually very effective at conveying the chronology of events or giving detailed explanations of why something has happened. This is perhaps another way of saying that news and current affairs coverage of the major historical events and crises of the last fifty years has often been quite ahistorical, either focusing on immediate causes (“the spark which set it off”) or offering a simplistic explanation which is never questioned or subjected to analysis. The coverage in western broadcasting media of developments in the Balkans throughout the 1990s has often reinforced unquestioningly an assumption that “there has always been ethnic unrest and violence in this region”;
- they often do not make connections between events and developments happening in one place and at one particular time and parallel developments in another place and another time;
- they do not cite their sources or explain how they verified them;
- the selection of sources is often determined by production values rather than educational values: an entertaining speaker rather than an informative but boring one or a shot which conveys action, excitement, pressure, panic, conflict or violence even if other verifiable sources indicate that these were not typical of what actually happened;
- the context is not always dealt with effectively. The material is allowed “to speak for itself”.

Finally, there is also the problem that even when a television crew covers events in another European country or a genuinely international issue or crisis the reporters or the editors, or both, will tend to emphasise their own nation's interests and concerns, rather than examine the situation from a genuinely European perspective. This situation is changing, partly because of the emergence of new technologies including portable camcorders, portable satellite transmitters and satellite telephones, and partly because of the emergence of 24-hour news channels, such as CNN, which will provide extended live coverage of events with minimal editorial interference. In this respect television coverage of the Gulf war and the attempted coup in the Russian Federation in 1991 and subsequent coverage of developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo have begun to change this tendency to impose a national agenda on the coverage of “foreign news”.

Using television as a resource in the history classroom

The history of television

It is difficult to see how the cultural history of the 20th century could be adequately covered in history curricula without looking at how television has developed into a medium of mass communication, the organisational structure of public and commercial broadcasting and its role in reflecting society, informing and shaping public opinion, attitudes, behaviour and tastes. Of course students may well be looking at some of the aspects of mass communication elsewhere in the curriculum, in social studies or media studies. However, there is a distinctive historical dimension that is often overlooked.

The history of television lends itself to a thematic approach which focuses on a number of developmental strands, such as:

- technological developments: conversion of light into electrical impulses, use of cathode ray tubes for transmitting and reproducing pictures, John Logie Baird's experiments in the 1930s, emergence of the first public television service in 1936, the take-off of television in North America and Europe, introduction of colour reproduction in United States in 1953, the emergence of different systems for transmitting colour signals (SECAM in France and the Soviet Union and PAL in most of the rest of Europe), high definition television with more scanning lines, the growing influence of Japan on technology, the emergence of a universal European system in 1991, the development of new, lightweight portable cameras, video, the emergence of portable satellite transmitters, digitalisation of technology, then used in programme production and now transmission.
- emergence of a mass audience: the growth in private ownership of television sets, the extension of hours of viewing, the changes and developments in the range of programme genres on offer, advertising on television, the rapid expansion in the number of TV channels, the growth of pay-television cable networks, the introduction of satellite television, the development of interactive television.
- organisational developments: the early competition (and influences of) newsreels and radio, public service broadcasting, the emergence of commercially-owned broadcasting companies, increasing governmental and European regulation of broadcasting, political censorship, the nature of competition in television broadcasting, the internationalisation of television programming, the emergence of global television companies.
- social and cultural influence: its influence on politics and politicians, its influence on the voter, television in times of war, the influence of television on children, the influence of television on people's behaviour (for example has it made people more violent or more accepting of violence?).

Using tele-history and documentaries

Essentially the objective here is to devise learning activities whereby the students will use primary and secondary evidence from tele-history and television documentaries to see if it confirms or contradicts evidence they have accessed from other sources (including textbooks, topic books, the interpretations of different historians, the photographic record). This would put them into the role of a kind of historical detective, going through the following stages:

- *stage 1*: students watch the film (or an excerpt from it) taking systematic notes about: the key points being made in the commentary, the kinds of evidence used (oral testimony, archived film, references to official documents, expert testimony, etc.), the emphasis given to different kinds of evidence and the conclusions drawn;
- *stage 2*: they discuss their summaries in small groups and produce an agreed summary;
- *stage 3*: they then compare the television version or account with another source, such as a textbook and identify the points of agreement and the differences in the two sources;
- *stage 4*: finally they discuss why any differences might have emerged, for example new evidence, different interpretations of the old evidence, different points of emphasis or they decide if the difference is mainly due to the emphasis in the television programme on the need to use visual material (that is has the medium influenced the way in which this historical event or development has been covered)?

Examining filmed archive evidence

Take an excerpt from a newsreel or a more recent documentary on a particular historical event or situation and get the students in small groups to seek answers to the following questions:

- Who made the film?
- Why was the film made? Was it a newsreel for cinema audiences? Was it a programme made for educational purposes? Was it part of a series? Was it a one-off for news and current affairs programming?
- Who do you think was the intended audience for the film?
- What kinds of evidence is the film using: primary and/or secondary evidence? eyewitness accounts? the oral testimony of people directly involved? journalists? politicians? visual evidence?)
- What is the film trying to do? Is it trying to influence public opinion or the views of decision makers? Is it trying to explain what happened and/or trying to inform people on who was doing what to whom and when? Is it

trying to give a voice to those who have been ignored or trying to correct the historical record?

- Does it succeed in doing this?
- Is there any soundtrack music? What mood does it convey?
- What messages do the images convey?
- Do these visual messages match the message in the commentary?
- What is the tone of the commentary? Is it biased or one-sided, and if so, in what ways? Is it attempting to give a balanced account of what happened? Is it neutral or critical?
- How are the interviews and oral testimony used? Are they being asked to describe what happened and when? Are they being asked to pass judgments on others? Are they being asked for their opinions? Are they being asked to say why they thought something happened? Do they seem to have been selected because they agree with each other or because they disagree?
- On the basis of your reading about this event or issue can you identify any evidence or points of view which have been left out?

CHAPTER 18

EVALUATING HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

The history that is taught in schools is not the sole preserve of the academic historian, the teacher, the textbook writer and the publisher. It is widely perceived to be public property. Politicians, pressure groups, ethnic and language minorities, and parents in general often feel that they have a right to try and influence the content of the history curriculum and the ways in which it is taught to a much larger extent than they would ever attempt to do with the curriculum for mathematics, science or geography. In this respect, history textbooks are also public property and all kinds of groups within the same country and in neighbouring countries may have valid concerns about the content of these books, the explicit and implicit messages and assumptions transmitted by the text, the illustrations and source material as well as by what has been included and omitted, the appropriateness of the teaching and learning styles employed by the writers, and by practical concerns related to cost, availability and value for money.

What kinds of questions need to be asked in order to evaluate a textbook before deciding whether to purchase and use it? This short chapter is intended to serve as a stimulus for further discussion. It is not written with the intention of seeking to offer a definitive answer to the question "What is a good history textbook?" Indeed, one of the assumptions behind this chapter is that the answer to this question is likely to vary from one educational system to another and, consequently any attempt to offer a definitive answer usually leads to little more than broad and rather platitudinous generalisations. Of course, there may be certain pedagogic principles and design features which may apply to any history textbook but these are unlikely to be sufficient to ensure that a given textbook is appropriate and suitable for every circumstance. The context in which a textbook is written, published, marketed, purchased and used in classrooms is also critically important. Therefore, the evaluative questions in the following checklist have been organised into three main categories: first, questions designed to evaluate the content and pedagogy of history textbooks; second, questions which focus on the intrinsic qualities of textbooks (and which are likely to apply regardless of the country in which they are published and used, the content covered, or the age and ability ranges of the students for whom they are

written); and, finally, questions which focus on the extrinsic factors which are external to the processes of writing, publishing and using textbooks and yet which impinge on and influence those processes.

Evaluating the content and pedagogy of history textbooks

History teachers and committees authorising textbooks will no doubt look at possible textbooks in some depth before deciding which ones are most suitable. Others may be able to obtain much of the evidence for answering these questions by some skim reading, looking at the treatment of two or three topics in more depth, examining some of the assignments and assessment exercises at random, and by making some simple lists (for example a list of topics covered to compare with the topics listed in the history curriculum, number of pages devoted to different topics, etc.)

Content

1. Which historical period or periods are covered? Do these periods exactly match those covered in the relevant curriculum guidelines or syllabuses? Are there any gaps which would need to be filled by other textbooks or teaching materials?
2. How is the content organised in terms of structure and sequence? Does the textbook present a fairly comprehensive chronological survey of an extended period of time? Or, a more selective survey? Or, focus on a few important periods in national, regional, European or world history (for example antiquity, the Middle Ages, the explorations, 19th-century Europe, the cold war)? Or, does it focus on broad historical themes and developments (for example the Christianisation of Europe, the emergence of the nation-state, industrialisation, imperialism and colonialism, etc.)?
3. Is the structure of the content in the textbook in line with the structure or framework used in the history curriculum?
4. How many pages are devoted to each period covered and does this allocation reflect the coverage in the official curriculum?
5. How much emphasis is given to political, diplomatic, economic, social and cultural history within the contents of the textbook? Does the emphasis or balance between these different dimensions vary significantly according to the period covered? Does the emphasis in the textbook match or complement the emphasis in the official history curriculum?
6. Does the textbook focus predominantly on national history, regional history, European history or global history or some combination of these?

Does this focus match or complement the emphasis in the official history curriculum?

7. If the textbook includes some coverage of regional, European or world history, what is the perspective? For example, does the textbook tend to offer a national perspective on European or regional history? Does it tend to offer a predominantly Eurocentric perspective on global history? Does it tend to present a western perspective on events and developments in eastern Europe, or vice versa?
8. Does the coverage of national history involve looking at how other countries and peoples might have perceived events and developments in the home country?
9. If the textbook is essentially about European history then how is Europe defined explicitly or implicitly in the text? Does it include western, central and eastern Europe or only one region? Does it focus on the common cultural heritage or those factors which highlight diversity?
10. Can any patterns be discerned in those topics, events, groups, dimensions and perspectives, which are omitted from the text, illustrations, source material or assessment tasks? Are there any implicit messages in these omissions?

Pedagogical approaches

11. What prerequisite knowledge, if any, is required for the student to effectively access and use this textbook?
12. What prerequisite skills and understanding, if any, are required for the student to interpret any source material, and attempt any activities and assessment tasks contained in the opening sections of the textbook?
13. Does it function as a workbook as well as a “text” book? (Does it include source material, activities and tasks as well as narrative text?) If it does where are the other elements located in the book and how are they organised? For example, is there source material and/or other learning activities at the end of each chapter or are these all located at the back of the book? (Location of the different elements can have implications for how the teacher and the student will use the textbook.)
14. If the textbook includes assignments, questions, tasks and assessment exercises, what appears to be their function? Do they seem to be mainly concerned with the student’s recall of information supplied in the text or do they provide the student with opportunities to critically examine historical evidence, recognise how the same evidence can be open to more

than one interpretation, evaluate the likely biases of different sources of historical evidence, provide the tools and the encouragement to undertake some independent historical research, and so forth?

15. Are there any opportunities for the student to look at ways in which the selection of evidence, the sources available, and the individual historian's own values can influence interpretations of the past?
16. How do any illustrations, photographs, maps and diagrams relate to the text? Do they illuminate or exemplify points made in the text? Do they provide links between points made in one chapter and something that the student would have read in an earlier chapter? Or, does their main function appear to be to "break up" the text and make the individual page look more interesting?
17. Does the textbook have "advance organisers" at the beginning of each chapter? If so, what is their function? Do they just outline what the following chapter will cover or do they also make links between this and other chapters and identify the key ideas, concepts and methods which will be explored in the chapter?
18. Does the textbook seek to introduce the student to key historical concepts, for example continuity and change, centralisation and fragmentation, development and decay, evolution and revolution, etc.?
19. Does the textbook attempt to involve the student in the historical events, issues and developments which it covers? For example, does it seek to show how people would have perceived not only the events and developments they were living through but also the options and alternatives open to them at any given time and how they were shaped by their own past?
20. How does the textbook present historical processes?
21. How does it reinforce the student's sense of chronological time, particularly when the themes and periods covered in the textbook are not always sequential?
22. Does the textbook provide opportunities for the student to develop a comparative perspective by, for example, contrasting events or developments in two or more countries or regions? Or, by showing similarities in the historical developments of two or more countries or regions? Or by showing how events at a national level were influenced by what was happening elsewhere? Or, by showing how different cultures have influenced each other?

Intrinsic qualities of history textbooks

Much of the evidence for this can be obtained by a combination of skim reading and taking a few paragraphs at random and examining them in some depth.

23. Is the balance between text and the other elements (illustrations, maps, statistical tables, extracts from official documents, letters, pictures of artefacts, assignments, questions, assessment exercises, etc.) appropriate to the age range or ability level for whom it is produced? While it is certainly the case that younger and less able students prefer textbooks with less text and more illustrations, it is also the case that the more source material they are required to make use of the more difficult they find it.
24. Are there any examples of monocausal, over-simplistic or reductionist explanations of historical events and developments?
25. Does it offer a plurality of interpretations of the past (i.e. multiple perspectives)?
26. Is the text biased? Examine any sections on international relations, relations with neighbouring countries, wars or colonial history; then examine at random some of the accompanying cartoons, paintings and photographs, and examine the treatment of some of the nation's heroes and heroines, and then consider if there is consistent evidence of:
 - biased treatment of events;
 - nationalistic interpretations of the past;
 - racist interpretations of the history of particular ethnic groups;
 - ideological interpretations (political, religious and cultural) which are unsupported by evidence or not balanced by other perspectives;
 - ethnocentrism;
 - Eurocentrism;
 - stereotypical attitudes and images (that is over-simplified generalisations, usually of a derogatory nature, about particular nations, groups, races or gender);
 - tokenism (the inclusion of arbitrary and standardised illustrative material that seems to bear little relation to the text).
27. How is the past portrayed? Is the present perceived as the inevitable outcome of past events? Is history portrayed as "the triumphal march of progress"?
28. Will it challenge the student to think about history as a discipline?

29. Is it likely that this textbook will arouse their interest in the subject and their curiosity about the past?
30. Does the material in the textbook reflect recent research or current thinking amongst historians?
31. Is the text written in a style which is suitable for the age range and ability level for whom the textbook has been produced? Take a few paragraphs at random and check the length of sentences, the use of technical words and jargon without explanation, whether the narrative is written predominantly within the passive or the active voice, etc. It should be neither condescending nor written "above the heads" of the students. It should be readable but it should also help the student to develop a style of writing appropriate to the discipline of history.

Extrinsic factors in evaluating history textbooks

Much of the information for this can be obtained through looking at the cover of the book, the preface or foreword, and a brief skim through the pages. Publicity material issued by the publisher will also help.

32. When was the textbook first published? This provides some indication of the political context in which it was written and authorised. It also gives some indication of how up-to-date it is likely to be in approach and content (subtract up to two years from the publication date for an indication of when it was written). This can be particularly important if the textbook covers recent national and regional developments.
33. Does the author show clear evidence that she or he is aware of current practice in classrooms? Note that this is not quite the same thing as asking whether the author was or is a history teacher. Some academic historians, with the help of their publishers, have done their homework and are up-to-date with modern classroom practices; some history teachers who write textbooks can be out-of-step with current practice.
34. Has the book (or parts of it) been field tested or trialled with teachers and students?
35. Does it specify a particular target readership (for example age range, ability range, type of school, type of course or examination for which it is produced)?
36. Does the preface or introduction give an indication of the writer's approach, aims and objectives?

37. Will it require considerable supplementary material (published and/or developed by the teacher) to fulfil the requirements of the specific history syllabus or curriculum for which it has been produced?
38. Is the quality of design (layout, colour scheme, typography, etc.) consistent throughout?
39. Will it survive everyday classroom use for a reasonable period of time?
40. Is it well-designed for the price? Does it compare well with other textbooks currently available on the market within the same price range? Is it good value for the money?

CHAPTER 19

EVALUATING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

At the time of writing, in most secondary schools in Europe, the textbook remains the history teacher's main teaching resource. In much of eastern Europe it continues to be the only resource. In the short-term new resource developments in much of Europe will probably take the form of supplementary materials on specific topics and themes and sourcebooks (that is publications which contain extracts from primary and secondary sources). However, as the chapter on using new technologies attempted to demonstrate, a lot of potentially useful material for history teaching can now be found on the Internet and an increasing number of publishers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other educational bodies are also producing CD-Roms for use in the history classroom. It may be some time before all history teachers across Europe are in a position to use regularly new technologies in their classrooms but there may be an interim stage in which they will be able to access a computer for limited periods of time in order to download material that can be used in more conventional ways in the classroom.

Some of the material already available on CD-Roms and on reliable and authenticated websites is excellent. This is particularly true of resources dedicated to the history of the 20th century simply because they can draw on so many sources, audiovisual as well as document-based. However, anyone who has surfed the Internet looking for information on topics of relevance to the study of the last century will also know that there is a great deal of dross as well and some materials which have a highly dubious provenance, due mainly to the rapid expansion of the World Wide Web, the development of user-friendly HTML editing software and access to free homepage space for anyone with an Internet account.

It is essential therefore to evaluate any websites and CD-Roms before students have access to them. As with textbooks it is also important to evaluate not just the content of these resources but also their pedagogical value. This chapter therefore follows the same pattern as the previous one in outlining a series of questions that could be asked of any website or CD-Rom when evaluating its educational value.

Evaluating Internet websites

Essentially there are six broad areas of evaluation that need to be kept in mind when examining the suitability of a particular website: These are purpose, source, access, navigability, design and content.

The questions under each of these headings have emerged from the particular context of this handbook, that of teaching 20th-century history to 14- to 18-year-olds. However, with a few omissions and additions they could also be appropriate for teaching younger students and teaching other subjects.

Purpose

1. Is the purpose of the site clearly stated on the homepage (or a subsequent page)?
2. Does the author/producer of the site identify its intended audience?
3. Which elements of the site, if any, will be appropriate to the history curriculum you are teaching in terms of content and aims and objectives, that is the development of specific skills and historical understanding?
4. Is the website appropriate to the age, prior knowledge and ability levels of your students?
5. Are you sufficiently satisfied that this site contains enough useful information to continue evaluating it in more detail?

Source

6. Who created this website?
7. Does the author/producer provide any information about her or his background and expertise in relation to history and history teaching? Is the author an authority on the subject covered by the site or a representative of an authoritative organisation?
8. Is it clear from the homepage whether or not the author/producer is associated with or affiliated to a particular organisation? If yes, does this information reassure you?
9. Does the domain of the site help you to evaluate the source? Apart from the national codes on some, though not all, sites the domain name can also help to give you some indication of the provenance of the site. For example:
 - ac: academic (UK);
 - edu: educational institution;
 - gov: governmental department;

- int: international organisation;
 - org: non-profit making organisation;
 - com: commercial organisation;
 - co: commercial organisation (United Kingdom);
 - net: Internet gateway or administrative host.
10. Is the site sponsored by any particular group, institution, company or governmental body? Does this detract from or add to its credibility?
 11. Is there advertising on the site? If yes, does it detract from the site's credibility? Will it distract the students?
 12. Has this site been reviewed by an online reviewer? Was the review positive?

Access

Before deciding on whether or not to use a particular website you need to try accessing it several times.

13. Is it usually possible to connect to the site at times when you would want to use it, or is it in such demand that you often have to wait some time?
14. Do you have to download software in order to use it, for example software for listening to sound extracts or viewing film clips? How long does it take to download?
15. Do the pages download quickly enough to use during history classes and to keep students on task when working independently or in small groups?
16. Can you access the website through the search engines which you usually use?
17. Is the site free or is it necessary to pay a fee or subscription to access parts of it?

After using the site for a while you may want to review its accessibility again, particularly if the author/producer does not seem to sort out recurring problems or the URL (or website address) keeps changing and you have problems finding it.

Navigability

18. Can you tell from the homepage or index page how the site is organised and what options are available to the user?
19. Are the links to each page easy to identify?

20. Are these links logically grouped and likely to make sense to your students? Or do the students have to use their intuition a lot when navigating through the site?
21. Is the method of navigation easy to follow, for example with labels such as "Back", "Next", "Home", "Go to Top?"
22. Will students be able to find their way through the site without getting lost or confused? Can you?
23. Do the links to other sites operate efficiently? Do they work? Are the connections quick enough to keep the students on task?
24. Does the site have a search facility? Will the students find it easy to use?
25. Does the site have bookmarking and highlighting facilities?

Design

26. Does the site look and feel user-friendly?
27. Can the user interact with it in various ways? Will the interactive elements provide opportunities for students to practice their investigative and interpretative skills?
28. Is the language at the appropriate level for the age and ability of your students?
29. Does the site have sound and/or video clips? Will the equipment used by the students have speakers to enable them to use this material?
30. Will the use of multimedia (graphics, photographs, video and audio clips) contribute to the students' understanding of the content or prove to be a distraction?
31. Check the size of print, the typefaces used, the contrast between the text and the background, etc. Do they help to make the pages easier or more difficult to read?
32. Is the site monolingual or can other language speakers access the site in their own language?
33. If you click on a link and move to a totally different site is this obvious or does it appear as if it were another page on the original website? Are you able to verify the source of this new site in the same way as you did for the original one?
34. Is it easy to exit the site or do you get stuck on a particular page or in a loop between certain pages?

Content

35. Are you satisfied with the depth of the content or is it mostly superficial?
36. Are there any indications of bias? When opinions are expressed are these clearly distinct from descriptions?
37. When examining events and developments of European significance is the perspective offered by the site national, regional, European, western, eastern, etc?
38. Is it factually correct? Check some aspects of factual content against other sources? Are there any obvious mistakes? Are there any obvious omissions which might mislead students? Does the information on the site confirm or contradict other sources. If it contradicts them are you satisfied that this alternative perspective or interpretation is a valid one (for example it may offer the perspective of a minority group who have tended to be overlooked in textbook coverage of a particular event or development)
39. Does the site offer something which the students could not obtain through their textbooks, reference books or other sources?

Evaluating CD-Roms

Installation

1. Is it easy to install?
2. Does it provide detailed information about the specific hardware and software requirements for running the CD-Rom?
3. Are the written instructions clear, easy to understand and thorough?
4. Is there a technical support telephone number and/or e-mail address?

Accompanying documentation

5. Is there a summary of contents that you can check before purchasing it?
6. Is there a guide for teachers on the target group for whom the CD-Rom has been developed, on how it relates to the history curriculum designed for these target groups and possible ways of using the resource in the classroom?
7. Are there any supplementary materials, for example lesson plans, learning activities, worksheets, etc?

Navigability

8. Are the menus, icons and prompts clear, logical and easy to use?
9. Are the commands used to navigate through the CD-Rom simple and consistent?
10. Can the user easily exit from a particular screen and move to other screens?
11. Can the user retrace her or his steps?
12. Is there a good, easy-to-use search facility?
13. Are there different levels of search (from browsing to the use of keywords in an advanced Boolean search)?
14. Can the search results be printed?
15. Can the user obtain a search history?
16. Are the links or cross-references easily accessible?
17. Are there bookmarking and highlighting features?

Content

18. Are you satisfied with the depth of the content or is it mostly superficial?
19. Are there any indications of bias? When opinions are expressed are these clearly distinct from descriptions?
20. When examining events and developments of European significance is the perspective offered by the site national, regional, European, western, eastern, etc?
21. Check some aspects of factual content against other sources? Are there any obvious mistakes? Are there any obvious omissions which might mislead students? Does the information on the CD-Rom confirm or contradict other sources. If it contradicts them are you satisfied that this alternative perspective or interpretation is valid?
22. Does the product offer something which the students could not obtain through their textbooks, reference books or other sources?

Design

23. Are the screen displays user-friendly and uncluttered?
24. Is the product appropriate in terms of text, audiovisual material and intellectual level for use with your students?

25. Does the CD-Rom have sound and/or video clips? Will the equipment used by the students have speakers to enable them to use this material?
26. Will the use of multimedia (graphics, photographs, video and audio clips) contribute to the students' understanding of the content or prove to be a distraction? Is the quality of the multimedia features high?
27. Is the CD-Rom monolingual or can other language speakers access the site in their own language?
28. Are the help screens easy to use?
29. Can the user interact with it in various ways, that is does it have exercises, investigative activities, etc.? Will the interactive elements provide opportunities for students to practice their investigative and interpretative skills?
30. Are the interactive elements stimulating and challenging?
31. Do these activities provide the student with useful feedback?
32. Are there options for students to progress on to activities which are increasingly complex, for example from seeking information, to cross-referencing, to analysing and interpreting different sources on the same topic, etc.?
33. Does the user have to make use of their prior knowledge and learning in order to use the product effectively?

Making a decision

34. Do the producers provide evaluation copies?
35. Is the price reasonable in comparison to similar products?
36. Will this product provide an added dimension to teaching and learning?
37. Which aspects of the history curriculum will it support?
38. Can it be networked?
39. Will you still be using it in two years time?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

In a book of this kind, written for history teachers, teacher trainers and curriculum planners across the whole of Europe, it would be impossible to produce a truly comprehensive guide to all the international and nationally-based organisations and projects engaged in supporting history teaching on 20th Europe. As with history teaching itself, it is necessary to be selective. The main criteria for selection have been to include:

- organisations which can provide a means whereby the individual history teacher can obtain useful publications on history teaching (many of them free), get copies of newsletters on developments in history teaching across Europe, or link into networks that would enable them to contact history teachers in other countries in order to organise their own joint projects or student and teacher exchanges;
- projects which can provide the history teacher with an opportunity to either obtain information about ongoing history projects that may be particularly relevant to their students or information about the histories of other countries;
- projects that even though they are not necessarily of direct relevance to your particular history syllabus or curriculum could serve as useful models for developing your own projects.

Intergovernmental and supranational institutions

The Council of Europe
Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport,
Council of Europe,
67075 Strasbourg Cedex,
France
Tel.: (33) 3 88 41 20 00
Fax: (33) 3 88 41 27 50
History website: <http://culture.coe.fr/hist20>

In addition to the project on "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century", the Council of Europe has a number of other

initiatives and projects that would be of interest to history teachers. These include "Education for democratic citizenship", the "Black Sea initiative on history", the In-Service Training Programme for Educational Staff, the "Reform of history teaching in the Commonwealth of Independent States" (CIS) and "Cultural routes". (The latter covers the development of pilgrimage routes, trade routes and cultural influences throughout the last millennium. However, some of these routes have particular relevance to the history of the 20th century, for example "Gypsy routes", "the Routes of humanism", "Rural habitats") Details can be obtained from the Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport.

European Union

European Commission
200 rue de la Loi,
B-1049 Brussels,
Belgium
Tel.: (32) 2 299 1111
Website: <http://www.europa.eu.int>

Although history education is not a specific priority for development and support, there are two programmes which may be worth investigating, depending on where the reader is located in Europe and on their specific interest in history teaching.

The Comenius Programme is the part of the Socrates programme which focuses upon support for school partnerships and European education projects. There is some scope here for the development of educational activities around the topic of cultural heritage.

Website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/comenius>

The Phare Programme is the main channel for the European Union's activities with the countries of central and eastern Europe. One of the priority areas is education and training and although there have been some activities on history education (including one in association with Euroclio although this has not been one of the major development areas in the past).

Website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare>

Unesco

7 Place de Fontenoy,
F-75732 Paris Cedex 15,
France
Tel.: (33) 1 45 68 10 89
Fax: (33) 1 40 65 94 05

The main development here of interest to history teachers is likely to be the "Associated schools" project in Education for International Co-operation and

Peace (ASP). See the section on projects for more details.
Website: <http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/asp>

International non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

European Standing Conference of History Teachers Associations (Euroclio)
Juliana van Stolberglaan 41,
2595 CA Den Haag,
Netherlands
Tel.: (31) 70 382 48 72
Fax: (31) 70 385 36 69
E-mail: bennetts@qca.or.uk

Euroclio was founded in 1992 to provide a forum for history teachers in Europe to strengthen the position of history in the curricula of schools in Europe, promote the European dimension in history teaching, disseminate information and promote the development of associations of history teachers in countries where none existed. Details on its activities can be obtained direct from the executive office in the Hague or through national associations of history teachers.

European Association for Schools for Co-operative Projects
c/o OCCE
101 bis rue du Ranelagh,
F-75016 Paris,
France
Tel.: (33) 1 45 25 46 07

The OCCE is the national body in France responsible for initiating and supporting co-operative projects at school level. Their brief extends well beyond history education.

European Cultural Foundation
Jan van Goyenkade 5,
1075 HN Amsterdam,
The Netherlands
Tel.: (31) 20 67 60 222
Fax: (31) 20 67 52 231

The foundation has supported a range of initiatives in education and training. It is not specifically concerned with history education but, along with several other European foundations and NGOs, it is currently taking an active interest in educational development in Southeast Europe including history and civics.

European Educational Publishers' Group (EEPG)

Box 3095 750 03

Uppsala

Sweden

Tel.: (46) 18 123 114

Fax: (46) 18 125 533

The EEPG is concerned with educational publishing at all levels and across the whole curriculum. However, it has played an active part in workshops for publishers and authors of history textbooks across Europe, particularly in central and eastern Europe since 1990. It was represented on the project group of the Council of Europe's project "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century"

Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research

Celler Strasse 3,

D-38114 Braunschweig,

Germany

Tel.: (49) 531 59 09 90

Fax: (49) 531 59 09 999

The Georg Eckert Institute, since it was founded in 1951, has conducted many important studies of the content and treatment of national, European and global history in school textbooks. Staff at the institute also run international seminars on textbooks and textbook analysis. Details of one of their most recent studies of European history textbooks can be found on the Council of Europe's history website.

International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE)

Köpmangatan 7,

S-151-71 Södertälje,

Sweden

Tel.: (46) 8 550 100 81

Fax: (46) 8 550 100 81

The IAIE organises conferences and workshops on intercultural education and publishes the *European Journal of Intercultural Studies*. It also runs a project in this field, the "Co-operative learning in intercultural education project" (CLIP).

International Society for History Didactics

Kirchplatz 2

D-88250 Weingarten,

Germany

Tel.: (49) 75 29 841

Fax: (49) 751 501 200

The society was founded in 1980 and is committed to scholarship and international co-operation in history education. It publishes a journal in three languages (English, French and German), *Informations/Mitteilungen/Communications*.

International Students of History Association (ISHA)

Justus Lipsiusstraat 44
B-3000 Leuven,
Belgium
Tel.: (32) 16 23 29 26
Fax: (32) 16 28 50 20

ISHA was founded in Budapest in 1990 to encourage east-west collaboration in the study and teaching of history. It organises joint projects and exchange programmes.

Körper Stiftung

Kurt-A- Körper-Chaussee 10
21033 Hamburg,
Germany
Tel.: (49) 40 7250 3921
Fax: (49) 40 7250 3922

The Körper Stiftung has supported research on history education, including the "Youth and history" project referred to below, and runs Europe-wide seminars for history teachers and students who win their history competitions. It also initiated and co-ordinates Eustory, a project which aims to establish common standards for the treatment of history and also to use history as a tool for intercultural understanding. As part of this project it has set up a network of competitions to encourage students to carry out their own research on local history.

KulturKontakt

Spittelberggasse 3,
1070 Vienna,
Austria
Tel.: (43) 1 522 91 60 12
Fax: (43) 1 523 87 65 20

For some years now Kulturkontakt has provided support and expertise for the initial and in-service training of history teachers, particularly in eastern Europe and the Russian Federation. It also runs the Task Force Office for the Enhanced Graz Process which is directly involved in promoting peace, stability and democracy in Southeast Europe through educational co-operation.

This includes the co-ordination of initiatives in history education and civics. More details can be obtained from the website: (<http://www.see-educoop.net>) .

A selection of projects

Again it is simply not possible to provide a comprehensive guide to all the history projects which are now operating in various parts of Europe. Emphasis has been given to projects which either have a European-wide or a regional dimension or can serve as models for the implementation of new projects.

"Associated schools" project

This project was launched in the mid-1950s by Unesco. It now includes over 3 000 schools in 120 countries. A number of the European-based projects which emerged through this initiative have had a strong environmental theme. Some of these themes are particularly relevant for studying geography and the study of the history of 20th century Europe. The projects provide useful background material for history teachers working in other parts of Europe and can serve as possible models of how to establish similar regionally-based projects elsewhere.

The "Baltic Sea" project

This began life as a series of environmental investigations in which schools in all the states of the Baltic took part in collecting environmental data and sharing it with each other through the use of electronic communications networks. The project subsequently expanded to include other aspects of the curriculum which were suitable for this kind of joint approach. Similar initiatives were implemented in other regions, including the Mediterranean and the Danube. The "Blue Danube River" project demonstrated how the thinking behind the "Baltic Sea" project could be applied to other regions of Europe. However, because of political sensitivities in the region it was difficult to develop a historical dimension.

Contact: "Baltic Sea" project
Mr Siv Sellin,
National Agency for Education,
106, 20 Stockholm,
Sweden
Tel.: (46) 8 723 32 74
Fax: (46) 8 24 44 20

Contact: "Blue Danube River" project
Ms Yordanka Nenova,
ELS School "Geo Milev"
Rousse
Bulgaria
Tel.: (359) 82 623 820
Fax: (359) 82 226 379

Contact: the Mediterranean project
Mr Miguel Marti
Centre Unesco de Catalunya
Mallorca 285
08037 Barcelona,
Spain
Tel.: (34) 3 207 17 16
Fax: (34) 3 457 58 51

"Baltic states history textbook" project

This is aimed at fostering mutual understanding in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania through the production of textbooks which cover the history of all three countries. To do this the project group organised a series of workshops at which historians and teachers worked together on their respective nation's perspectives on the history of the region as a whole. It is also intended to produce a single textbook on the region for use in schools in all three countries.

Contact: Ms Mare Oja
Ministry of Education,
Department of General Education,
Tõnismägi Str. 9/11,
EE-0100 Tallinn,
Estonia

"Black Sea initiative on history" project

This Council of Europe project brought together history educators from seven countries: Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine. It analysed the history curricula in each country and then attempted to identify a minimum core of knowledge to be taught to students about the region. It has established networks of schools which are working together on bilateral and multilateral history projects.

Details are available from the Council of Europe.

"Chata" project

"Concepts of history and teaching approaches" (Chata) is directed by Alaric Dickinson and Peter Lee of the University of London Institute of Education. The first stage of the project focused on children's understanding of key concepts of historical understanding and enquiry. The second phase focuses more on history teaching and is comparative involving schools in countries across Europe.

Contact: Alaric Dickinson or Peter Lee
Institute of Education,
University of London,
20 Bedford Way,
London WC1H 0AL
United Kingdom
Tel.: (44)71 612 6543
Fax: (44) 71 612 6555

Council of Europe's In-Service Training Programme for Educational Staff

This programme helps teachers to attend short in-service training courses in another European country and to broaden their professional experience. Up to 1 000 places are available each year, and priority is given to teachers from new state parties to the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe. The seminars are organised around the Council's priority themes, including citizenship, intercultural education and history. Details are available from the Council of Europe

"History and identity" project

This project involves co-operation between schools in five central European countries, Austria, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic and Slovenia. The project brings together school students and their teachers on fieldwork projects to explore the local history of their neighbours and through this to examine their neighbours' sense of national identity as well.

Contact: Prof. Anton Pelinka,
Institut für Politikwissenschaft,
Universität Innsbruck,
A-6020 Innsbruck,
Austria
Tel.: (43) 512 507 2710
Fax: (43) 512 507 2849

"Joint history" project

This is a project which focuses on the teaching of history in southeast Europe. It has organised a series of workshops for teachers on sensitive and controversial issues which are examined from a cross-border, bilateral or multilateral perspective, for example the Cyprus question, the Macedonian question and the Ottoman legacy in Southeast Europe.

Contact: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in South East Europe,
Krispou 9,
Ano Poli,
54634 Thessaloniki,
Greece
Tel.: (30) 31 960 820
Fax: (30) 31 960 822
E-mail: info@cdsee.org

"School twinning and local history" project

This project promotes twinning arrangements between schools in European countries, particularly in the more remote areas and between schools which have few opportunities for twinning. The emphasis, through local history projects, is on the history of migration in Europe.

Contact: M Olivier Jehin,
1 rue de Palerme
Strasbourg,
France
Tel.: (33) 3 88 41 10 99

"Youth and history" project

This project, funded by the Körber Stiftung in Germany, was a cross-national European survey of the historical consciousness and attitudes of 32,000 14-15 year-olds in 26 countries. The results were published in two volumes in 1997 under the title of *Youth and History*, Magne Angvik and Bodo von Borries (eds) Hamburg, Körber Stiftung, 1997. For further details on the project:

http://www.erzwiss.uni-hamburg.de/Projekte/Youth_and_History/homepage.html

For more details on how to go about setting up a collaborative European history project see: Sean Lang, *History without frontiers: a practical guide to international history projects in schools in Europe*, Council of Europe (Doc.CC-ED/HIST(96)2)

School links and exchanges

Although links and exchanges are a long-established practice in modern languages teaching they are a more recent development in history education. The trend now is to encourage multiple links between schools so that joint projects, electronic communications and exchanges of students and staff can enhance teaching in modern languages, history, geography, social studies, cultural studies and environmental science. It is clear that much can be learned from the experience of colleagues in modern languages departments but it is also likely that a history project involving schools in various European countries will provide opportunities not only for enhanced learning in history but also enhanced development of the students' second languages. In this respect co-operation with colleagues in language departments is essential, and opportunities for learning in both subjects need to be integrated into any project of this kind.

The Council of Europe has played a key role in facilitating school links and exchanges across Europe and anyone interested in finding out more about this work should consult the following documents available from the Council:

R. Savage, "The educational theory and practice of school links and exchanges", Council of Europe, 1992 (Doc. DECS/SE/BS/Donau (92)2)

E. Cardy, "School exchanges as a factor in curriculum organisation, Council of Europe, 1993 (Doc.DECS/SE/Sec (93) 10)

R. Savage, *School links and exchanges in Europe: a practical guide*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Press, 1993

APPENDIX II

THE PROJECT "LEARNING AND TEACHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF EUROPE IN THE 20TH CENTURY"

Often considered by historians as the most difficult to study and to teach, the 20th century is the subject of a specific project on "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century".¹ In 1993 and 1997, the two summits of heads of state and government of the Council of Europe member states called upon the Council to develop in particular activities and educational methods relating to this period. The Parliamentary Assembly expressed a similar wish in a recommendation on history and the learning of history in Europe, adopted in 1996.

This project represents a complete teaching kit and may be described as an "atom" in which "satellites" gravitate around a "nucleus". This nucleus is the present handbook for history teachers, devoted to the methods and different ways of presenting the 20th century to students. A British historian, Robert Stradling, has prepared this work which comprises educational chapters and practical worksheets and exercises based on concrete cases and themes. While drawing on and amplifying the Council of Europe's recommendations already adopted in the field of history, he has adapted them to the problems and difficulties of the 20th century, taking into account the intellectual, political and social upheavals which have marked it. He has also attempted to identify the omissions and falsifications in the presentation of the century and deal with contentious issues, the source of conflict, confrontations and misunderstandings.

The satellites are teaching packs looking at women's history, population movements, cinema, the teaching of the Holocaust and nationalism in 20th century Europe. They are supplemented by reports and contributions on, amongst others, the use of new technologies in teaching, the problem of sources in contemporary history and the study of misuses of history. All these components form a teaching pack which can be used by all teachers and adapted to their needs and resources.

Specifically dealt with by several reports and workshops, the question of the collection and exploitation of source material for 20th century history is

1. This text is based upon a chapter previously published in *Lessons in history* (Council of Europe Publishing, 1999).

included in the project within a transversal approach. It seeks to initiate students in the consultation and use of archives as a documentary basis or discussion theme. But unlike previous centuries, the 20th century can be studied and interpreted through new media such as the cinema, radio, television and more generally images which accompany or indeed replace written information.

These new sources must be inventoried and known, decoded and assessed. The power of images, whether still or moving, also increases the risk of the spectator's being manipulated: propaganda films shot by totalitarian regimes are perhaps the most tragic illustration of this, but omissions and misrepresentations – including those made by editing techniques or clever camerawork – are also a feature of films or documentaries which lay claim to objectivity or information. By discovering these techniques, deliberate or not, today's students who live in a permanent audiovisual environment will also learn how to be more critical towards it when watching television news programmes or a "contemporary" film.

Clearly, however, above and beyond propaganda and manipulation, the gradual transition from the written word towards an image society is also a historical phenomenon worthy of study. In this context, the teaching pack on cinema offers teachers a filmography of significant films of the 20th century. These are to be used to shed light upon their period, both historically and culturally, and prompt discussion.

The project also seeks to encourage the use of sources which are little used in teaching, such as oral history. Sometimes, this is the only source available on a particular event or living environment and can provide an insight capable of counterbalancing the official history; increasingly it makes for more personalised history by giving the speaker the role of witness. Some schools already invite former members of the resistance or former deportees to recount their memories, thereby enabling the listeners to put the period in context. Similarly, life in a factory can be illustrated by a talk by a former factory worker. However, oral history must also be multiple, since, like any other written or visual source, it too can lack objectivity.

The most recent technology, computers in particular, can also provide new sources of information, such as CD-Roms or Internet sites, but they can also be used as a means of teaching. Here too, it is important to help both teachers and students select and evaluate the plethora of documents available on the Internet, and to encourage them to look at their source, their reliability and all the risks of manipulation or omission which they may contain. For teachers, using the Internet means first of all knowing how to use it: depending on their training and their own attitude to such tools, teachers can be very much in favour or very much against. The project therefore also seeks to

help them use these tools which will provide them with text and images. In this way, Internet sites and CD-Roms can be valuable supplements to text-books and lessons.

Nevertheless, while these new tools have significant educational potential, teachers attending the training seminars stress the fact that they cannot replace books and papers and that while they do open new avenues, they will not completely revolutionise teaching. Furthermore, many teachers point out that their development in school is at present still limited because of the cost.

The pack on women in history fits in with the Council of Europe's desire for fair representation of both sexes in society, but its aim goes far beyond simply redressing the balance. While emphasising the role of women in society, too long overlooked, it also seeks to view history from their perspective. Several seminars were held on this project which is based on specific collective or individual examples. Amongst these, the role of women in Stalin's Russia illustrates the life, activities and image of women of the time, and the period through them. Biographies of famous women could provide the framework for lessons or themes, but it is also essential to present ordinary or unknown women and their views on events and the world. For that, the use of oral history must be encouraged: the teaching pack suggests examples and interviewing methods which could be used with women who have lived through historic events or who are representative of a period or a theme.

The pack also contains general subjects to be addressed in lessons, such as the struggle for the right to vote, working women or the image of women. It also deals with bias and omissions in the presentation of women in history and consequently has resulted in a genuine work of historiography conducive to comment and critical judgement.

Conceived in a similar way the pack on nationalism goes beyond mere definitions of the phenomenon to look at the more day-to-day aspects, even including topics such as sport or currency. It covers the major historic consequences of nationalism, such as shifting borders or the break-up of empires (Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and the Soviet Union) and looks at relations between majority and minority groups within states. It then discusses the cohabitation of groups and the means of living together, for example via federalism.

The pack on migration examines population movements in Europe in the 20th century, the reasons why individuals and groups change countries and the cultural and social exchanges which result from these movements. Not restricted simply to the major migration waves of recent decades, it also covers transfrontier movements caused as a result of border changes or

economic necessities, as in the case of border workers. It seeks to illustrate the situation and views of migrants as inhabitants of a host country, while facilitating dialogue and mutual understanding concerning increasingly similar concerns and lifestyles.

The pack on teaching the Holocaust, above and beyond the facts themselves, should personalise events through the life of victims, for example before and during the Holocaust. A 15-year-old adolescent will be more moved by the story of a young person of the same age before and during the war than by an overview of the period, and will develop a more concrete understanding of the extent of the tyranny and crimes. At a time when anti-Semitism is growing alarmingly in certain countries, it is important, over and above the facts, to point out that anyone could one day become the victim of such crimes, but thought must be given to the mechanisms which can, at the same time, turn normal individuals into torturers and executioners.

The project also examines the way in which the history of the 20th century is taught across Europe, in textbooks, syllabuses and lessons. It calls on teachers not merely to pass on facts but to deal with the practical expression and memory implicit in those facts. The concept of "place of remembrance", conducive to discussion and recollection, also introduces the idea of cultural heritage, which should not be restricted to a palace or a church, but should also include sites recalling the darkest hours of the 20th century, such as the trenches of 1914 or the concentration camps.

The theme of "living memory" can be illustrated by using little known documents such as letters sent by soldiers in the Great War to their families; these also provide an individual dimension to a collective event. Maps and photos, like film extracts, often speak more effectively to students than a mere chronological listing of events, and the presentation of a memorial also shows how a conflict affects a country or a region.

Lastly, comparative studies have been made on the training of history teachers and these serve as a basis for recommendations. Depending on the country, future teachers move directly from university to the school environment and their academic qualifications are supplemented by teacher training varying from short courses to one or more years of preparation for entry to the profession. The project sets out to assess and inventory the various models of teacher training although it seeks only to improve them and not to make them uniform. It insists on the need to develop in-service training for teachers, in both teaching techniques and in the choice of themes which should be presented to students.

The project aims to enable history teachers in Europe, whatever country they are from, to develop methods and themes adapted to the specific nature of 20th century history. It also aims to help them to incorporate all documentary sources and subjects into their teaching, and to adapt their approach to modern technological developments. The project underscores the specific nature of teaching 20th century history in relation to history training in general, and insists that the 20th century should be presented in a way which is more open to the outside world and enables students to understand this world more readily. Dynamic and appealing, such teaching must remind students, confronted outside the classroom by numerous external sources of history information, that school is the most appropriate place to learn about and analyse the history of Europe in the 20th century.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS FROM THE PROJECT "LEARNING AND TEACHING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF EUROPE IN THE 20TH CENTURY"

Lessons in history: the Council of Europe and the teaching of history (1999)
ISBN 92- 871-3905-9

Towards a pluralist and tolerant approach to teaching history: a range of sources and new didactics (1999)
ISBN 92-871-4097-9

The challenges of the information and communication technologies facing history teaching (1999)
ISBN 92-871-3998-9

Teaching 20th century women's history: a classroom approach (2000)
ISBN 92-871-4304-8

The misuses of history (2000)
ISBN 92-871-4315-3

The European home: representations of 20th century Europe in history textbooks (2000)
ISBN 92-871-4347-1

(See <http://culture/coe.int/hist20>)

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