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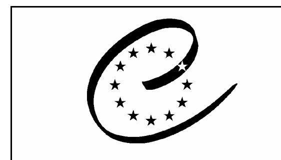

CC-ED/HIST (98)47

The Council of Europe and School History

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Strasbourg, 1997

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and

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1997

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Part 1: Introduction

1. The Work of the Council of Europe

For nearly 50 years the Council of Europe has initiated and supported regular meetings of experts concerned with the teaching and learning of history in schools, drawn from every country across the continent. Taken together, the reports of these meetings constitute today a major collection of the views of all of those concerned with history education across Europe. This study seeks to distil the central findings and recommendations about school history, drawn from all of these reports.

School history has always enjoyed an important place in the Council of Europe's education programmes. From the beginning it was felt that the way history is taught and learned in school influences the knowledge, understanding and perceptions which pupils acquire about their own and other countries. As early as 1950, one year after the founding of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers raised the question of the revision of textbooks. At the first conference on this topic, at Calw in 1953, there were representatives from 15 different countries. The work began in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the idea that school history textbooks, if they were scrutinised by independent teams of experts drawn from across Europe, could be improved by removing stereotypes, bias, or gross errors about other countries. The results, it was hoped, might be a contribution towards greater peace and understanding, especially between the countries of Europe.

It quickly became apparent that this approach was too narrow. Textbooks cannot be tackled in isolation: they are the result of particular syllabuses and ways of teaching in different countries. Work on textbooks led to comparisons, and the discovery of some striking similarities, in approaches to the teaching of history in all countries, and the findings were published.

The Council of Europe has sought to have influence on governments, Ministries of Education and policy-makers, and to communicate findings to the grassroots level of classroom teachers. It initiated a scheme providing bursaries for practising classroom teachers to attend seminars with other teachers from across Europe, which grew into the current annual In-service Training Programme for teachers. Every year some of these seminars are concerned with history teaching. Each seminar is organised by a

host country, and historians and other experts may be invited to discuss with teachers the presentation of their subject in the classroom. It is clear from the reports that many teachers have valued these contacts. Selecting and simplifying history for the curriculum, and developing ways of teaching which will engage young pupils, is a more complicated task than is generally realised. In many countries those actively concerned with these problems are a small group, and classroom teachers reflecting on their practice often feel quite isolated.

The Council of Europe has maintained a broader forum for discussion of history in schools than is available anywhere else. Conferences, symposia and seminars have brought together different experts to discuss central issues, make recommendations, and produce reports on many different aspects of the teaching and learning of history in schools across Europe. Ministers of Education, academic historians, officials from Ministries of Education, school inspectors, teachers, headteachers and teacher-trainers, as well as educational researchers, and schoolbook authors and publishers, have all contributed and debated the central issues which arise when history is adapted for young pupils in classrooms.

2. The Parameters of School History

Work on history has focussed on teaching pupils between the ages of 10 or 11 up to the age of about 16 in secondary schools. This is when history is usually part of the compulsory school curriculum for all pupils in most European countries. But the time available for it is very short. A survey in 1995 points out that history is only compulsory for five years of secondary schooling in most school systems, and for only three years in some others, for senior secondary pupils history is usually an option. In technical and vocational schools there are often fewer hours allocated to history than in academic schools. This investigation covered only 12 countries, but the findings probably apply more generally.

> "The evidence gathered for this research showed that the average secondary school student in Western Europe receives less than two 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 three years and 400 hours in a system where compulsory secondary schooling begins at 11 and ends at 16."[1]

[1] *The European Content of the School History Curriculum* - R. Stradling, 1995. Ref. CC-ED/Hist (95) 1.

The training of secondary school teachers is quite varied. At the senior end of secondary schools, and in academic schools in selective systems, the history teacher is likely to be a well-qualified and specialised teacher, a university graduate in history with some training in the methodologies of the subject and a wide background of study of the content of history, together with a pedagogical training with some focus on history methods. In lower secondary schools, in technical and vocational schools, the teacher may combine teaching two or more subjects, such as history with geography, or religion, or civics, or social sciences or, more rarely, a modern language. These teachers will not be history specialists, and, for some, history may not be their major area of interest.

Those who feel gloomy confronting these stark statistics need to note the fact that school history does not build on a blank base. There has been accumulating evidence, and a growing conviction in Council of Europe reports, that children acquire a considerable amount of their knowledge of history from outside school. This accumulation begins within the family, drawing on memories, anecdotes, overheard conversations and stories. As children grow older, aspects of history may be encountered within their environment, through local anniversaries and celebrations, and on holiday visits. In the late 20th Century a major source of wider information comes from the media, especially television and through films and videos. Usually this kind of knowledge of history is acquired haphazardly. It does not readily lead to organised thought on historical issues, nor to awareness of the use and misuse of historical evidence. What it may provide is an initial curiosity or enthusiasm, and a growing knowledge of areas of the subject.

3. History in Primary Schools

Primary school pupils learning history have not been completely neglected in the work of the Council of Europe, and a conference on this topic was held in 1983. The report concludes that to omit history entirely at this stage is mistaken because children should become familiar with historical processes as early as possible, begin to grasp a sense of a temporal world beyond the immediate one, and see historical evidence in their surrounding environment and society. It acknowledges that history at this level is usually a part of inter-disciplinary topic work, and suggests teaching methods which will develop active investigative learning by pupils, as well as the use of vivid stories,

artefacts, visual representations, and oral evidence. It especially recommended participatory museum visits and the use of historical evidence in the environment whenever possible.

The report went on to suggest that it is possible to move beyond the immediate environment by recognising that Europe is a collection of local communities which could be put in touch with each other, exchange their work on each locality, gain a comparative perspective, and perhaps develop a book of their findings. This idea was taken up at a much later date by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe which launched a project on “Local and Regional History” in 1991-92.

Recognising that actual visits by pupils are expensive and difficult to arrange, the Project wanted to find a simpler way for primary pupils to “open a window looking out on another European region and its inhabitants”. The aim was to involve the least privileged, to strengthen local identities and roots, and to help combat racism and xenophobia. Modern communications made it possible to put individual class teachers and their pupils in touch with a similar class in another country. Pupils worked on a description of the daily lives of themselves and their families, and on the history of their own locality or region. The work of pupils was then exchanged with the twinned class, which gave them an audience and a new purpose for their work in history. The organisers set out to twin classes far apart, to link Eastern and Western Europe, for example a class in the United Kingdom linked to one in Hungary; or Southern and Northern Europe, for example a school in Italy linked with one in Denmark. The Project worked best in systems where the teacher had some freedom to organise the work, and there were richly varied productions.

Primary school teachers are not specially trained as historians. They have a general training with an emphasis on child development and on techniques for teaching basic literacy and numeracy. The length of primary schooling, and the amount of history in it, is quite varied across Europe. Most pupils do some history, often with a local emphasis, few have a structured course. Some teachers with a real interest in the subject have taken part in the Council of Europe’s seminars on the wider issues raised by history teaching.

Part 2: The Foundations of Work on School History

1. Textbooks

The work of the Council of Europe on school history began with the scrutiny of school textbooks to remove gross errors and bias. This inevitably led to discussion of the history syllabuses of the different countries, for which the texts were designed. All textbooks necessarily reflect the main outlines of course content. There was a series of six conferences between 1953 and 1958, which looked carefully at the content of courses in each historical period, as conveyed in school books.

There had been some precedent for this kind of work in the 1920s and 1930s, and the practice of cross-national scrutiny of school texts was already established between several countries in Scandinavia. The revision of history textbooks in post-war Germany provided an immediate stimulus to the work on the textbooks of other European nations. Professor Georg Eckert of Brunswick promoted and sustained meetings between representatives of various countries with the purpose of removing bias from national history books. By 1951 this led to the foundation of what later became the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research. In 1965 the Institute was asked to act as a textbook centre for the Council of Europe. International work on history textbooks has continued, with Council of Europe conferences held regularly at the Institute, and producing publications.[1]

Today history textbooks are changing. Earlier books were predominantly authoritative narrative. Now there is a movement towards reducing the amount of narrative and increasing work based on a selection of historical source material. Textbooks reproduce extracts from a wide variety of sources, such as: documents, pictures, maps, graphs, posters, cartoons, and much other material relevant to the topic. Pupils are required to work through structured exercises based on assessing and using the sources. Textbooks are more like workbooks than reading books.

As resources for teaching have multiplied, the position of textbooks has changed from being almost the only basis for lessons, to being one amongst many teaching aids.

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[1] *History and Social Studies - Methodologies of Textbook Analysis* ed. Hilary Bourdillon. Pub: Swets & Zeitlinger B.V. Amsterdam/Lisse, 1992. Ref: ISBN 90 265 1230 9.

Modern media, particularly television, video and CD ROM's, are increasingly important sources information from which pupils acquire information. Today textbooks need to be considered together with other resources. Yet they remain important even in resource rich classrooms, since "for most teachers, teaching without textbooks is like playing soccer without a ball." In all countries teachers demand new textbooks if the history course is re-structured.

Research on textbooks has become inter-disciplinary, and texts are examined from many perspectives. The original investigation into 'bias', suggesting some universal, factually correct, version of events, has dissolved into the multi-perspectivity of current historical scholarship. The representation of central concepts and ideas in all school books, as in all history books, can be traced as it changes over time. Thus, a volume of the Brunswick Institute Journal for 1996 is devoted to research articles on the varied ways in which national identities are constructed in school texts, the principles on which they are based, and how these have changed.

Analysis of textbooks reveals the nexus of pressures on school history: political pressures, changing scholarship, commercial constraints, pedagogical styles, learning theories, and, especially in history, the pressures of public opinion too. The Council of Europe has actively encouraged research into textbooks, developed some guidelines[1] on required standards, and seeks ways to make findings more widely known.

2. Course Outlines

The early conferences analysing textbooks and the content of courses came to the conclusion that, school history, in every country, was dominated by national history. Most countries taught history from their own national perspective, and the history of other countries only appeared in relation to their own: "the most familiar kind of bias is bias due to national prejudice or ignorance."

More unexpected was the finding that although there were sometimes courses called "European History", most such courses in fact had a national bias too:

> "Every country publishes textbooks which are entitled 'Histories of Europe', but few of them are, in fact, what their titles claim. They are not

[1] See Appendix I.

> about Europe regarded as a whole, but about the rivalries of separate European powers, or the development of separate European countries."[1]

Finally, and paradoxically, when aspects of world history appeared in school courses, they usually had a Eurocentric perspective, if not a national one. Chinese or Indian history was not explained or studied in its own terms, but only from the point of view of Europeans. This was very obvious when the topic was that of European explorations of the world in the 16th Century. The topic was presented from a national or European view, hardly ever as the encounter of two different cultures.

There were persistent oddities in the way that aspects of European history were presented, or omitted, in school textbooks. Many of these anomalies applied quite generally across all textbooks, from all countries, for example:

- all textbooks were dominated by the national perspective, "which assumes as an axiom that Germany, or France or England or Russia is the 'best' of the European States, and that their own cultures are superior to any other." This was particularly obvious over wars, but was not confined to wars and treaties. For instance, the geographical discoveries of the 15th and 16th Centuries were a European phenomenon but each country gave disproportionate prominence to its own explorers. The national perspective particularly distorted teaching about the Middle Ages: "far too many of our textbooks exaggerate the importance of their own nation in the treatment of medieval themes, and minimise that of the European community";[2]

- generally school textbooks were dominated by a big power view of history: the major nations concerned figured in the school texts. Smaller nations were scarcely ever mentioned. Conversely it was the bigger nations which tended to have a more exclusively national approach to history. Smaller nations, partly because their own history was bound up with others, tended to take a broader, more regional, view of major historical events. Amongst big powers, Western ones dominated all texts, with less emphasis given to the influence of Russia;

[1] E. Bruley and E.H. Dance: *A History of Europe?* A.W. Sythoff – Leyden, 1960. Page 27.

[2] Otto-Ernst Schuddekopf: *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, Strasbourg, 1967. Page 80.

- whole regional areas hardly appeared at all in European history: except for the brief intervention of Gustavus Adolphus, Scandinavia was largely absent. Poland was partitioned by the Great Powers, but Western textbooks tend " to say almost nothing about the greatness of Poland in the 15th and 16th Centuries." Similarly little was ever said about Greece after the very early period, and the long existence and influence of Byzantium was ignored. The history of Turkey was not explained, Turkey appeared as an aggressor, or as a problem in the period of the decline of the Ottoman empire;

- nations were presented monolithically, as if the nation were a homogeneous group. Minority groups were often not mentioned. The existence, and influence of the Jews across Europe over many centuries, scarcely featured until the modern period;

- religious history was often partisan, and ignored entirely in more recent history. "It was repeatedly found, with regard to all the relevant periods of history, that Catholic and Protestant textbooks hardly ever make any attempt to explain the point of view of the other side." The very existence of Orthodox Christianity was forgotten in Western texts;

- school history was dominated by political history, although a trend towards including more social and economic history was noted. Cultural history was neglected. Scientific advance, an international phenomenon, was absent from school books, and the emancipation of women was given little emphasis.

3. Frameworks as 'Mental Maps'

The findings of these early conferences are interesting and still relevant: they point to the overall frameworks within which history is presented to pupils. The general conclusion was that, "bias is usually unconscious rather than conscious; and is more often due to omission than to positive errors."

Because it is usually unconscious, such bias easily crosses the thin line between history and propaganda:

> "Many history textbooks make propaganda by unbalanced selection which by no means necessarily stems from ill-will but can also be caused by inherited prejudices which, however, are not recognised as such."[1]

Bias of this kind has quite profound effects on the overall frameworks through which history is selected and presented to children. It forms the outline of the mental map through which the subject is seen. This framework may well be what is remembered when the detail of what was learned has been forgotten. A pupil might well retain the impression that all history is always viewed from one's own national perspective. This one-sided view is particularly damaging over wars, treaties and long-standing conflicts. But pupils may easily believe that there is only one side to the story of the Reformation, or European imperialism. Because other sides of a historical topic are never mentioned, it may not occur to pupils that there is another version, or even several perspectives, on particular events. This kind of bias is subtle and hard to detect: "it is less a matter of correcting errors than of repairing omissions and rectifying false impressions", and these "would not emerge from a mere reading and would, therefore, escape nearly all pupils."

All history is a matter of selection from a mass of material. The syllabuses in schools, and the textbooks used, usually reveal a point of view from which the selections are made. Titles of books and courses imply the framework of the course, but this is rarely explicitly recognised. The overall framework for school history revealed in these early investigations was dominated by a national perspective, even for European and world history. National perspectives of the early 20th Century were projected back anachronistically to other times and periods, and this distorted most aspects of world history presented to pupils, and obscured any view of European history. In essence, the national view was presented to children as the only perspective on the past.

4. New Movements in School History: the 1960s and 1970s

During the 1960s and 1970s, there were changes in societies, in historical scholarship, and in educational thinking, all of which affected ideas about the teaching of history. The work of the Council of Europe continued with further meetings between 1965 and 1979 which considered history in secondary schools in some detail. One conference looked specifically at the way religion was presented in history books, recommending

[1] Otto-Ernst Schuddekopf: *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, Strasbourg 1967. Page 125.

that neither should it be omitted, nor should present values be projected backwards: religion ought to be studied as an important part of the historical record in every period.

During this period, there were major changes in historical scholarship, a great widening of the subject-matter of history. Social history expanded to become a major area of the discipline, investigating all classes of society and aspects of life in the past and developing new techniques such as oral history. General changes in ideas such as the growth of the new feminism began to influence historical scholarship, and more slowly percolated into school books too.

In schools there were innovations and experiments in teaching methods, all seeking to promote more active learning by pupils. New methods were aided by developing technologies which made the duplication of selected written historical source material much more available in classrooms. Visual material was increasingly available in new forms which could be used in class teaching, at first slides, and later on film and video. Picture reproduction in textbooks also improved. Using a variety of new resources, teachers sought to develop more active methods of learning in which pupils had to examine a range of different kinds of source material on a topic and exercise thought to arrive at explanations and answers.

There was a movement to broaden the content of the school syllabus by introducing topics in world history: one way of moving away from the national base. The Council of Europe sponsored a number of Teachers Seminars in the early 1980s which looked at topics in world history, such as: The Birth of Brazil and Teaching about Africa South of the Sahara. There were two conferences on American History, and in 1983 there was a major conference on : Portuguese Expansion in the 15th and 16th Centuries and the World Encounter of Cultures. This meeting noted that:

> "In the past, the European Discoveries were often taught in a chauvinistic or Eurocentric way." It recommended that: "in view of the multi-cultural character of many schools in Western Europe, and of the need to educate young people for life in an inter-dependent world, it is essential that teaching about this topic should not lead to feelings of racial or cultural superiority."

Experiments with inter-disciplinary teaching were tried in a number of European school systems. This meant teachers of several subjects co-operating on an agreed topic, so that for example the history, geography and economics of a topic would be tackled together. This approach, widely used in primary schools, became popular in lower secondary schools too, and led to the development of inter-disciplinary programmes.

Learning history was increasingly seen in a wider educational context. Discussion about the aims of teaching and learning history led the Council of Europe to consider the contribution of the subject to the social and civic purposes of education. In 1978 the Council started work on human rights education in schools seeing history as a subject which should contribute because:

> "Human rights have had to be won and defended throughout history;
> Human rights are not static, and new rights emerge as society develops."

5. The Transformation of Europe

The political changes of 1989-90 changed the face of Europe, and, in one important respect they also transformed fundamentally the ways in which it was possible to think about a European element in the history curriculum. What was now required was to recover a conception of the whole of Europe. Throughout the 40 years of the Cold War, the Iron Curtain had divided the continent both literally and mentally. In the West this had increasingly led to a truncated view of the continent, especially in simplified school books. It was clear to historians that the political transformations came from long historical roots, that Europe in the last decade of the 20th Century had again picked up historical threads from much earlier periods.

The earliest Council of Europe meetings had reluctantly concluded that it was difficult to include all of Europe in approaches to history in the 1960s, chiefly because the values were so different, and above all because the interpretation and understanding of what history was were not concordant.

> " This means the acceptance of a great ideological rift in our Europe of the present day. We are really concerned not with a European, but with a Western European community extending as far east as Greece and Turkey. This is an unfortunate limitation of "the Idea of Europe", but as it seems, an inevitable one for the moment. Only future developments

> that may be hoped for, can bring about a more extensive European community" (1967).[1]

Now, in the 1990s, a full conception of Europe and a pan-European view of its history became possible. The number of member States of the Council of Europe expanded rapidly, with new member States urgently seeking to change approaches to school history. They had views of Europe which older member States did not know about. The implications began to be explored at once, not least through the personal encounters of teachers and others concerned with "History Teaching in the New Europe", the title of the Council of Europe's first pan-European inter-governmental symposium, at Bruges in 1991.

6. Early Council of Europe Recommendations on School History

The early conferences came to a number of conclusions about the content of school history courses which have continued to inform the work of the Council of Europe.

1. The first of these is that history is not propaganda: history courses in schools should not be attempts to persuade pupils to accept particular conclusions or solutions to current issues and problems.

2. Secondly, a revision of history syllabuses to allow for a more European context, as well as national histories, was needed. The Council of Europe has always made the case for an element of European history in school courses, but this has never been urged exclusively, always as one of several possibilities, It became a commonplace at Council of Europe meetings, and eventually elsewhere, for teachers and others to discuss endlessly how to achieve a proper balance between local, national, regional, European and world history in the short time available in school.

3. It was clear that national history was important: "the national story is of great, perhaps of paramount importance, and it would be fatal to neglect it." Recently the Council has looked in more detail at the teaching of national history.

[1] Otto-Ernst Schuddekopf: *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, Strasbourg 1967. Page 71, chapter by Haakon Vigander.

4. Repeatedly conferences affirmed that a Eurocentric historical perspective was as unsatisfactory as a national one. There was interaction between Europe and the rest of the world throughout history. Every student:

   "should be enabled to study one non-European culture in some depth. Such study would contrast with European history and be complementary in character."

5. It was, however, manifest that there had been many historical events and movements which had occurred throughout the whole of Europe and which formed the basis for the view that there was a history of Europe. A conference in 1965 produced a list of 25 such topics. They ranged from Feudalism and the Crusades, to the development of Capitalism, the Industrial revolution, and the French revolution, and included the Age of Enlightenment, the development of Colonial empires, and two World Wars. To treat historical movements, such as industrialisation or the development of colonial empires, from a national point of view only was to give pupils a misleading view of the nature of these events. The national experience should at least be set in a European context, to indicate something of the wider movement. There was a good case for presenting pupils with at least one course of genuinely European history.

6. Senior pupils should study contemporary history because it is frequently current affairs which lead pupils to want to know more of the historical background. It is particularly in modern history that an international perspective becomes essential. But it was also appropriate that pupils should be given some historical background on the current creation of new European institutions, their origins, and the problems and discussion surrounding their development.

7. History was a subject in which pupils should learn that there is usually more than one point of view on events. All pupils should acquire through their history courses more than one perspective on events to be explained. If one of the educational purposes of learning history was to deepen understanding of the societies and communities to which pupils belonged, then the nation state was not the only one of these.

   "The child is, and the adult will be, a member of more than one kind of community. If the teaching of history were to begin with the local

> community of town or district, then pass on to the history of the State, and so on to Europe and the world, it would in practice be possible to strike a satisfactory balance between the claims of the different communities to which we all belong."[1]

The implications of this conclusion have been affirmed and developed in all subsequent Council of Europe conferences.

[1] Otto-Ernst Schuddekopf: *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision*, Strasbourg 1967. P82, chapter by E.H. Dance. For this section see also*: Against Bias and Prejudice: the Council of Europe's Work on History Teaching and History Textbooks*. Ref: CC-ED/Hist (95) 3 rev.

Part 3: The Content of School History Courses in the 1990s

1. Background

There is much evidence that from the 1980s and into the 1990s governments, as well as teachers and curriculum planners, became much more concerned with the history taught in schools than at any time since the founding of the Council of Europe. In the new member States from Central and Eastern Europe, political change made history a matter of intense public debate. There was an urgent desire to rediscover their own national history and to rewrite and present it in schools. Changing school history meant thinking about new teaching methods, producing new textbooks, and retraining history teachers. It has been a major task which is still not complete.

In Western countries too, there was a detectable new concern by governments about the teaching of national history. In France President Mitterand in 1983, and in England, the Minister of Education in 1984, both made much publicised speeches about the need to strengthen the understanding of national history amongst the younger generation. The issues were taken up by the media and widely discussed. In a number of Western countries new syllabuses and requirements have been developed for the teaching of history in schools. These inter-national developments, which have occurred in America too, have coincided with a period of greater national consciousness, of nationalistic demonstrations, but also with a period in which the cohesion of nation-states seems in some respects more fragile and uncertain than previously.

2. Sources of Information

At the Symposium in Bruges in 1991 on "History Teaching in the New Europe", all countries participating were asked to submit national reports on the situation of history teaching: an analysis of these is the first part of the report on the symposium.[1] About 50 reports were received, and most covered topics such as objectives of history teaching, its place in the curriculum, syllabuses, links with other subjects, teaching methods used, the available resources, assessment and teacher-training. Many of the

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[1] *History Teaching in the New Europe*, Report of the Symposium, Brugge, Belgium, Dec. 1991, M. Charriere. Ref: CC-ED/Hist (93) 1.

reports from Western Europe indicated that wide-ranging changes were taking place, and in Central and Eastern European countries radical revisions were just beginning. The data from Bruges are broad, from all over Europe, and very varied in nature. A more systematic comparative study of history teaching and history curricula in the then member States of the European Union was completed in 1992. This piece of research was originally undertaken by an outside research body with a report on it written later for the Council of Europe.[1] Taken together, and with incidental material from other reports, some view can be given of the present position of history in schools. There has been less change than might have been anticipated.

3. Guidelines

In most educational systems there are now official curriculum guidelines. Most guidelines are a summary of what is legally required, a few are not, and are simply guides and based on consensus after consultation. Sometimes assessment may be linked to guidelines.

In a number of countries history in the early secondary school is taught with other subjects, by the same teacher, and may not be separately specified. In Scotland it is a part of Environmental Studies, in Norway history and geography are part of Social Studies, in France there are close links between history and geography, elsewhere history and civics are linked. Some guidelines are the result of trials and evaluation of new approaches, as in Spain. Others may impose innovatory approaches which are remote from the experience of ordinary teachers..

There is no consensus about how the history curriculum should be structured. The commonest structure is the chronological outline survey, although there are other patterns of selecting material, including guidelines structured around topics or themes, and some which are inter-disciplinary. All guidelines suggest the content to be covered and therefore make selections, some are detailed and precise with a rationale for the choices made, others simply give a list of topics with little further specification.

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[1] *The European Content of the School History Curriculum* - R. Stradling 1995, Ref. CC-ED/Hist (95) 1.

Some guidelines include requirements about how the content should be taught: insisting on certain approaches, methods and skills which pupils should acquire, and be able to demonstrate in their work: for instance, that they can assess the reliability of a source. An emphasis on skills usually means a curriculum less crowded with detailed content, the happy balance of both is much discussed. In some countries textbooks to go with curriculum guidelines are specified, in others there is a choice of approved texts, and in some countries textbooks are never specified.

Guidelines vary in length and detail, and often their existence may be seen to strengthen the position of history in the curriculum. On the other hand, very detailed guidelines limit the freedom of the teacher to choose and adapt the syllabus for particular pupils. One purpose of guidelines is to make a reasoned choice of historical material suited to pupils of particular ages, and manageable within the relatively short amount of time for the subject in school. Selection is an extremely difficult task, at the heart of curriculum construction, and the cause of much debate.

4. Overview of School History Courses

The content of school history during the period when it is a compulsory subject for all pupils, is still largely national history. There has been a broadening of content to include some topics on both local history and wider regional or world history. But the national perspective still tends to influence all of the syllabus.

> "Students spend a very limited amount of time looking at the history of their home town or village; most of their curriculum is taken up with national history; and there is a limited amount of time for looking at the interaction of national history with regional history and for the coverage of world history. Generally speaking this global dimension is usually restricted to 20th Century developments and, where appropriate, the home nation's colonial past."

Where aspects of European history are introduced into the syllabus, it is usually:

> "in order to shed light on the country's own national history, or at periods when their own nation played a significant part in European history. Each country highlights its own period of pre-eminence, for example: France and the Enlightenment, Italy and the Renaissance,

> Germany and the Reformation, England and the Industrial Revolution, Spain and Portugal and the Voyages of Exploration."

The result is that there is often a national perspective on European history too; indeed because the nation is prominent beyond its own borders, some of the European history is really a way of enhancing national pride.

This is a general overall picture; in detail there is of course diversity. In Germany and Central Europe guidelines more often place national history within a broader regional history, often called general or world history, but, "the main emphasis is on the Western world with a marked preference for Europe." In England there is a long tradition of separate courses for national history. While smaller nations most frequently seem to place their national history within a European or regional context, this is not always so and some of the countries where the curriculum is predominantly national and inward-looking are also small.

A global or international perspective is most likely to occur in 20th Century history. But this too is quite restricted:

> "the international dimension is dominated by England, France and Germany before the mid-20th century and by the USA, the Soviet Union, China and Japan post-1945."

There is a widespread view that a global or world perspective is essential for studying 20th Century history, but, in fact, whole continents such as India or Africa rarely appear in school courses. 20th Century history is usually the final period studied in compulsory courses which gives it a certain prominence. There is seldom a world perspective in earlier periods of history, and the conception of world history is generally a very limited one. Curriculum planners clearly find it difficult to accomodate this perspective in a limited time, for young pupils. Before the 20th Century there are quite widely agreed conventions about appropriate glimpses of a world perspective:

> "The focus is usually on the history of one or two non-European countries, mostly former colonies, or on the period of European expansion and discovery, or on the early cultures which contributed so much to the formation of European civilisation."

In general, school history courses now include more social and economic history, and some emphasise cultural history and the history of ideas. The dominance of political history is not as great as it was, except in 20th Century history. Despite this, the history of women is still less prominent than amongst academic historians. New techniques such as oral history do not seem to be widely used, although they can be readily adapted to school work. Science and technology remain neglected, and even environmental history has not really percolated into school courses.

The chronological outline survey from pre-history to the present day is still the dominant curriculum model. A few countries begin at a later date, in England and Wales the lower secondary course begins with the Roman Empire. The argument for a chronological structure is that it gives historical perspective and a coherent mental map of history. But some argue that:

> "a combination of depth studies (e.g. the Reformation), lines of development (e.g. the influence of Islam since the 7th Century) and contrasting studies (e.g. Europe in the 18th Century and in the late 20th Century) could be just as effective and that an historical perspective develops through the application of historical methods rather than through learning about the key events in every period."

National history remains the central concern of school courses. This is clear from all of the information available in Council of Europe reports. One teachers' seminar agreed that it occupied 40-50% of the time for history in school in most countries. Not only is national history the centre of the school history syllabus, it influences the rest of the syllabus too. There was a time, in the 1970s, when it seemed that the emphasis on national history in classrooms was waning, while that on teaching world history was growing. In the 1990s this is no longer true. The author of the research into history teaching commented that:

> "My impression is that, in the 1990s, we are seeing a shift back towards a greater emphasis on national history not just in those countries which have experienced major upheavals and political changes, but also in the countries ofWestern Europe where some policy-makers have become concerned, on the one hand, about the growing alienation from society of disadvantaged young people and marginal groups and, on the other hand, the relatively simplistic and non-historical understanding of their country

> which most young people are given by the mass media, particularly television."

The teaching and learning of both national and European history in schools have been extensively discussed in Council of Europe seminars for teachers and in symposia and colloquies which have drawn on the expertise of historians and others. The findings of these discussions for both areas raise problems and possibilities.

Part 4: The Complexities of National History

1. Council of Europe Initiatives

Throughout the 1990s the Council of Europe has paid special attention to the teaching of national history in its conferences and seminars. This was a response both to requests for help from new member States, and to the new emphasis on national history everywhere. In fact, there was a new project to: “identify innovatory approaches to the teaching of the history of Europe.” Yet by 1995 the project organisers noted that:

> “Paradoxically for a project on the teaching of European history, one of the main topics of discussion has been the aims of, and approaches to, the teaching of national history.”

The summary of all the reports at the Bruges Symposium concluded that a major objective of history teaching was:

> “to hand down a heritage, a historical culture, whose purpose is to provide pupils with roots. The term ‘roots’ can be understood in an open sense, if the idea is to make pupils aware of the past history of the society, regional or wider, in and with which they live.”

However, it was already clear that:

> “the resurgence of nationalism and various forms of exclusion can also increase the danger of these ‘roots’ being seen as a justification, explicit or otherwise, for withdrawing into an identity asserted at the expense of others. In this respect, history teaching still seems to be linked to the search for and assertion of a national identity.”

The dangers of nationalism were obvious in many parts of Europe, with examples of racist violence, and the war in the former Yugoslavia nightly on television. Yet in the decades before the 1990s, there had been little discussion of the concepts of a nation or nationalism: as an earlier conference noted “a pupil and a teacher in 1900 would certainly have been more adept than us at dealing with the concepts of nationality.”

A series of Council of Europe meetings focussed on some of the problems and tensions in the teaching of national history in schools, and sought to explore ways of developing positive influences.

2. National Identities

There are fundamental questions about the basic outline of the national history in some of the new member States of the Council of Europe. Should the framework be based on the boundaries of the present State projected backwards? How is national history to be thought of if the political state has been quite recently created? What is national history where there are substantial minority groups? How can national history create a sense of citizenship if recent history is inextricably entwined with what now are other nations?

Ministries of Education have been under some pressure to resolve these issues speedily, because "the national history is part of establishing the national identity". This point was stressed in reports from most countries in Central and Eastern Europe at a Council of Europe seminar in Graz in 1994.[1] Establishing a national history would strengthen a sense of national identity, and this was the purpose of teaching it in school: "special attention is paid to strengthening the national identity and making it known to all." And "our national history is presented from a national and State point of view which has been totally ignored until now."

This concern with identity has occurred also in States where it has not been precipitated by political upheavals. A seminar in York in 1995 looked carefully at: "The Role of History in the Formation of National Identity." The Chief Executive in charge of the curriculum in England made a powerful speech on the importance of the role of history in fostering a sense of community and the identity of a society, and was critical of the lack of heroes and exemplars for the young in modern history textbooks.

This speech provoked much discussion amongst participants. Yet it curiously echoes some of the urgent concern over national history expressed in the new member States, where an agreed sense of the national past is felt to be an important ingredient in the

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[1] *The Reform of History Teaching in European Countries in Democratic Transition*, Report of the Seminar at Graz, Austria, Nov. 1994, A. Low-Beer. Ref: CC-ED/Hist (95) 2.

stability and future of the society. It is a debate which is frequently fuelled by pressures from outside classrooms, both from politicians and popular opinion expressed through the media.

For individuals, national identity is one amongst many other identities, and although basic, it may not be of great importance unless threatened. Identities based on religion, gender, professional interests, football teams, or a local community may be of greater daily significance. Political and cultural identities may not coincide. In a world where people and families move, and political boundaries change, many people have multiple identities. Children growing up in complicated worlds have to construct their own sense of identity, which may not always be the same as that of their parents, since the experience of each generation is different. Even at the level of the individual, the idea of national identity can be complex.

History teachers support the idea of teaching national history because the next generation should know something of the history of the society in which they live. But teachers are often more aware than politicians of the complexities of the idea of national identity rather than national history, because they mediate between individual children from very varied backgrounds and the collective consciousness. When politicians worry about the sense of national identity, they are usually expressing concerns about the current state of society, about groups who may be alienated from the community. They look to schools to ameliorate the ills of present society, despite causes such as poverty, unemployment or discrimination, which may lie beyond the school system.

3. National Symbols: National Myths

In recent years there has been a growing academic discussion on nations and nationalism, on what can be learned from the historical record about how nations have, in fact, been formed, and on the nature of national identities. There is an enormous literature on these topics. Sometimes the discussion reaches out into more popular journals and articles. The Council of Europe drew into its meetings experts from a variety of disciplines to discuss central conceptual issues such as different definitions of a nation, a state, a nation-state, and the ways in which such concepts have changed over time. It is clear that, whilst the teaching of the national history in

school is one of the threads which binds the nation together, it is by no means the only one.
Several Council of Europe meetings have noted other aspects of our cultures which are arguably more important influences on national consciousness: modern sport, for example, is structured on national representation. Sporting heroes act as national symbols and are a source of pride. Symbols of various kinds serve to structure the national consciousness, such as place names, buildings, monuments, and national emblems. Such symbols frequently allude to the past of the nation, drawing on history, but also on myth and tradition. In Europe such public monuments and statues have existed since ancient times, and are destroyed or removed when the nation wants to redefine its identity. Occasionally such symbols may simply change their symbolic, inner, meaning. There are several examples of famous medieval saints who at more recent dates have become national symbols. Changes in national consciousness can be traced through changes in national emblems which usually "express the prevailing self-definition of a state as well as its relation to the past."

In all countries there are various national ceremonies and commemorative occasions which include reference to events in the past of the nation, and teachers would usually be expected to explain the historical background. But sometimes such events move beyond the historic. Popular history, as distinct from both academic and school history, often encompasses festivities based only loosely on the historic past and centred essentially on myth and beliefs which have grown beyond the historic situation. Mythical elements are a frequent aspect of national identity, which have potency because of the memories, the emotions, which they were created to convey. This too has been explored in two Council of Europe meetings, at Trondheim in Norway, and Visby in Sweden. In both places, events in the past form the basis for regular modern re-enactments, powerful performances which are hugely popular.

> "Visby's celebrated 'Medieval Week', which brings tourists flocking to this medieval walled city, is not - as one might be pardoned for assuming - of great antiquity. It has grown steadily over the last 10 years, involving numerous people of the city as well as enthusiasts from elsewhere. The large number of people who wear their medieval costumes for the whole week testifies to the hold which the idea has developed on the imagination of the city, while providing some intriguingly surreal sights for visitors: medieval monks wheeled pushchairs through the cobbled streets while Knights Hospitaller, in full chain mail and their splendid black cloaks, queued up at the supermarket. A conference of historians

> was, of course, pleased to note the care that had gone into making sure that the costumes were accurate and reflected the styles of 1361. It was a pity, therefore, though not entirely a surprise, to learn that the whole event was based on myth."[1]

It was, as the report comments, an excellent illustration of "the power of the past both to illumine the imagination, and to mislead, falsify and romanticise." This conference eventually concluded that the triumphant Swedish nationalism of the mythical past was historically anachronistic: for that part of the world in the Middle Ages, loyalty was to a monarch or a local town, and a sense of nationalism had yet to develop.

At Trondheim too, a dramatically powerful play has been created around the medieval legends of St. Olaf. This, like the re-enactment at Visby, was created in the early 20th Century, and intended to nurture a spirit of patriotic nationalism. Olaf the first Christian King of Norway, died in battle against the freeborn peasants and is now the Patron Saint of Norway. The play is performed annually at the site of the battle, drawing very large crowds in an open air setting. Such dramatic use of the legendary and mythical past is ancient, its purpose being to generate emotion and teach moral lessons, which may be for good or bad ends. In the modern world it is often an aspect of the tourist and heritage industries - only tenuously connected to the real historical past. The report from Trondheim noted that:

> "the purpose of history is not primarily to generate emotion but to analyse and assess the evidence and then come to conclusions about what it can tell us about past events."

Whilst human beings use their past in many different ways, training in historical skills may lead pupils to ask questions, not only about dramatic presentations, but about the uses of history in the heritage industry, in tourism, in museum displays, and about the real historical context of national symbols and monuments.

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[1] *The History of the Baltic Sea - A History of Conflicts*, Report of the European Teachers' Seminar, Visby, Sweden, August 1993, S. Lang. Ref: DECS/SE/BS/Sem (94) 15.

4. Minorities

National history, as it has been traditionally conceived, is a particular form of history. In school, as elsewhere, it is usually political history and hence, by definition, the history of the dominant group. It is majority history and mostly concerned with the history of those groups or classes who held power. There is a tendency in tightly selected school history to highlight major movements and events, turning points in the national fortunes, conflicts successfully negotiated, or, for some nations, periods of expansion and prosperity. But in all national histories there are other stories, the counterpoint to the dominant themes. These are the stories of minority groups, of the classes without power, of minority religions, of women, of the daily lives of those not engaged in great events. In recent years historians have paid increasing attention to the social and cultural history of ordinary people which, rather more than political history, tends to reveal the complexities of the national experience.

The Council of Europe has advocated including recognition of minority groups and their alternative histories, within the national history. To give one important example, since 1969 the Council has supported a number of initiatives about one particularly marginalised group, the Gypsies. Not only are they a minority group, but their origins and history are distinctive, they are nomadic and present in all European countries, the object of much discrimination and marginalisation. The majority of Europeans know little about them although they have been here for over 500 years, and their culture, language and music have influenced many aspects of European culture. They are a distinctive thread in the historic European tapestry. Yet at a teachers' seminar in 1994 a participant introduced himself by saying:

> "I am a member of the Romany community and teach history in a secondary school. I have not found any mention of Romanies in history textbooks."

In 1985, the Council sponsored the publication of a book by an expert entitled: *"Roma, Gypsies, Travellers"*.[1] This informative and thoughtful small book has been much in demand, running to a second edition in 1994. One important section is on school and the effects of schooling on Roma families. Much of what is written in that section has relevance for all minority children: school is an alien place for them if,

[1] *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*, J-P Liegeois, Pub: Council of Europe Press (1994). Ref: ISBN 92 871 2349 7.

within the school, there is no recognition of the cultures which children bring with them from their backgrounds and families. Recognition of minorities within the history curriculum, for instance,

> “gives the children a multi-faceted enriching view, and enables each child to reclaim the elements of his own identity in the perspective of their relation with others.”

Furthermore, this multi-faceted perspective presents majorities too with a different understanding of the collective community of the nation:

> “A national programme dealing with minorities in history teaching ... has also to deal with the relations and inter-dependence between majorities and minorities .. teaching the history of minorities has to take into account the function of minorities in helping majorities or nations to understand themselves.”

Whilst several Council of Europe seminars have urged the inclusion of minority history, practical possibilities of doing this must be considered, given the short time for history in school. As one delegate from a new member state remarked, “the government has said they should be in, but there are so many that it is difficult to know how to do it.” The situation varies all over Europe, as well as in different regional areas of one country. One possible solution is to allow space within a national curriculum for optional topics which teachers can develop to suit their pupils.

The treatment of minority groups within schools also gives messages of equal importance to majority children, about how different groups within a society are to live together. Attitudes essential for the recognition of equal rights and democracy in pluralist societies begin to be learnt in schools. There are civic implications of the way the history curriculum is handled. Council of Europe experts have developed the view that an inclusive national history is essential for democracies.

5. Divisive History

For many countries in Europe, 'the national history' is not a simple story. In the new member States:

> "A source of acute difficulty for schools is how to teach recent national history, which has divided society, especially where there has been fighting, and lives lost or wasted in prisons."

At the moment these problems are most acute in new member States because most of these countries have experienced very painful events, well within living memory, and these can be extremely difficult to teach about in school. If the national curriculum makers cannot solve these problems, then teachers are left in very exposed situations. They live in the local societies in which they teach, and are responsible to parents whose lives and views they know for what they teach to the next generation.

These problems have occurred in other countries too. History is full of painful and controversial topics. Where they exist in recent history, there are great dilemmas about how to present them to the next generation. Teaching about the Holocaust is the major example of such a problem, and many historians and educators are still involved in thinking about ways to understand and teach about it. In Spain 20 years ago educators had to attempt to come to grips with ways of teaching about a bitter civil war. A topic further back in history such as European imperialism can still present problems since the effects of colonialism reverberate into the present day.

In Northern Ireland much thought has been necessary to maintain genuine history teaching at all in a very divided society. Educators from Northern Ireland have presented their approaches at several Council of Europe meetings.[1] There the very concept of a national history has been disputed for generations and is still disputed. Teachers in classrooms face strident competition from a 'people's history', a history of the streets.

> "Flags and wall paintings assert loudly two competing nationalisms."

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[1] *The Role of History in the Formation of National Identity,* Report of the European Teachers' Seminar, York, United Kingdom Sept. 1996, H. Skovgaard Nielson. Ref: DECS/BS/SE/Sem (95) 15.

> "These murals are powerful images, the particular use of history to present a particular point of view. There is no room here for a dispassionate review of complex causes, of an interplay of events, of balanced judgements."

In the Northern Irish situation, several steps have been taken to maintain history in classrooms. History teachers across the sectarian divides have worked together, and with their Department of Education, to develop pioneering techniques and approaches in the classroom. By the 1980s, these ideas were taken up by the Government. A common core history curriculum was developed, and, after wide consultation, became the legal basis of school history in 1991. Together with this, schools are required to teach what is called 'Education for Mutual Understanding' across the whole curriculum. This is well described in a Council of Europe report of 1994.[1] Indeed, the techniques are similar to those developed by the Council across Europe: essentially putting teachers and pupils in touch with each other, across national and religious divides, in joint projects and discussions, and attempting to create a space where controversial issues can be explored and discussed. Links were also made with schools in Europe through a special European Studies Project, using modern communications. Several thousand teachers and pupils have been involved in working contacts with other pupils across community boundaries and national frontiers.

Government action and support are crucial to sustaining such initiatives. In Northern Ireland it was precipitated by the widespread desire to live in a less troubled society. The report on the history curriculum maintained that democratic values were built on "open-mindedness, and respect for a range of possible interpretations based on evidence and objectivity." These are the approaches of the discipline of history. The government supported a proper historical approach to a troubled past in the hope that this might improve relations within the society in the future. Government money has been put into resources to support the new history curriculum, including textbooks which are written jointly by teachers from both sides of the sectarian divide. Before these initiatives school history was a form of sectarian propaganda, and sensitive issues and recent history were often not taught at all since teachers felt they could not tackle these issues without support and resources.

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[1] *Education for Mutual Understanding in an International Context*, Report of the European Teachers' Seminar, Belfast, Northern Ireland, November 1994, A. Trant. Ref: DECS/SE/BS/Sem (95) 3.

There are however a number of European countries where the national history in schools exists in several versions, although not all of them may be known to any one set of pupils. In a sense these are divided histories, but the variations on the national history have not in fact been contentious. They reflect national constitutions and have evolved out of historic experience. In the German Länder, in the different parts of the United Kingdom, in Belgium, in Switzerland, in Spain, versions of the national history in schools have a strong regional emphasis. Such variations on the national history will have common threads, but a variety of content and points of view. There are many values in presenting a multi-perspective view of the collective national history, not least that it provides some protection against the more simplistic versions of nationalistic history.

6. Official History?

In many ways school history is a kind of official history. In most countries the content of the curriculum is eventually decided by government bodies. History, along with the rest of the curriculum, is part of legislation: teachers are legally required to teach topics, which always include the national history, specified in greater or lesser detail. Sometimes innovations in curricula and in examinations may begin at grassroots level. In the end, however, major changes in the curriculum usually require government action and, after discussion and consultation, eventually legislation.

The public and semi-official status of school history was discussed by representatives of all of the new member States at the 1994 Seminar in Graz. In several countries there have been controversies over the new versions of the national history in textbooks. These disputes arise most sharply over recent national history, much less over other aspects of history. In countries where textbooks are sponsored by Ministries of Education, such texts may easily be seen as the 'official' history. But even in countries without such official government sponsorship, history textbooks are sometimes seen as the most public version of 'our' history, and criticised as inadequate or unworthy. They are very rarely praised. In many countries, there either are, or have been, conspiracies of silence on more difficult or controversial aspects of the national history, tacit agreements not to put them into school curricula or textbooks. In countries where historians are completely free from government

censorship, governments usually still have considerable influence over school history, not only through legislation but through inspections and examinations too.

There is a second sense in which school history is some kind of official history: it has to be a version of the national history which is broadly acceptable to public opinion. It is in countries where the most open public debate is possible that aspects of school history are most readily criticised. In all countries, changes in the versions of the national history taught in school are liable to lead to considerable debate. In many ways school history is the most public form of history, the version of the national story which is most accessible to the general public, and about which, in free societies, there may be much discussion.

7. National or Nationalistic History?

A recent report from a Council of Europe's Teachers' Seminar notes at the beginning that:

> "It was a general opinion, shared by the participants, that national history is a natural part of any curriculum, any textbook and of classroom teaching. Pupils - and other people - need to have a common background in their language, history, and cultural heritage."

The importance of national history has been repeatedly affirmed by teachers in Council of Europe meetings. Yet teachers are clearly aware that "the step from national to nationalistic history teaching can be a very short one." Their own historical training means that they see how easily classroom history can become a form of political indoctrination.

> "In many countries, there may be a wish by pressure groups, by parts of the general public and by politicians to use history teaching as a tool to build up a feeling of superiority, and in some cases, hatred to 'the others', whether they are States, or ethnic/minority groups."

History teachers always mention the dangers, the limits and the conditions without which a genuinely historical approach to the national story is not possible. For example, the report of a major symposium in 1993 records that:

> "groups were agreed that it was legitimate to perceive of the history curriculum as a means of developing and sustaining a sense of national identity, but only under certain conditions. Firstly, they wished to uphold the distinction, made in several plenary lectures, between 'national identity' and 'nationalism' and felt that it was not legitimate to teach history in order to promote nationalistic attitudes. Secondly, some participants felt that in those countries where the population was not culturally and ethnically homogeneous, a clear balance needed to be struck between, for example, developing and sustaining a sense of a common political identity and giving full recognition to the histories of minority ethnic and cultural groups and their contributions to the history of the nation or state as a whole."

The report of this symposium noted uncertainties about the purposes of teaching national history, a certain unease about the overall aims which might be required of teachers when dealing with national history. At least, however,

> "The value of conferences such as this is that these issues are aired and an exchange of views is facilitated. More needs to be done at an international level, to encourage similar debates between those who are officially responsible for drafting curriculum guidelines and regulations."

Another seminar noted that the distinction between national and nationalistic history could lie in terminology: the language of what is meant by, 'the nation', or 'minorities', can be important. Should teachers use words like 'we' and 'us' and 'them' in history? They looked at the influence of television and the media, as well as textbooks, and popular history in street murals. They felt that in the matter of national identity and consciousness:

> "socialising agents outside the school system probably play a more striking role"

Since history was being used and misused by many others outside classrooms, then one of the aims of organised school history must be:

> "to give pupils the tools, the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to deal with this use and misuse."

Pupils should learn to scrutinise all sources of information, media presentations as well as textbooks, for their value as historical evidence.

> "There was a general wish to have textbooks that present various viewpoints and offer students opportunities of acquiring and working with skills. This is especially important when dealing with the danger of nationalistic and chauvinistic history. Students should learn the skills necessary to pick out and reveal propaganda."

How far should teachers in classrooms attempt to deal with controversial and sensitive issues in the national history and consciousness? This meeting concluded that wherever possible such issues should be tackled, since school was perhaps the only place where they could be studied. School history might thus lead, at the least, to a greater understanding of historical sources of conflict in society. It was particularly felt that

> "history teachers have an obligation not to be neutral, especially not in contexts where questions of chauvinism, xenophobia and racism occur."

However, for teachers to raise such issues in classrooms might cause trouble and demand a good deal of civil courage. They needed support from their school, from the community and from governments.

One new source of support for teachers across Europe is the newly formed organisation called **Euroclio**, (The European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations). The Council of Europe acted as midwife at the start of this organisation and has done much to support and publicise its activities. There have also been calls for a Charter for history teachers as some protection against political pressure on them. International organisations can, in themselves, give support through publicity. There is general agreement that, as one meeting put it:

> "history teachers do not have the duty to deliver uncritically official versions of national myths and propaganda."

What many societies want from history teaching in schools is contradictory, as this seminar realised. On the one hand,

> "it is a general theory that history in the education system plays a major part in the formation of national identity. Hence the enormous interest in the subject by politicians and the general public the world over."

On the other hand, it is clear that agencies outside schools are often much more powerful in influencing national emotions and a sense of national identity. This may

well be based on a view of the national past which is highly selective and unhistorical. It was a historian who remarked at an earlier conference that school history is expected to do two things, especially with older pupils. It should teach proper academic skills and method, and produce pupils who can be thoughtful and critical. But secondly, it is asked to be constructive, to authenticate and deepen national consciousness through historical education. There is a tension between these two functions, and the same tension exists in the work of historians, who are primarily valued by societies when they can construct new and meaningful interpretations of the past, which they frequently achieve by critical re-interpretation.

8. Some Practical Implications

1. The Council of Europe has always asserted that school should offer pupils a genuine historical education. There are contradictions in what is expected of school history, by both politicians and the general public, and these arise most painfully within recent national history. In 1996, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, in its recommendation on school history and the learning of history in Europe, stated that:

> "Historical awareness is an important civic skill. Without it, the individual is more vulnerable to political and other manipulation."

For most young people, history begins in school. This should not simply be the learning by heart of haphazard historical facts; it should be an initiation into how historical knowledge is arrived at, a matter of developing the critical mind and the development of a democratic, tolerant and responsible civic attitude.

2. School history has been used by governments for ideological indoctrination, and it is the school subject most vulnerable to this kind of manipulation. Yet protection from such manipulation is also a responsibility of governments. The Council of Europe believes that:

> "Citizens have a right to learn history that has not been manipulated. The State should uphold this right and encourage an appropriate scientific approach, without religious or political bias, in all that is taught."

Governments have considerable influence on school history through legislation and Ministries of Education, they can use history either as “an assertion of national identity”, or to support a varied, critical, scholarly and open approach to the national history.

3. A flexible framework for the curriculum, with options, can accomodate the history of minorities and of particular localities:

> “in today’s multi-ethnic, divided and multi-racial societies, it may be necessary to include separate opportunities for specific groups to present their own history within the framework laid down nationally.”

Projects in local history may reflect the minority history of that region or town and be seen as a clear counterpoint to a national story. An introduction to the history of minorities is valuable civic education for majority children too.

Part 5: European History within the School Curriculum

National history and European history are not completely separate strands in the school curriculum, except in a few countries. A seminar in 1991 on "Teaching about European History and Society", noted that:

> "We speak of national histories, but this is a misleading idea: there is no nation in Europe whose history is not both infused with and part of the history of the whole continent. When children discover this, they will be better able to see through some of the more pernicious myths about the past that are peddled by the more extreme forms of nationalism."

The amount and the range of European history taught within basic education varies across different school systems so that it is difficult to present a general picture.. The summary of reports from all countries at the Bruges Symposium in 1991 concluded that:

> "All young Europeans are given the opportunity to discover the development of regions and countries other than their own."

All the information suggests that this is an accurate generalisation, but the view of Europe and its history is generally filtered through a national perspective. In some areas, especially in Northern Europe, there is a rather broader regional perspective. However, this may still present a limited conception of Europe as a whole. The time available for history in school is severely limited, and this is a serious constraint, which means that, for most pupils, learning about European history may be restricted to a few topics. The Council of Europe, in several meetings, has looked carefully at the way the history of Europe is presented in schools, and a very useful survey of The European Content of the School History Curriculum was published in 1995.[1]

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[1] *The European Content of the School History Curriculum*. R. Stradling 1995. Ref. CC-ED/Hist.(95) 1.

1. Definitions of Europe

Europe has many meanings, which have changed through history. At certain times, including the present, rival definitions have existed at the same time. The survey mentioned above draws attention to different definitions of European history implicit in curricula and in recent attempts to produce textbooks. There are two main ones. The first tends to take a chronological sweep, to focus on common movements and events and emphasise the unity of Europe. The second view focuses on particular periods, emphasises diversity, and the sometimes dynamic tension and conflict in European history. Both views have strengths and weaknesses. Older pupils ought to be made aware of the fluidity of the concept.

2. Present Practice

European history comes into courses in several ways, and there are some general features of its place in the history curriculum.

1. Topics in European history are usually linked to the national perspective. Where national history is taught in a European context, the continent will not generally be seen as a whole, but only in relation to national history.

Much of the teaching of European history really has a regional rather than a continental view: the focus is on the history of North West Europe, the Mediterranean, the Aegean, Central Europe, the Baltic or Scandinavia. At a seminar in the Czech Republic in 1996, it became obvious to participants that each country looked at the treaties ending the First World War from their regional perspective. Those treaties which were not locally relevant were omitted entirely, so that for example, pupils in the rest of the continent did not learn about events concerning Greece and Turkey.

2. There are however several topics in European history which are quite widely taught, as shown in the chart from the 1995 survey (Appendix II). Similar topics were identified in the 1960s. Not all of these topics will appear in any one curriculum. Whilst such topics might well be based in detail on the national experience, teachers can use them to develop a European or a comparative perspective. Just as there is considerable diversity between different school systems, there is variety within any one system in the ways in which different schools and teachers will interpret particular guidelines.

3. Syllabuses providing a course with a comprehensive view of European history over a long period of time are not common. The 1995 survey cites Luxembourg as having a three-year course starting with the Roman Empire and ending with the crisis of socialism in Eastern Europe. In Portugal too, the focus is European and global, with national history in post-compulsory schooling. In Central Europe, and some parts of Germany, national history is taught together with courses on world or general history, which in fact are largely European history.

4. Interestingly, it is some of the new syllabuses developed in Central and Eastern European countries which place the strongest emphasis on European history. The 1995 report gives an example from Slovenia, and comments that these guidelines give almost as much coverage to events in Western European countries as they do to their own regional history. At another seminar in 1991, it was the countries from Central Europe who wanted new syllabuses in which national history would always be taught in a European context.

5. There are examples of school courses devised so that, over the course as a whole, national, European and world perspectives conceptually inter-relate. These are not common, but the French history programme for lower secondary schools offers one such example:

ABRIDGED version of the History Curriculum for the 2nd cycle (pupils aged 11-13) in France

Ancien Régime
Ideas of property, social and demographic changes and population movement; the gradual evolution of the State; the development of a stable monarchy; work, technology and society in the 18th Century.

The French Revolution and Empire
The main actors; the chronological phases; important documents of the time; the impact of the Revolution outside France; the impact of revolutionary ideas and the development of Empire.

France, Europe and the world in the 19th Century

a. Economies, societies and nations in Europe: growth of liberalism, social movements, religious ideas, nationalism and internationalism;

b. France and the French: the development of democracy; ideologies; social change; political development in 19th Century France; the movement of ideas.

c. Europe and the world: colonialism, exploitation and conquest. [NB. This should include a study of a non-European civilisation.]

6. A comparative perspective which requires the teacher to compare and contrast events in national history with experience in other European countries is more common. There are variations on such comparative approaches: for example the topic may be based around a theme, as in the French-speaking Community in Belgium where students look at absolute and representative government in France, England, the United Provinces, Russia and Eastern Europe. The following year they look at revolutions in France, the United States, Germany and Italy and then at the revolutionary movement in Belgium. Another variation is to study a period of conflict: in Northern Ireland pupils are required to examine the economic, political and religious rivalry between England and Spain in the late 16th Century and look at its impact on two other nations: the Irish and the Dutch. Here pupils are being asked to look at rivalries and conflict within Europe which involved both their own and other countries. Queries have been raised about whether comparative approaches are too demanding for pupils aged about 11 to 15. In practice, however, pupils will only occasionally be required to look at events in this comparative European way.

7. Some periods of European history are more prominent than others:

> "Generally speaking, there is usually some coverage of Classical Greece and of the Roman Empire... The treatment of the Middle Ages is often fragmented... Coverage of events and movements from the late Middle Ages to the mid-18th Century is limited."

8. Time-scales vary markedly: in early history pupils may study events over several centuries. In the modern period topics rarely cover more than 50 years. The long view is useful for understanding some current events, but teaching of the modern period does not allow it.

9. 20th Century European history focuses on the politics of international relations and the emergence of supra-national institutions, and

> "it is worth noting that concern about the limited educational value of this approach has regularly emerged at Council of Europe meetings since the mid-1970s."

Quite frequently:

> "the European idea and the building of Europe does not appear to receive sustained attention, other than in civics lessons."

10. Finally, the history of Eastern and Central Europe hardly appears at all in the syllabuses of many Western European countries. Teachers from these countries have been dismayed to discover that Western Europeans are ignorant about even the bare outlines of the history of the rest of the continent. There is some evidence that the current generation of students in the West are curious about the rest of Europe, partly because of what they learn from television. But even a few references to the histories of the other half of Europe have as yet scarcely begun to appear in Western school textbooks. Historians have already produced many new histories of individual countries in East and Central Europe for interested adults. New scholarship and new historical interests are very slow to penetrate into school texts, and there are few countries with institutionalised mechanisms to see that school books reflect up-to-date scholarship.

3. The Views of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has always argued the view that school history should include European history, and major movements, significant events and important individuals should be widely known. From time to time, some groups have argued for a ‘common core’ European history to be developed, and there have been calls for a common European history textbook. This view has always been rejected by the Council which has felt that it is more appropriate to recognise and encourage a diversity of approaches. Similarly, it would be better to have a range of textbooks, and even better if they could be widely, rather than locally published.

From its earliest meetings the Council of Europe has stressed that it has never favoured a Eurocentric approach, and it is:

> “not in favour of using history as propaganda for European unity, still less of some sort of standard ‘Euro-history’.”

The Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education meeting at Kristiansand, Norway, in 1997, recommended that:

> “education authorities should review their curricula to ensure that they reflect the richness and diversity of the history of Europe. The Council of Europe should lend its support to these efforts by organising meetings between historians, curriculum developers, school textbook authors and

> representatives of teachers and publishers, in order to facilitate the development of curricula and textbooks with a European dimension. Moreover, the Ministers REJECT categorically the idea of trying to impose a uniform or standardised version of European history on schools in member States."

The report of the Bruges Symposium in 1991 suggested that:

> "there is a need to re-think our approach to Europe and its peoples in history teaching. This process should take into account a social fact: the increasing mobility of the population and of European youth in particular. A number of reports mention this fact, which makes it harder to justify the retention of more or less rigid frontiers in history syllabuses."

There are many constraints on school history: the pupils are young, there is little time, and examinations and assessments increasingly mould what can be done. Overall however, and despite many changes, the school history curriculum is often both restricted and rather out-of-date in the way in which the history of Europe is presented. An important symposium in Prague in 1995, the culmination of a two year project on "History Teaching in the New Europe"[1], noted that new approaches to history and to thinking about Europe failed to get into school curricula, or were doing so only very slowly.

> "We have to look again at how modern history is taught. In many cases, the old syllabuses have ignored the post-1989 changes, but many history teachers will know that their pupils do not ignore contemporary events and changes. If they do not discuss these changes with their history teachers, they will be dependent on the mass media, particularly television, for their information. With some notable exceptions, television tends to present a non-historical perspective."

Major changes in the curriculum may not be required. What is needed is a new perspective, new ways of thinking about Europe and its history within the school curriculum. This has considerable implications for the training of teachers. A number

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[1] *Mutual Understanding and the Teaching of European History: Challenges, Problems and Approaches*. Symposium: Prague, Czech Republic, October 1995 R. Stradling. Ref: CC-Ed/Hist (95) 16.

of Council of Europe meetings and reports have made suggestions about change. The constraints and practical problems which inhibit curriculum change are considerable, but during the 1990s, the Council has responded to the view that new thinking was needed about approaches to teaching about Europe. There have been many new initiatives and projects exploring ways of developing fresh perspectives on European history.

Part 6: New Perspectives on European History

The new initiatives concerning European history are varied, but all depend upon new conceptualisation about how to introduce it into the school curriculum. A basic theme of many Council of Europe meetings has been about how to achieve a satisfactory balance between local, national, regional, European and world history. Comprehensive coverage is clearly not possible, and many courses already cover too much material for young pupils to assimilate readily. The Council of Europe long ago advocated that the approach and the perspectives offered to pupils were more important than learning detail.

The report of the symposium in Prague in 1995 suggested that:

> "discussion has tended to assume that balance essentially relates to the amount of content or the amount of time allocated to each historical dimension. It is possible, however, to resolve this issue in a different way through the approach of the teacher."

Essentially, teachers with a clear view of 'the new Europe', can introduce this dimension quite expeditiously into topics where the primary focus may be on national or local history, but a link with a European perspective may be relevant and valuable to the topic in hand. The same approach is also possible with global links too. Pupils may, thus, acquire glimpses of perspectives other than the national, but also a general view that there are a multiplicity of perspectives on most historical topics, and that these perspectives inter-relate and are not discrete compartments.

New perspectives are being developed in another direction through the cultural work of the Council of Europe, connecting to history in school through museums and art, for example.

The new technologies are transforming connections between schools across Europe, and lead to joint projects, across national boundaries, with direct communication between pupils in history classes. The Council of Europe has also promoted initiatives looking specifically at historical topics across national boundaries.

Not all of the innovations are new: a number have grown from experience over a considerable period of time. But the scale of the new developments has increased

greatly in the 1990s. Some of the initiatives described below have been developed by other organisations with whom the Council of Europe has worked. All have been made more widely known through Council of Europe seminars.

1. Local History

Local history has always been popular with teachers, but was usually seen as an adjunct to national or European history. Recent meetings and reports have suggested something different. Local topics readily lead to a variety of perspectives, and often provide a precise way in to national, European and international connections, for example through the study of:

- a local family with national and international connections;
- a war memorial which links the locality not only to the broader national, but also to international events;
- the trading links of a local factory, or port, linked to changes in national, regional and international events.

2. Transnational Topics

The Council of Europe has initiated seminars on historical topics which are both trans-national and European. Historians, museum educators, archaeologists and other experts were invited to contribute up-to-date thinking on the subject, and then teachers and others considered how to present the topic in classrooms. These reports cover topics such as:

- The Viking Age in Europe (1983);
- The French Revolution and its Consequences in Europe (1988);
- The Symbols of Freedom - Switzerland in the 13th and 14th Centuries (1991);
- The Hanse in Norway and Europe (1992);
- The History of the Baltic Sea (1993);
- Vikings going Eastwards - Explorers of the river routes from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea (1994);
- The Danube - a thoroughfare of European Culture (1994);
- Crucial Points of Hungarian History in its European Perspective (1994);
- The Balkans, Multi-Ethnic and Multicultural Crossroads (1995).

An art exhibition, "From Viking to Crusader, the Scandinavians and Europe 800-1200" was held in Paris, Berlin and Copenhagen in 1992-93, related to seminars on the Vikings and the Baltic sea, sponsored by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Europe. The Baltic region has well-developed international connections, including The School Viking Network. Pupils find out information about the Vikings in their local area and exchange information through e-mail with other network schools, thus connecting to their European neighbours.

3. Case-Studies on Mutual Influence and Interaction

Points of mutual influence and inter-action in European history have been developed as case-studies. Usually the report has been written by a specialist on the topic who also considers how it might be managed in classrooms. Some of these topics have been presented at symposia and the larger meetings of the Council of Europe. The main purpose was to look at the topic broadly so as to "encourage students to look at the events and changes under study in a more European way" and to bring out points of contact and influence.

Case-studies on positive mutual influences include:

- The French Revolution;
- The Hanse;
- The Jews in Prague;
- El - Andalus;
- Venice and the Mediterranean;
- The Danube.

4. Cultural Connections and Interconnections

One aim of the Council of Europe is 'to promote awareness of a European cultural identity and encourage its development'. The Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe began in 1987 and was originally intended for adults, and to develop a deeper dimension to tourism by co-ordinating cultural events and the work of museums around a series of routes 'along which the European identity was formed.' Brochures and a newsletter are produced about the routes, which are usually on themes with a strong historical side, and involve more than one nation. There are cultural routes on: the Celts, and the Vikings, the Pilgrim Routes to Santiago de

Compostela, the Hanse, and Monasticism. There are also a Silk Route and a Baroque Route.

If suitable materials can be developed, these routes might be of real educational value too. A role-play project involving four schools in different countries has been developed around the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route. The historical museum of Gotland in Visby, Sweden, has developed the kind of resource materials and guide to sites which will enable teachers to use the Hanseatic route. Seminars discussing school uses of the Cultural Routes have suggested that videos should be developed for use in schools when sites cannot be visited.

The educational use of museums has been explored in Council of Europe seminars and reports. A symposium in Salzburg in 1990 looked at strategies for encouraging co-operation among museums "to play their part in educating young people about the European heritage." There are already some linking networks, and some of this work overlaps with the Cultural Routes programme. Modern technology can enhance and increase these links between museums and into schools. This is also a period of rapid change for many museums, they have increased in number but are now financed in many different ways. Provision of museums is very varied: in some countries there is a tradition of many small local museums and long-standing connections with local schools. All museums are keen to attract the young, and many now have museum education departments, which are becoming more aware of the European dimension. Museums, like history courses in schools, can re-interpret their objects in different perspectives, showing the national, European and international connections of local objects.

For many years the Council of Europe has sponsored Art Exhibitions. These have increasingly dealt with movements of people and ideas central to the development of European society, with a strong historical context to the visual material. A recent one called Art and Power: Europe under the Dictators, 1930-1945, presented the art and architecture of the totalitarian regimes which believed in the visual communication of their ideals. Working with other organisations visual material from the exhibitions is increasingly available through modern media such as CD Roms and videos, and is presented on television as well as touring in a number of cities.

European Heritage Classes began in France in 1982, and were launched internationally in 1989 to mark the Council of Europe's 40th birthday.[1] The classes bring together school students from different countries at a site of historic interest to explore it in depth through archaeology, history, language, art, music and theatre. This is a well-established project on which the Council of Europe has produced a useful book with reports from the organisers of their experiences of particular projects. Many are based on student participation in archaeological digs or restoration work. It is a basic tenet of the project that students should be transported to a new environment where they must learn to live, work, and communicate with others from different backgrounds. Part of the purpose is inter-cultural education, educating pupils through experience of a multi-cultural situation. Usually two or three classes from different countries work together, preparing and exchanging material, then perhaps spending a week together with a reciprocal visit later in the year.

5. History Across Frontiers

A major aim of many projects is to find ways in which pupils from different areas can work together. Increasingly information technology is being used to put pupils directly in touch with each other. Best of all are schemes where pupils can meet and spend time working and living together. A number of these projects focus on historical topics and the Council of Europe has recently produced a report, called History without Frontiers on 19 such projects.[2] This report gives valuable practical advice to teachers wishing to set up links with schools in other countries. Increasing numbers of schools have developed such links through modern technology.

History and Identity is a Council of Europe project developed under the initiative on *Democracy, Human Rights and Minorities*, with pilot projects starting in 1995 and running over 18 months. The project involved teachers from five neighbouring countries with strong historical interconnections: Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. The project began with a seminar on History and Identity, at which participants explored central concepts of national identity, of

[1] *Handbook on European Heritage Classes*. Ref: ISBN 92 871 2227 X.

[2] *History Without Frontiers: a practical guide to international history projects in European schools*, Guide and report of the meeting, Strasbourg, France, July 1995, S. Lang. Ref: CC-ED/Hist (96) 2.

personal multiple identities, of national stereotypes, and looked at examples of the formation of national identities. The practical part of the project linked teachers and pupils in classrooms across national boundaries to study a mutually agreed topic, using non-traditional approaches. Projects are on a range of topics: from an aristocratic family with land in three countries, to everyday life in two neighbouring countries. Two projects focus on the history of minority groups within a local area, each school doing investigations and exchanging information. Some projects directly explored changes in national symbols and why these occurred.

Part of the planning in these projects was that pupils should investigate the chosen topic, exchange information, and then meet to discuss their joint work and arrive at final conclusions. Finances mean that this may not be possible for all of them, although the teachers all think such direct contact motivates pupils. The other major difficulty has been that exploratory topics of this kind have proved impossible to fit in to the ordinary curriculum work. They are done as extra topics by interested teachers. In all these five countries there is not sufficient choice or flexibility in the ordinary curriculum to allow for such special projects.

The European Studies Project began in 1986 with funding from Ministries of Education, currently from the Republic of Ireland and from Northern Ireland, and from national and regional authorities in several other countries. This project has been presented at several Council of Europe meetings. It is an extensive project which has now spread to 300 schools across Europe, and has both a junior and a senior version. One of its great strengths may be that the project has been designed to fit in to ordinary curriculum courses. As in some other projects, schools are put in touch with each other in threes: one school from Northern Ireland, one from the Republic of Ireland and one from another country. The project began with strong links with Belgium and France, but now has links with schools in a number of other countries. Senior pupils meet for a residential week's course. The agreed topics are studied in class at intervals during the course, and classes then exchange information with their linked classes electronically. Pupils study the Normans, the 17th Century, and conflict 1914-21, from their own perspective. Exchanging information on the work they have done introduces a comparative European dimension to each topic. But students also learn a lot about each other. At the start of the project, they exchange personal information, and from time to time they may exchange views on political events, football matches or favourite music. Participating students are encouraged to develop

language skills and the ability to use technology as an effective means of communication.

6. Multi-Perspectivity

"Multi-perspectivity" is a concept which has increasingly been used at Council of Europe conferences to describe a way of learning history and a particular kind of approach to the content of the curriculum. Essentially it stems from the basic discipline of history and the need to assess historical events from different perspectives. All historians do this. Very young children readily understand that in a battle, or the invasion of a country, there are at least two views of these events - the perspectives of victor and vanquished, of the invaders and those invaded. It is not difficult to present straightforward polarised views. From this, pupils can move to an understanding that there are a range of views on major historical events, for instance during the Reformation, or the changes of industrialisation. In history, multiple perspectives are usual and have to be tested against evidence, and accounted for in judgements and conclusions.

The recent Council of Europe Handbook on History Without Frontiers, points out that many historical events are not readily enclosed within the national boundaries of today. To understand most historical periods we must shed mental boundaries and think of a world before there were nations. European and national histories inter-connect once teachers and textbook writers start thinking beyond traditional mental frontiers. A world perspective adds another dimension.

Meanwhile modern technology already enables pupils to exchange their local perceptions of major historical movements and changes. Such exchanges give new perceptions, not only another point of view, but the second view may sharpen and clarify what one's own perspective is. There is an interaction between different perspectives: pupils discover that industrialisation happened in a variety of ways, or that experience of the Second World War was quite different in other parts of Europe. Television daily presents the young with glimpses of many worlds far beyond their own.

The teacher aware of multi-perspectivity can use it as one way of resolving the dilemmas of how to balance local, national, regional, European and world perspectives on history in the school curriculum. How far it can be imparted to young pupils in school is not yet clear. Teachers find it valuable to compare their practices at

international seminars. Participants from host countries notice that: “We were able to borrow the eyes of our visitors to see ourselves as others see us - a healthy and salutary process.” Policy-makers and curriculum experts have commented that they have learnt much by looking at their own national practices through “European eyes” at Council of Europe meetings. Moreover, it is increasingly urged as a vital way of seeing the world in multicultural democracies.

Part 7: History in Social and Civic Education

What is the purpose of teaching history in school? Most curricular statements about history begin with aims and objectives. There are usually several of these, expressed in a variety of ways in different countries, and many include the contribution of history to broader social and civic purposes of education. The research report quoted earlier,[1] gives a list of a dozen such aims and suggests that they can be reduced to three broad categories:

- acquiring knowledge and understanding of the past is part of what is involved in becoming an educated person; a humanist position - the contribution of history to general education;

- developing an historical perspective and understanding; history is an academic discipline conveying intrinsically worthwhile knowledge and skills;

- acquiring historical knowledge, understanding and skills as a means to some other end: socialisation, preparation for citizenship, better international understanding - an instrumentalist view of history as a vital ingredient in other important purposes of educating.

There has been a long-standing debate about the validity of these three overall aims, and some teachers will take a stand, regarding one of these aims as paramount. For younger pupils in basic schooling, many teachers will tend to emphasise the broadly educative and social purposes of learning history, regarding the academic purposes as more important with older pupils. The research report concludes that:

> "it is clear that the history curricula adopted in most of the education systems of Western Europe not only reflect these different positions but attempt to pursue all three aims through the same curricular framework."

Council of Europe meetings have considered the contribution of history to social and civic education in a number of different ways. Initiatives in social and civic education

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[1] *The European Content of the School History Curriculum*. R. Stradling 1995. Ref. CC-ED/Hist.(95) 1.

tend to overlap, and they have things in common. They include work which is extra-curricular, which is often inter-disciplinary, and which puts an emphasis on the participation of pupils and learning through experiences which go beyond the academic learning of basic school work.

1. Developing a European Dimension in Schools

This is not a new idea, and many organisations and secondary schools have been involved with it for some time. However, since the end of a divided Europe, and with the development of economic, social and political ties across the continent, the idea of including a European dimension in the education of all children has gained momentum. The Council of Europe has promoted this idea, but it acted in response to many requests for advice on how to include a European dimension in schools. It has often worked with the other European Institutions, with governments at national and local levels, and with non-governmental organisations concerned with the same issues. The Council has produced useful publications and publicised new initiatives.

In 1989 the Council of Ministers passed a resolution on the importance of developing a European dimension in education, following this the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled "A Secondary Education for Europe," to run from 1991 to 1996. The aims of this project were to:

- provide young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the major challenges of European society;

- prepare young people for higher education, mobility, work and everyday life in a democratic, multilingual and multicultural Europe;

- make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their joint responsibilities as Europeans.

What is meant by the European dimension in education? The meaning of the term has been developing rapidly in recent years. Increasingly it means helping pupils to acquire a general overarching view of Europe through the particular activities in which they may be engaged for this purpose. This includes recognising the diversity

within Europe, but also aspects of a common cultural heritage, together with the civic values embedded in the ideals of pluralistic democracies.

> "The term 'European dimension' implies a knowledge of the customs, culture, language and economic situation of other European countries - but - the crucial aspect is comprehension of how all these elements create different perspectives in our understanding of other Europeans and ourselves."[1]

In the curriculum it is not a matter of devising new courses in history or any other subject. It is more frequently a matter of looking at existing syllabuses to find topics which lend themselves to the introduction of a European perspective. It increasingly involves pupils in different parts of Europe communicating electronically with each other and sometimes meeting and working together through school exchanges. Interdisciplinary projects may include a historical strand.

Communicating across different languages remains a fundamental part of the European dimension. Contact encourages learning another language, and language teachers within the secondary school play an important role in all such exchanges. Those involved in linking schools through modern communications do not regard finding a language to communicate in as a major problem. There have been several kinds of links, with exchanges of work, between primary classes or with pupils too young to have much competence in a foreign language. Sometimes translators have been found amongst parents or others associated with a school. But exchanges of classwork material have been done with little common language "by making personal files, drawings, models, videotapes and cassettes they have been able to find, in a different language, new means of communication."

A number of successful new programmes are extra-curricular and are largely run by pupils themselves within an overall structure. The Fax! Programme[2] is an example of this, essentially a newspaper produced by pupils, co-ordinating groups in many countries. It was started in 1989, and now stretches beyond Europe linking with groups in Asia too. From time to time there are articles on cultural topics and local

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[1] *The European Dimension in Regional Exchanges,* J. Ritchie and F.J. Sanz. Pub: Council of Europe Publishing. Ref. ISBN 92 871 2847 2.

[2] *The Fax! Programme*, J Agnes. Pub: Council of Europe Press 1994. Ref. ISBN 92 871 2412 4.

history. The main point of many of the programmes is to find an activity which provides a way into ‘Europe’.

In recent years there has been a spectacular flourishing of many European activities in schools, as well as an increase in school exchanges. There are many examples of local festivals and celebrations associated with town or regional twinning and sometimes involving local businesses. Pupils take part in European sporting or musical events, in dance and theatre activities, and visit other countries through language courses, field studies or ski trips. Some of these activities may lead to work on the history of a particular country, or on the historical background to current European events. All such work may be quite short and extra-curricular, but the experiences for pupils are usually positive and important. Ideas such as having a special European Day in school, or forming a European Club, are also growing. European Clubs[1] began in Portugal, and provide a system for linking schools in extensive electronic networks. New clubs sometimes research and write up for others the history of their locality. There is considerable support for all these activities at local, regional and government level, and primary schools are as involved as secondary schools.

2. School Links and Exchanges

School Links and Exchanges are a long-established practice in the teaching of languages. More recent is the view that such contact has benefit for other subjects too, including history. Indeed links and exchanges are increasingly seen as broad cultural exchanges, in which learning about the history, culture, geography and ecology of linked schools are all important. Recent developments have been to encourage multiple links between several schools. These facilitate work across the curriculum contributing to education in the European dimension in all subject areas. Some schools and countries are much more involved in these ventures than others. There is evidence that many more schools and teachers would like to become involved in some trans-national project.

The Council of Europe has been a major influence in facilitating such exchanges, and in 1991 it established a Network on School Links and Exchanges, which meets regularly with annual reports of seminars. It has produced a useful guide to organising

[1] *European Clubs*, M Belard. Pub: Council of Europe Press 1993. Ref. ISBN 92 871 2125 7.

links and exchanges,[1] with excellent practical advice and addresses. Already in the 1980s, the Council of Europe had noted major changes in the nature of school links and convened meetings to consider the implications:

> "Because of the growing interest in schools to create contacts with a number of different cultures and to develop projects beyond the simple objectives of learning another language, there are now a growing number of examples of schools setting up networks in some cases spread right across the globe. It is because the new technologies have entered the scene that such world-wide networks of schools have been made possible."

The early meetings also noted that:

> "In most member States, developments in the educational uses of the new technologies are taking place at an increasing rate of progress at a grass roots level. Education departments at a national level have not always been able to keep up with what is happening in schools."

Information technologies have transformed the abilities of schools to link with other schools in other countries for all sorts of purposes.

The School Links Network encourages multiple networks between several countries, making it easier to include countries with minority languages and new member States who are keen to join in. The Council of Europe has encouraged such participation as a practical way of communicating a pan-European view. The network link does not need to have the same purposes for all partners. A multiple network of this kind readily involves work across the curriculum, for example:

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[1] *School Links and Exchanges in Europe: A Practical Guide*, R. Savage. Pub: Council of Europe Press 1993 Ref. ISBN 92 871 2270 9.

A school in France is linked with a school in the UK, Germany, Portugal and Denmark. All schools teach English and the other languages taught are French and German. In the French school there are a number of children of Portuguese origin. The headteachers agree a joint study programme of three years including:

a. the study of the effects of pollution on the local environment;

b. the study of the voyages of discovery in the 15th and 16th Centuries;

c. the joint production of a termly newspaper using electronic mail;

d. the study of patterns of migration.

Short visits are carried out by history, geography and computer education teachers to other schools in the network and there are post-to-post exchanges for language teachers. Pupil exchanges are organised as part of the joint study projects."

Development of the educational purposes of these projects is demanding and this has important implications for the training of teachers, and of head teachers. Technology and enthusiasm are not enough to sustain worthwhile projects. Teachers need specific training in managing such projects, becoming comfortable with the technology, and in coming to understand and appreciate what is meant by the European dimension. Grasping the entrepreneurial teamwork involved and planning work in history as part of a project using information technology have not usually been a part of the training of most teachers.

School links have been developing rapidly in the 1990s but they are still often seen as rather exceptional enterprises. Through its Network on School Links and Exchanges, the Council of Europe believes that the advance of information technology in many different forms means that both links and exchanges should become a normal part of schoolwork. Linked projects should be recognised within the ordinary curriculum and contribute to assessments. The Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education has recommended that all member States should:

> "acknowledge school links and exchanges as an integral part of education at all levels of schooling and support them with all appropriate means - political, legal, administrative and financial."

3. Intercultural Education

Teaching for the European dimension has come to have a meaning which goes beyond the traditional views of school exchanges and partnerships. In some countries the kind of education involved is called intercultural education. This is not a recent idea, the European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL), was founded in Belgium in 1971, and there are a number of other major organisations extensively involved. There were discussions within the Council of Europe on intercultural education in the 1970s and 1980s, arising from work with migrant communities. This led to a workshop on the training of all teachers in this approach, and the production of a useful handbook in 1985,[1] explaining the general value of these ideas. Understanding of the term, and the practice of intercultural education as an accepted part of school education, varies across the continent. A seminar in 1992 concluded that:

> "In some countries it was a compulsory element firmly embedded in the curriculum with clear guidance in terms of delivery. In others - approximately 50% - Intercultural education was still a somewhat vague notion very much dependent on the interests, expertise and attitude of individual teachers."

It is a form of social learning to prepare pupils for the experience of contact with peers from a different cultural background. Such contact can be negative. Direct educational intervention is to encourage more positive responses to cultural difference, including a clearer awareness of one's own cultural background, and a building of relationships across acknowledged differences. It means helping pupils to understand, in general, the diversity, which is a basic aspect of Europe through their particular experiences. They will notice differences but also discover what they have in common with other young Europeans. They may become more aware of their own sense of identity and of the quirks of their national culture through encounters with others. They need to be helped to acquire the ability to negotiate and communicate in intercultural situations, and to examine and clarify their own views and attitudes towards Europe. In each such encounter, young people can learn that getting to grips with Europe always means dealing with diversity and intercultural communication.

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[1] Training Teachers in Intercultural Education? The Work of the Council for Cultural Cooperation: 1977-83, M. Rey : Pub. Council of Europe, 1986.

The Council of Europe has published a series of vivid and very human reports all based on actual experiences of intercultural workshops,[1] and the practical, structured methods with which they work. A brief description cannot convey the full flavour, but, for example, a series of activities are intended to show participants the nature of cultural, and historical, diversity. All Europeans approach Europe from within their own cultures, sometimes the result of schoolwork in national history. Pupils need to be made aware of this:

> "A way of helping young people to realise this is .. to invite them to describe how a historical event is dealt with in their country. Each country has a different perception of Europe, its history, its borders and its illustrious personalities. Take Napoleon, for example. In the French school system Napoleon is presented as 'a great man', which is by no means the case for a Russian or a Spaniard."

Young people already have certain images, both of Europe and of those from other nations; often these are really commonplace stereotypes, and:

> "A crucial aspect of the European dimension is to examine these stereotypes, to look at how they have evolved, and then to find ways of encouraging young people to question them by offering alternative frames of reference."

Images of Europe as a whole similarly vary and are often based on limited stereotypes. For many westerners Europe is the European Union. For others the line drawn by the Iron Curtain still persists as a mental line: "the French tell us how their maps of Europe at school stopped at Austria, the rest of Europe was one colour, usually grey." And there are images from the other side of the line too: "for a whole generation of Czechs, the overriding image of western Europe was freedom, an image they had to revise, often distressingly." The experience of recognising stereotypes and revising one's views is a basic aspect of encounters with Europe.

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[1] *Talking about Europe to Young People*, I. Mohedano-Sohm. Pub: Council of Europe Press, 1995. Ref: ISBN 92 871 2681 X.

Intercultural education is based on experiences rather than traditional schoolwork. It is in some respects a counterpart to the mental multiperspectivity recommended in relation to studying history.

4. Education for Citizenship

History and political education have a long connection. There has been a growing concern across Europe in the last decade about educating future citizens. Recently new member States have asked the Council of Europe for help in developing schemes to educate pupils about the meanings of democracy, about rights and responsibilities in pluralistic societies, and on handling conflicts and developing tolerance. In many countries it is history teachers who are responsible for teaching civics too. There have been several Council of Europe conferences, teachers' seminars, and publications on this area of education. In 1992 there was a conference of Directors of Educational Research Institutions on the topic organised jointly by Unesco and the Council of Europe, with published papers.[1] A special effort has been made to respond to the requests of new member States.

The connection between the teaching of history and political education has its dark side, especially in countries where history was used very deliberately as a tool for ideological indoctrination. A seminar in Moscow in 1994 recorded that:

> "The recent misuse of history for political purposes makes it important, but difficult, to view history teaching as a tool for democratic citizenship."

One of the earliest seminars with participants from Central Europe, in 1991, took a longer view:

> "Since the 19th Century ... each European country has had its own experience of history teaching not being primarily geared to fulfilling educational objectives ... but being made to serve what were claimed to be the legitimate interests of the dominant political system of the time."

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[1] *Education for Democratic Citizenship in Europe*, eds.: L. Edwards, P. Munn, K. Fogelman. Pub: Swets & Zeitlinger 1994. Ref: ISBN 90 265 1383 6.

Education about Human Rights is a fundamental element of the work of the Council of Europe. Modern conceptions of human rights have a history, and were first expressed in the late 18th Century in France and America. They are universal and individual, and perhaps the best known expression of them is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights agreed to in the United Nations in 1948. The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1951, established the first international legal process and court to support such rights, and it is one of the outstanding achievements of the Council of Europe. However, as a useful book published by the Council says,[1] for texts and laws to have any real force they must be known, and something of how they operate and the values on which they are based needs to be widely understood.

To encourage teaching about Human Rights, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 1985, adopted a recommendation, which was the result of a five year programme of research and consultation intended to help teachers. The section on teaching and learning about Human Rights begins by stating that:

> "The understanding and experience of human rights is an important element in the preparation of all young people for life in a democratic and pluralistic society. It is a part of social and political education, and it involves intercultural and international understanding."

Teaching about Human Rights is often included as part of citizenship education. In English-speaking countries, work on multicultural and anti-racist education may encompass similar issues as part of personal and social education. In other countries schools may be concerned about values education or education for democracy. Elsewhere religious education may take up these issues, or they come under ethics and philosophy. These issues occur in schools under different titles.

The need for such teaching has become very clear in the requests for help on it from new member States where the whole idea of such rights has been quite unknown. A Teachers Seminar at Rostov-on-Don in 1993 noted that perhaps this was the first point to be made:

> "that the existence of human rights instruments and human rights treaties marks a change in the value system. What was in the past thought

[1] *Human Rights Education*, H. Starkey. Pub: Cassell/ Council of Europe 1991. Ref: ISBN 0 304 31943 0.

> inevitable, just life, is now condemned, and sometimes action is taken to prevent it. The violations exist, many of the violations are condemned and when action can be taken, and is taken, which is not always the case, some wrongs are righted or compensated for. An historical perspective can, therefore, help in explaining what the change is. In the past, condemnations were mere expressions of opinion. Now they have the force, in principle, of international law, of being a violation of the rules by which nations live together. Governments are forced onto the defensive, they are shamed before their peers and their legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens and of others is undermined."

In some countries, France for example, teaching about human rights is consistently developed through the curriculum. Elsewhere it is patchy or non-existent. Teachers have not had training in human rights education. The legal and historical background needs to be connected to the immediate environment at the local and school level. Pupils should consider issues relevant to their lives in school and the community, such as racism and sexism as examples of human rights issues. Newspapers or controversies in school may provide precise cases over which pupils can begin to see issues of justice affect everyday life. Local issues can connect to international law, for instance corporal punishment was abolished in British schools because the European Court of Human Rights ruled that it was a breach of human rights.

A different kind of learning is involved in education about human rights and civic responsibilities from that which predominates in secondary schools. Learning information is necessary, but tends to remain nebulous unless it is accompanied by actual experience of community involvement within school and beyond. It needs to include experience of discussing attitudes and beliefs including personal values, and learning how to consider controversial issues. Many courses will include a historical element such as: learning about the origins and development of human rights legislation, or investigating the lives of individuals whose actions exemplify the struggle for rights, for instance Gandhi, Sakharov, or women suffragettes. Certain topics in the regular history course connect readily to civic education: struggles for particular rights such as the abolition of slavery or the legalisation of trade unions. Issues in recent history, or a study of 6th Century Athens, can provide the start for discussion of the whole conception of citizenship and what it has meant at particular times and places.

There is considerable evidence, however, that citizenship education is currently not successful in schools. Much of the evidence is discussed in Council of Europe reports. A teachers' seminar in 1993 reported on the situation of citizenship education in a number of countries and concluded that:

> "provision for citizenship education across Europe is patchy, fragmented and highly variable with countries adopting markedly different approaches to the subject. Almost everywhere there is a large gap between the rhetoric of official policy which uniformly places education for citizenship as a central aim of education and the reality in the schools where it is generally badly provided for in terms of curriculum time, resources and in-service training support."

One question is whether citizenship should be taught separately, or should it permeate the work of the school? As a defined topic it has low status amongst pupils, especially in upper secondary schools where they concentrate on academic examination subjects. Teachers do not regard it as a priority, and in most countries they have not been properly trained for the tasks required. In countries where they are well trained, such as Denmark, social and political education has a better standing. Across Europe, for varying reasons, many pupils are apathetic about traditional politics and more likely to put energy into, for example, environmental issues.

This situation may be changing, as Mr. Maitland Stobart, Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport at the Council of Europe, wrote recently:

> "there is a keen interest in education for democratic values throughout Europe at present. Most countries in Central and Eastern Europe are preparing new programmes of education for democratic citizenship to replace the heavily ideological civic education courses which are no longer in force. At the same time a serious reflection is under way in Western Europe about the role of education in overcoming political apathy and combating such challenges to democratic values as intolerance, xenophobia, racism, violence and terrorism."[1]

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[1] Foreword to, *Human Rights Education*, H. Starkey. Pub: Cassell/ Council of Europe 1991. Ref: ISBN 0304 31943 0.

Essentially citizenship education raises difficult issues of the values within a society, on which there may not be consensus. Schools cannot solve the problems of society. Most experts feel that citizenship education should have a defined place in the curriculum. But they tend also to suggest that some of the issues about values are bound to occur across the curriculum, and history is always mentioned as one of the subjects involved:

> "we must look to the social sciences, to history, geography, religious and moral education each to play a part in combating racial prejudice."

The Council of Europe has just begun a project on 'Teaching about the History of Europe in the 20th Century'. The teaching of modern history is seen as essential to understand the modern world, but also, as the Council's Parliamentary Assembly has argued: "so that young people will be better prepared to promote democracy."

The Council has produced an interesting handbook on History Teaching and the Promotion of Democratic Values and Tolerance.[1] In essence, the author suggests that new methods of teaching history mean that the subject can contribute positively to civic education . With many practical classroom based examples, this Handbook shows how teaching pupils the skills of using and interpreting all kinds of evidence, considering a range of points of view, discussing implications, and reaching conclusions, have academic value and are equally useful as civic skills. Few pupils will be historians, but this author suggests that the skills of historical thinking have value as democratic skills:

> "The methodology of history encourages a multi-perspective approach to any issue and enshrines what may be described as moral principles: that judgement should be based on evidence; that there are always a range of points of view to be taken into consideration; and that views should be justified by reference to rational evidence and empathy for other perspectives. The fundamental premise of the subject is that information should not be taken at face value but should be examined critically with a view to analysing its purpose and message."

[1] *History Teaching and the Promotion of Democratic Values and Tolerance*, C. Gallagher. Ref: CC-ED/Hist (96) 1.

Moreover, the subject-matter of history is often relevant to civic education since history;

> “provides many opportunities to consider disturbing or controversial issues, how aggression, assertive ethnicity and corroded sensitivity takes hold and spreads, especially in situations which appear to defy reality, such as the Holocaust.”

The determination to teach history as a positive aspect of civic education is strongest amongst some teachers from countries where history was most subverted by ideology. The basis must be ‘realistic’ history, not false, idealised or mythical views of the past. Difficult and controversial issues must be tackled because they are never just forgotten. The meaning of democracy has to be learnt again, and both the content and the methods of history may help. As a teacher from the Czech Republic put it:

> “Schools are not the only influence on young people and the importance of the family, the community, the peer group and the mass media cannot be underestimated. On the other hand, schools are the official agent of socialisation. As such they have a special role to play in helping young people to become informed, active, and responsible citizens, the compulsory school may be the only time when they are encouraged and helped to handle information in a rigorous and critical way, understand the complexity of political, economic and social problems, appreciate diversity and question and reject stereotypes.”

The Council of Europe has remained committed to a view which sees history teaching as an important aspect of a broad civic education, as defined in the 1983 recommendation of the Committee of Ministers:

> “Our education programmes should encourage all young Europeans to see themselves not only as citizens of their own regions and countries, but also as citizens of Europe and the wider world. All young Europeans should be helped to acquire a willingness and ability to preserve and promote democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Part 8: Inside Classrooms

The vision of school history developed by the Council of Europe has considerable influence, but translating ideas into everyday classroom practices is a complicated process which often proceeds more slowly than innovators might hope. Discussions at symposia and in-service seminars influence attitudes, ideas, and approaches amongst both teachers and policy-makers. Widespread change, however, involves consultations at national, regional and local levels, and may involve legislation. Eventually changes have to be turned into workable practices by teachers in individual schools. They can only begin to do this if they have some resources. The Council of Europe is well aware of this since it receives many requests for new teaching materials to put ideas into practice in classrooms.

History taught in schools is a distinct form of history. It differs from both academic and popular history. There are particular pressures upon school history: from governments; from parental and popular expectations; and above all, because the pupils in school are young, have not chosen to study the subject, yet are required to. There is a need to simplify and adapt historical material if it is to be interesting and intelligible to young pupils.

The Council has always advocated the use of active learning methods whenever possible which involve pupils using not only textual historical sources but also visual and tangible ones. To put good ideas across to a class of 30 young pupils requires more than exposition: the ideas need to be developed into useful sequential exercises in textbooks or other teaching aids from which pupils can work and begin to assimilate information and form their own views. It is never clear how successful new approaches will be until they have been tried out in classrooms. The response of teachers and pupils will in turn modify the ideas and cannot be entirely anticipated.

Inside a classroom the processes of teaching and learning link, and both depend to some extent on resources. Teachers need to have assimilated new perspectives and ideas before they can teach them. This may be an incremental process, and sometimes new resources can help teachers grasp new ideas.

1. Pupils

Pupils in the basic stages of schooling, when history is compulsory, are still quite young, usually between the ages of about 11 and 16, but in some countries the subject becomes optional, or a minor part of the programme by the age of 14. Pupils vary widely in their abilities and interests, not only within any one class, but in different schools and areas across a city or a country. Some, perhaps many, do not find traditional book-based sources of learning history attractive. Academic and adult historical understanding has to be simplified and transformed to interest or engage young people. The gap between academic and school history became very obvious in countries where new history textbooks were written by academic experts immediately after 1989. At the Graz seminar there were many rueful complaints by teachers about such books: “it is good to have a schoolbook on our national history, but sad that it is so dry and weighted with an excessive amount of information. It will not make teaching better.”

It is teachers and textbook authors who largely act as mediators between adult history and young pupils. Good textbook authors in all countries are more frequently teachers than academic experts, because it is essential to understand something of pedagogy and psychology as well as the dynamics of classrooms. At another seminar, teachers explained how they tried to use excellent local source material, supplied by historians, in their classrooms, but “ they ran into problems of translating and editing the sources, many of which were too difficult for young pupils.” In the end they wrote a book, with a strong narrative thread, and plenty of jokes, as well as some of the more vivid extracts from the sources in it.

In several countries the method of getting pupils to use a variety of historical sources, visual as well as textual, has become a usual feature of history textbooks. Such books essentially become work books, full of exercises for pupils, rather than reading books. In daily practice there are problems with this method too - exercises which begin as innovations can become mechanical. The method of using sources needs to be balanced with narrative detail, and well adapted to suit pupils at particular ages and stages of development. There is some evidence that a variety of methods, carefully tuned to the mentality of the pupils, allows more challenging history to be tackled.

Newer methods used in schools include role-play, and various forms of dramatisation which have been gaining popularity. Some forms of role-play may involve combined

work with museums, or take the form of a re-enactment in which a class may be involved for a day at an historic site. In February 1997, at Cambridge in the United Kingdom, the Council of Europe sponsored a role play in which senior pupils from several countries were involved in a simulation of the Treaty of Versailles and the Paris Peace conference, with participants representing a country other than their own.

In theory a much wider range of resources are now available for teaching history: audio-visual material, computer data-banks and simulations, artifacts and oral history. In practice they are not available everywhere. In some countries ready access to a photo-copier might transform teaching. Even in rich countries, finding a range of the right visual material for a whole class, can prove difficult. Varied sources are more abundant for local and national history.

Modern technology is transforming the sources of learning, and pupils understand this better and faster than their teachers. Where they are available, good television programmes, videos, and CD Roms are generally popular with students brought up in a visual culture. Electronic sources of learning can be accessed by pupils themselves, or they can work in small cooperative discussion groups. The media, especially television, are powerful sources of information and pupils need to learn to treat them critically. Teachers, therefore, require skills in media education.

Knowledge and expertise can reach a mass audience, such as the school population, very readily through modern media. One well-made video can communicate through pictures and commentary at least as well as most textbooks. This illustrates further why a variety of resources are needed in classrooms. The video may provide initial stimulation and interest, books are needed for re-capitulation and follow-up.

School exchanges and links can stimulate pupils to acquire some expertise in information technology in order to communicate freely with the twinned class. There is evidence that these links are popular with pupils, who are curious to know their peers elsewhere. An interest in learning a language may also be sustained by such contact. Both are useful skills, whilst the historical and cultural element to such links may encourage multi-perspectivity and transform outlooks.

'Youth and History' is a major European research project developed by a team from Norway, Germany and Hungary. It sets out to assess how young people think about history and how this correlates with social and political attitudes and with their sense

of national identity. A standard questionnaire was completed, in 1994-95, by a thousand 15-16 year old pupils in 32 countries covering all areas of Europe. The results are currently being assessed and are likely to produce much interesting material.

2. Resources

Few classrooms or schools are really well resourced, which means that pupils are less likely to find the materials which make history meaningful for them.

> "Only in a minority of European countries do schools possess well supplied libraries and very well equipped resource centres."

More damaging is that too many school history books are dated and do not reasonably reflect modern historical scholarship. School textbooks do not need to follow every academic trend, but they do need to connect to pupils who see the world through the context of the late 20th Century. Texts which are workbooks as well as narratives, can be very useful in classrooms.

The reports of Council of Europe meetings and seminars abound with requests for resources which will enable teachers to put ideas into classroom practice. There is a particular lack of suitable historical materials on European and world history.

> "Primary materials capable of being developed into usable resources for teaching the European dimension can obviously be found and assembled from all sorts of sources. But few teachers have time to search these out" and "rather little ready-to-use material of this kind has been assembled and published anywhere."

The Council of Europe has prepared some European Dimension Pedagogical Materials on 14 agreed topics, several of which are historical: for instance on 'the Industrial Revolutions'; and 'Discovery or Encounter: Europe and the Development of its Empires.' They have been tested in schools in several countries and are intended to supplement existing materials and enrich rather than change existing curricula. It is hoped that they can be used in many countries, for although curricula are very varied,

there are common themes in European history. The Council has publicised other useful sources for materials and some resources, for example on the Cultural Routes, through the Council of Europe Art exhibitions, and working with museums. These may increasingly become generally available across the continent, through modern media.

Rapid developments in information technology and communications have the potential to transform many of the processes of schooling and are already doing so in some places. Pupils can have direct access to all kinds of information which was not available even a decade ago. Yet even in wealthy countries, schools are arguably still underfunded and under-resourced. Discussion of the uses of modern technology in classrooms can seem positively futuristic to teachers from some European countries, and this was noted at some Council of Europe seminars.

3. Teachers

The initial training of teachers varies across Europe, but is often quite short. To date no one has collected systematic data on the variety of ways in which history teachers are trained. For practising teachers, opportunities for in-service further training are usually neither very systematic nor compulsory. Further training may, however, aid promotion. New member States of the Council of Europe re-thinking their teaching of history have found that it was relatively easy to change the curriculum; much more difficult, and expensive, to produce satisfactory textbooks; but most difficult of all was to re-train teachers and help them to adapt and feel confident in new ways.

Some new ideas are spreading at a grass-roots level, from within schools, for example the increasing numbers of school links and exchanges. Yet it is obvious that useful approaches will not become general and commonplace if developed only through the enthusiasm and energy of a few exceptional teachers. A more systematic and organised approach is needed: in initial training, in further in-service training, from inspectors, through provision of resources, from local and central government.

The problems of teacher training have often been raised in Council of Europe seminars. The Council plans to give the matter more systematic attention and has sponsored two useful publications.[1] Some teacher-trainers have been drawn into

[1] *Teacher Education and Human Rights* – Audrey OSLER and Hugh STARKEY. Ref: ISBN 1-85346-406-6.

Council of Europe work and they are a key group for sustained future developments. In new member States, the training of teachers of history is an important concern. There are member States where basic re-structuring of history education took place some time ago, and they have useful advice to offer. 20 years ago trainers in Spain discovered that teachers in ordinary classrooms needed local centres for immediate reference and support. Groups of teachers working together on new methods and approaches could provide support for each other. Small financial incentives to attend courses also helped.

Basic training is clearly a national responsibility. The Council of Europe's In-Service Training Programme for Teachers has provided an international context for teachers to learn about new approaches and gain other perspectives on issues in history teaching. Many of the reports comment on the value of such exchanges. Not only teachers, but the many other experts gathered in to these courses have commented on how useful an international perspective is. It can clarify ideas about the strengths, weaknesses and peculiarities of the national system, as well as stimulating new possibilities. In recent years, the Council has done much to make its many publications more readily available, and has established documentation centres in the capitals of many of its new member States.

Euroclio (the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations), was established in 1993, with the support of the Council of Europe. It has an international board and produces a bulletin which disseminates information from history teachers all over Europe. Each annual conference focuses on the teaching of a particular topic, for example on 'Philip II and his Times', or 'The Potsdam Conference of 1945 and its Consequences.' Groups of teachers have worked and reported on more general issues such as: 'Encouraging Democratic Values through History Education.'

Such international activities, however, only reach a minority of teachers, although cumulatively ideas from them will spread. There are, however, certain new developments where systematic initial and follow-up training is needed.

1. All teachers need training in how to use information technology. There is sometimes an assumption that this is not important for teachers of history. This is no longer true. The new media are increasingly an important source of information

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Handbook of Teacher Training in Europe Issues and Trends – Maurice GALTON and Bob MOON. Ref: ISBN 1-85346-228-4.

from which pupils learn history, and may well become as important as books. They are an essential tool for developing school links and exchanges.

2. Teachers may need training in aspects of media education, learning to apply traditional historical assessment of sources to data presented in new media.

3. Teachers need to be involved in textbook production, and such involvement can provide a form of further training. Critical appraisal of textbooks is rarely part of basic training, and should be.

4. The development of school links and exchanges, in which history teachers play a part, requires in-service training of the teachers involved.

5. Initial training should pay some attention to the nature and the dangers of teaching national history. Within national curriculum guidelines, teachers need to see models of inclusive national histories and the creative use of any optional possibilities. Where appropriate, newly-qualified teachers need to be familiar with existing models of placing topics in national history in other perspectives.

6. The teaching of European history, or the contribution of history to the European dimension within a school, requires that the teachers have had some background training in these areas of history. They will otherwise lack, or have a very limited or distorted vision, of what is meant by a European perspective.

7. An introduction to the diversity of educational systems in Europe, and the range of ways of teaching history, is valuable for teachers later involved in exchanges. It may also be justified as a way of gaining perspective on one's own system. It is facilitated by short exchanges, or international seminars such as those run by the Council of Europe.

8. Multiperspectivity and intercultural education are more developed in some countries than others. Both have been communicated in short "workshop" sessions, but these are not widespread and are relatively unknown in many countries. They are useful for balancing local, national, European and world perspectives.

9. If history teachers are to have responsibility for wider social and civic education, then some training is needed for effective classroom work. Training for teaching about Human Rights, for an understanding of concepts of citizenship, or for

dealing with controversial historical topics in the classroom, is not general. Without training and support, teachers will avoid such issues in the classroom.

Epilogue: The Continuing Questions

All history is constructed within an interpretive framework. The vision of school history developed by the Council of Europe over many years encompasses a particular interpretive framework. It recognises the diversity of history teaching in schools across the continent, and that:

> "education, more than any other area in which European co-operation is growing, is a domain in which national identity and state sovereignty are most forcefully expressed," and "this diversity already constitutes an asset and a shared heritage."

Acknowledgment of this diversity is a basic aspect of understanding Europe, but it is also an essential aspect of modern nations which has changed approaches to national history:

> "A hundred years ago, there was a strong belief in political stability and social cohesion through uniformity, i.e. one national language, one national culture, one national religion, one value system. A hundred years later, the situation has changed almost completely. Today, diversity is the normal condition. The end of this century is marked by global migration, supranational alliances, and, in some countries, by a resurgence of intense inter-ethnic conflict and warfare. At the end of this century it is inconceivable that political stability and social cohesion can be attained, unless it is through the respect of diversity, mutual understanding and tolerance."

Recognising diversity and encouraging multiperspectivity is a central strand of the Council of Europe's work on history teaching, together with:

1. An emphasis on active learning by pupils from a variety of source materials, and fostering the development of critical skills.

2. An approach to the content of the curriculum, guided by:

- the belief that "national history is not synonymous with nationalistic history" and that "history should not encourage narrow, chauvinistic, intolerant attitudes or lead to feelings of ethnic, national or racial superiority."
- the view that some European history, and the European dimension, should be a part of basic school education, but the Council of Europe has also been, " adamant that there can be no question of trying to impose a uniform version of European history," although there are some topics commonly taught in many countries.
- and finally, that: "whenever possible, national and European horizons should be widened to a world perspective," and that: "national history should not be isolated from its European and world contexts."

3. The Council of Europe has increasingly recognised the "special contribution which extra-curricular activities can make to formal teaching", especially through school links and exchanges.

4. It has always recommended that pupils should learn modern and contemporary history, and this view is endorsed by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly which has called for: "the adequate teaching of modern history so that young people will be better prepared to promote democracy." It has attempted to explore ways of handling controversial and painful events in recent history in classrooms.

5. It has supported international research on history textbooks, and sustained a major series of European in-service training seminars for teachers.

Overall, this concept of history teaching and learning in schools has a broad civic purpose. This has been made perfectly clear in the titles, and conclusions, of many meetings attended by a variety of experts, including historians. For instance a recent symposium at Sofia, on "History, Democratic Values and Tolerance in Europe", suggested that certain criteria should be applied to curricula, textbooks, and the practices of teachers. Do they:

- respect historical truth?
- uphold democratic institutions?

- promote human rights, tolerance, understanding and multiperspectivity?
- develop critical thinking and the ability to recognise bias, prejudice and stereotypes?
- encourage such attitudes as open-mindedness, acceptance of diversity, empathy and civil courage?

History is usually taught in schools for civic purposes as well as for its intrinsic interest and value as a branch of knowledge:

> "Generally, few programmes emphasise only the educational aims of history. Even those curriculum planners who begin with the importance of teaching historical method seem unwilling to say that this should be also the only criteria for selecting content."
>
> "In most countries there is a tension between the instrumental, social and political aims and the purely educational ones."

The Council of Europe has a particular kind of answer to the basic question - why is history included in the curriculum of basic schooling? Work on history began with the Council setting up international committees to analyse textbooks. Since then the Council has advocated a more flexible and accommodating approach than the traditional national one first delineated through the work on textbooks. Now a much broader range of civic skills are emphasised.

The question is whether the proposals of the Council of Europe are appropriate and valuable for pupils moving into the 21st Century. A seminar with new member States noticed in 1994 that:

> "Already, in all the classrooms, a new generation of pupils is coming to maturity with fresh minds, unencumbered by the experiences of their teachers and elders. ... Pupils look to the future. They watch television, and may learn as much from the media and outside sources as from school. Older pupils certainly ask questions about the past as well as about the present. Re-thinking the history curriculum means thinking about the future as well as the past. As one experienced delegate put it, school history needs to be relevant and meaningful to pupils, not to their grandfathers."

Appendix I[1]

From the point of view of the Council of Europe's Secretariat, the following conclusions were drawn:

2.4.1 METHODS OF TEXTBOOK ANALYSIS

It seems utopian to try and analyse all textbooks under all aspects. A pragmatic approach is necessary to find out whether a textbook is useful in a given situation and in the hands of a particular teacher or pupil. Of course the contribution of textbook research will be valuable in this context; the Institute in Braunschweig has done pioneer work in this field. International co-operation in textbook research has to be intensified; information about ongoing research and on publications should be improved.

2.4.2 TEAMWORK IN TEXTBBOK PRODUCTION

Textbook quality largely depends on good teamwork among author(s), publisher, editor, subject matter specialists, linguists, designers, etc. The publisher considers whether there will be a market for a particular type of textbook and whether it is likely to be approved (in countries where approval is required). The editor selects suitable authors; together they look at the curriculum and select the content, considering also the current state of research and examining how best to present and structure the text so that pupils can digest it. Linguists may help to check whether the text is understandable to the age group concerned. Designers and media experts help with illustrations and layout.

2.4.3 TEXTBOOK SELECTION

Many countries stick to formal approved procedures to guarantee quality, respect of certain values and a minimum of objectivity. On the other hand many participants would prefer simply to recommend good textbooks and leave teachers free to choose their books using a list of selection criteria. In no case should teachers come

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[1] *History and Social Studies – Methodologies of Textbook Analysis*, ed. Hilary BOURDILLON Page 109-111. Pub. Swets and Zeitlinger B.V. Amsterdam/Lisse, 1992. ISBN 90 265 1230 9.

to completely depend on the textbook; they should not limit their teaching to what publishers happen to offer.

2.4.4 SUBJECT MATTER ADEQUACY

Of course textbooks have to be adequate from a subject matter point of view; they should not contain inaccuracies. On the other hand, no textbook will ever be up to date in all aspects and correspond to the latest state of research. Too hasty an effort to take up current issues may result in inadequate presentation. In cases where historic events and developments are interpreted in different ways, textbooks should indicate the controversial views. In no case should history teaching focus on dates, rules and battles; social and cultural history should be included. The author should have the last word on what to include in a textbook and on what to omit.

2.4.5 EUROPEAN DIMENSION

Textbooks should present a proper balance of local, regional, national, European and world history and geography. Co-operation among the 12 States of the European Community, the 25 Council of Europe countries and the wider Europe presupposes awareness of Europe's cultural heritage and cultural-intellectual interpenetration. History should no longer be presented mainly from a national point of view but the greater European context of developments has to be brought out.

2.4.6 PREJUDICES AND UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

Prejudices with regard to other people and regions have to be overcome but good textbooks need not necessarily be free from underlying assumptions (e.g. the assumption that parliamentary democracy is something positive). It would, however, be helpful if the author would spell out his/her assumptions and have them discussed. In dealing, for instance, with multicultural society, a textbook should not just list arguments for or against it, but adopt a clear position.

2.4.7 USEFULNESS OF TEXTBOOKS AS LEARNING TOOLS

Textbooks should at least be adequate to children and adolescents and written in a language they can understand. Those concerned with the best teaching approach

relevant to the subject in question – belonging to a discipline in its own right in the German-speaking countries – should offer advice on how best to select the subject matter content to be taught and how to present and illustrate it. Many textbooks are too highly scientific; other are not scientific enough. Often pupils get lost in the wealth of text, references, explanatory notes, source material, examples, quotations, etc. Furthermore, textbooks should not just transmit knowledge but stimulate critical thinking.

2.4.8 LAYOUT, DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATIONS

In a world full of pictures, textbooks will have to compete with other media. Format, type of print, underlinings, squares, frames, photos, drawings, tables, diagrams, etc. should be deliberately chosen with a particular educational purpose in mind. Textbook research should include an examination of the question whether a book is well designed and illustrated to serve as a teaching and learning tool more than it did in the past; whether pictures are well explained so that they are not misunderstood; whether diagrams are clear enough for pupils to understand them. The fact that a textbook is full of pictures does by no means guarantee its usefulness as a teaching and learning tool, helping to attain learning objectives.

Times are over when textbooks were only assessed with a view to checking correct context and deleting prejudices about other people and countries. Textbook evaluation has become a more complex activity checking also the European dimension, the usefulness of the book for teachers and pupils, and successful design, layout and illustrations. International exchange of experience is vital in this context and the Georg-Eckert-Institute will have to continue to play a key role.

APPENDIX II

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Aspects of European History widely taught in
Secondary schools in Western Europe</th></tr>
<tr><td>Greek antiquity
The Judaeo-Christian tradition
Rome and the Roman Empire
Byzantium
The early invasions and migrations
(e.g. Goths, Huns, Vandals, etc.)
Eastern and Western Christianity
Rise of Islam
Carolingian Europe
Later invasions and migrations
(Vikings, Saxons, Angles, etc.)
The Crusades
Renaissance (14th – 15th centuries)
Reformation and counter-Reformation
Voyages of Discovery</td><td>The rise of nation states
Enlightenment
Napoleonic Empire
Congress of Vienna
Nationalist movements in the 19th century
Colonialism
Ideologies in the 19th century
World War I
Communism, Fascism and National Socialism
World War II
Post-1945 political and economic cooperation</td></tr>
</table>

References

All quotations are from Council of Europe reports, all of which are published by the Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport, at Strasbourg. Only major references are given here. A bibliography of all the documents of the Council of Europe on **History Teaching** 1953-96, and the reports, can be obtained from:

The Council of Europe

The Council for Cultural Cooperation

Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France.