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THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S NEW INITIATIVE

Regional Seminar on

**“The reform of history teaching
in secondary schools”**

Tbilissi, Georgia,

Thursday 25 - Saturday 27 September 1997

Report

Seminar on

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Report by

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
I. INTRODUCTION	5
II. KEYNOTE PRESENTATION BY Dr Elene MEDZMARIASHVILI	7
III. ROUND TABLE	
1) Preparing history teachers: improving their professional skills.....	13
2) The preparation of new history curriculum and standards in the Russian Federation	16
3) Progress with new standards and programmes in history. Preparing and introducing new standards	19
4) Preparing and publishing history textbooks in Azerbaijan	22
5) The preparation and publication of new history textbooks in Armenia.....	25
IV. CONCLUSIONS BY THE GENERAL RAPPORTEUR	28
 APPENDIX I	
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....	33
 APPENDIX II	
PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR.....	36
 APPENDIX III	
ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF GEORGIA, Mr Eduard SHEVARDNADZE.....	41

I. INTRODUCTION

The Regional Seminar on "The reform of history teaching in secondary schools" took place in Tabakhmela, Georgia, from 25-27 September 1997. It was organised within the framework of the Secretary General's New Initiative. This was the first time, since the accession of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to the European Cultural Convention, that such a Seminar was organised in the region.

The Seminar brought together:

- officials from the Ministry of Education responsible for history education in schools and the development of history curricula;
- a representative of a pedagogical institute;
- an author or publisher of history textbooks;

from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Turkey (see Appendix I for the List of Participants).

The aims of the Seminar were to:

- review the progress achieved in the preparation of new history curricula and discuss the common problems encountered so far;
- discuss the preparation and publication of new history textbooks;
- discuss the question of standards, their preparation and their implementation.

The opening ceremony for the Seminar took place at the Palace of Youth and welcome speeches were given by:

- Mr Zurab SHVANIA, Chair of the Parliament of Georgia;
- Mr Petre MAMRADZE, Chief of the President's Staff, who read a letter from President Eduard SHEVARDNADZE to the participants in the Seminar (see Appendix III for the letter);
- Mr George SHARVASHIDZE, First Deputy Minister of Education of Georgia;
- Mr Shota DOGHONADZE, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;

- Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator, Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport of the Council of Europe.

The programme of the Seminar can be found in Appendix II of the present document.

**II. KEYNOTE PRESENTATION BY
Dr Elene MEDZMARIASHVILI**
Lecturer of Tbilissi State University
Faculty of Modern and Contemporary History

I consider it an honour to greet you on behalf of my country and the Georgian delegation and to express our gratitude to all you for your readiness to participate in this Seminar. I hope our close cooperation will be of benefit to us all.

As is already known, at the present time, acute problems exist in history teaching (and not only in history) in the former republics of the Soviet Union. Here, I wish to dwell on some of them.

In the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s of our century on the territory of the USSR, the teaching of history as a school discipline was forbidden and a new subject – « social science » was introduced. The latter covered extracts from Marxist philosophy, political economy and history. But it was not a systematic course.

Since the second half of the 1930s, a short course on the history of the Soviet Union (in fact it was the history of Russia) was introduced instead of social science. In practice, it reflected Marxist-Leninist ideology and served the ruling party. Later, however, the pupils gradually began to study world history in schools within the framework of existing communist ideology. This tendency continued right through to the disintegration of the USSR, and it only underwent insignificant changes depending on the temper and mood of the person ruling the country.

During the existence of the Soviet Union, all national schools without exception used the textbooks compiled in accordance with curricula approved by the Ministry of Public Education of the USSR. These textbooks were simply a translation from Russian into the national languages.

Considering the factors mentioned above, it is clear that the time has come to make completely new demands for history teaching in national schools, thus a new approach to the process should also be used.

In the first place, we mean that the structure of the new curricula should provide more opportunities to guide the education of a new generation in properly, that is to train their analytical thinking and ability to orientate themselves in a new situation, and to develop their creativity.

In this direction, much has been done already. Some original Georgian textbooks on history have been compiled. They respond to world standards,

and this is not only the opinion of the authors. However, some other problems still have to be solved. We have not yet succeeded in publishing these textbooks on the level corresponding to their contents. This can be explained, first of all, by the limited economic opportunities of the Republic caused by the break-up of the Soviet Union. But, it should also be mentioned that these difficulties can be partially overcome as certain funds for this purpose have been provided by the World Bank.

It is greatly to the history textbook authors' credit that, in Georgia, the State Educational Standards of World History have been developed (T. Nikolaishvili and Tz. Chikvaidze) and for the history of Georgia (P. Lomashvili and S. Vardosanidze) in particular. The standards on the history of Georgia are well written and they meet present requirements.

The Georgian Ministry of Education sent standards on World History to the Council of Europe, and the latter, in its turn, handed them over to Mr Gary Brace (Wales). In March 1997, the representatives of the Council of Europe came to Tbilisi and acquainted the authors with their remarks about the standards.

In their opinion, the Standards are overloaded and greater emphasis should be placed on the acquisition of the necessary skills. The Standards have been revised. Nearly all the remarks were taken into account by the authors, except the amount of the contents. True, the latter have been reduced to some extent but not to the degree proposed by the representatives of the Council of Europe.

Such a decision by the authors might be explained in the following way: in addition to applying the traditional approach to the amount of contents, they tried to give the pupils the right ideas (freed from the chains of Marxist-Leninist ideology) of the most important world events.

At the same time, all the remarks of the representatives from the Council of Europe were fully considered.

In the Standards, the skills are optionally divided into five groups:

- i. time and place;
- ii. cause and consequence;
- iii. interpretation of history;
- iv. historical enquiry;
- v. organisation and communication.

The contents of the Standards cover four historical ages: Ancient History, Medieval History, Modern History and Contemporary History. The

main historical phenomena, events and processes given in the standards are specified in curricula and textbooks.

Approaches to the division of history into periods have changed too. True, the history of the Ancient World traditionally ends with the break up of the Roman Empire. The Voyages of Discovery are considered to be the boundary between the history of the Middle and Modern Ages, and the beginning of the 1870s is to be the border between Modern and Contemporary periods.

The division of history into periods has always been optional and caused considerable discussions among historians. Thus, your opinion on this problem is of great importance to us.

The first original history programme (Kvaliashvili and Chikvaidze) in Georgia was published in 1996. It contains the curriculum on World History as well as that of Georgian history. The same programme is used in non-national schools in Georgia (Russian, Armenian and Azeri).

The material of the programme is offered according to the classes and it is divided into sections. The curriculum provides brief contents of each topic and a number of hours of history teaching is indicated as well. The individual teacher is free to redistribute the hours and to conduct the lessons. Besides, the curriculum offers so-called reserve time and the teacher can use his/her own judgment and do what seems the best.

After each topic, interdisciplinary relations are given. At the end of each course, main concepts are listed and ideas to which the pupils' attention should be drawn in the process of teaching are identified.

The programme provides the list of skills the pupils should acquire in the 5th-10th forms. This year, the second revised edition of the curricula on world history and the history of Georgia have been issued where the above-mentioned questions are specified and are looked at in more depth. Additionally, it involves material for the 11th form on the Second World War. Here, the attention of the authors focuses on the social and economic shifts in some countries and, in particular, in those where the so-called "economic miracle" happened. The understanding of the reasons of the "economic miracle" will undoubtedly help our new generation to solve the problems in their own countries.

While drawing up the programme, our authors based their arguments on the experience of the leading countries. At the same time, they tried to consider the specific geopolitical position of our country. In contrast with the curricula on world history currently in force in Europe and the USA, our programme gives large coverage of the histories of Turkey and Iran.

And what is more, in the curricula of most world countries, attention is mainly focused on the history of several States (the USA, Great Britain, Germany, France, Russia), while our programmes reflect the contemporary history of “other countries” such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece.

Also, our curricula (and correspondingly our textbooks) include the history of the countries that are either ignored or only little mentioned (e.g. Afghanistan). However Australia and Oceania, Latin America, Equatorial and Southern Africa are included in the curricula due to the events and processes of world significance occurring there. For example, the formation of independent countries in Latin America is given in detail (programme and textbook on modern history for the 9th form). For the same reason, only the contemporary period of the history of Equatorial and Southern Africa is provided. Australia and Oceania are mentioned in the context of great geographical discoveries.

Those present here may mention to our authors the absence of one or other important part of the history of his or her country in curricula on world history, and thus it remains unknown for generations of pupils. The result is that the world could not understand the reasons for existing conflicts or conflicts about to occur in one or other region of the Earth.

In this respect, I would like to draw your attention to a problem that cannot be solved at present. But, it has already matured and should be brought up for discussion now. That is: may be we all or each taken separately have become aware of the need to fill the “white spots” in curricula on world history and in the textbooks. This will contribute to greater mutual understanding between nations and will enhance the comprehension of the problems of neighbouring, but not always nearest, countries.

Without better understanding of the origins of the present problems of other countries and cultures, it is quite difficult and probably will be even more difficult in the future to reach and secure everlasting world peace.

The Caucasian region can be given as a good example of this. The history of this region often remains unknown even to historians. And the present problems are deeply rooted. Thus, if the peoples of the world are not aware of the history of this region, of the migratory and other important processes, they will not be able to understand the reasons for the existing cataclysmic events and to find ways and means for overcoming or avoiding them.

Now, when our meeting and exchanges of opinion have gained a systematic character, it becomes possible to make the curriculum on world history more “flexible” in order to reflect (and in textbooks correspondingly) the important processes occurring now in different regions of the world. This

will enable the younger generation to defend the principles common to all humankind.

The first steps in this direction have been taken by the Georgian authors. There is, in progress, the development of the revised programme of the school course on world history. This programme will also include a course on the history of the nearest neighbours to Georgia, countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and the history of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus. These materials will be included in future editions of the textbooks on world history.

As far as the textbooks compiled in accordance with programmes in force until now are concerned, it should be noted that, in 1989-1992 (that is before the collapse of the USSR), new textbooks in Georgian history were written and introduced: propaedeutic (introductory) course for the 5th form (R. Metreveli, L. Sanikidze), systematic courses for the 8-9th forms (M. Lordkipanidze, N. Asatiani), and for the 10-11th forms (P. Lomashvili). New interpretations were placed on many of those events and concrete problems which were then considered to be either forbidden or distorted. These books have been translated into Russian, Azeri and Armenian. The authors continue to work and soon the revised editions of the textbooks will be issued.

The same question concerns the authors of the textbooks on world history. They also began work at the end of the 1980s. In 1992, two 8th-9th form textbooks on world history (N. Mamukelashvili) were published. In that way, among the former Soviet republics, Georgia was the first to offer her pupils new textbooks on world history in the national language. The first distinctive feature of these textbooks consists mainly in the rejection of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine about the stages of community development and of the leading role of class struggle.

Now the revised editions of the textbooks on world history are being published.

The greatest assistance has been rendered to the authors of the textbooks on world history by the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (Braunschweig) and, in particular, by Dr Robert Maier. Now, we have the opportunity to work in the library of the Institute. And, here I take the opportunity, on behalf of the authors, to express sincere gratitude to him.

Today, in Georgia, basic reforms are being carried out in the public education system in accordance with which, beginning from the 1998/99 year, gradually, stage by stage a new model of school education will be introduced. The reform provides three levels of educational process:

1. primary (elementary) school, that is 1st-6th forms;
2. basic school, 7th-9th forms;
3. secondary school, 10th-12th forms;

where optional and specialised study are offered. The reform provides for the teaching of separate courses on history at all levels. For this, special hours are allotted. From now on, the history of Georgia will be taught in three concentric circles (instead of two), but world history – in two concentric circles (instead of the linear teaching method). Furthermore, more attention should be paid to improving relations between history and other subjects.

For the successful implementation of the reform, it is necessary to overcome the drawbacks from which the existing curricula and textbooks suffer. The textbooks, for example, need to be simplified and perfected; greater emphasis should be placed on developing the necessary skills in pupils and, in order to do this, we have to work out the problems of history teaching methods and pedagogics; to draw up (collections) questionnaires and tests: to compile and issue reading books, to publish, at corresponding polygraphic level, atlases, historical wall maps; to implement in schools new visual aids of teaching; to supply school libraries with the necessary books etc.

We have great hopes that the Association of History Teachers (recently founded in Georgia) will greatly contribute to solving these problems. We rely increasingly on the help of the Council of Europe, and we are in close touch with it. The Council has already provided us with assistance in solving the most important problems.

We are hoping to have the support of the representatives of those countries with whom we have, not only been cooperating for years, but share sorrows and joy as well. And now we are all facing the same problems.

We hope that today's meeting will be of benefit to us all as it gives us the opportunity to exchange not easily gained experiences in a new situation.

III. ROUND TABLE ON:

- 1) Preparing history teachers: improving their professional skills
Chair: Dr Demir DRAGNEV (Moldova)

Both the presenters and the participants in the discussions paid particular attention to the necessity of continuous improvements of the professional level of teachers, forms of providing certificates, applying European standards and experience in training history teachers and raising their professional skills. The information provided by Mr Ian MCKELLAR (Scotland) appeared to be very useful. The experience of Scotland can be used as a model for future training curricula for teachers from the Caucasian region, Moldova and the Russian Federation.

The principal conclusions and proposals.

Today, in all countries of the region, there is a well developed system of initial and further improvement of the professional skills of teachers. The system is being constantly improved both in form and in contents. Financial and economic difficulties of the transitional period are the main obstacle, limiting successful developments in this direction. The prestige of the teaching profession has become very low, because of extremely poor remuneration. As a result, there is a shortage of teachers, especially in rural areas. Teachers are overburdened with responsibilities, sometimes one works for three. Teachers are badly in need of textbooks and teaching materials.

Taking into consideration the economic difficulties of the transitional period, the work towards raising the professional levels of history teachers has to be carried out in two directions:

- i. using forms and methods applicable as temporary measures during the transition period;
- ii. promoting a solid system that would make it possible to include the region into the developed European system of forms and methods of raising the professional skills of history teachers.

The experience of Azerbaijan shows that a special short course on world history corresponding to the demands of the new curriculum could be very useful as a temporary measure.

It was also suggested that the resources of local or national budgets should be allocated to provide each school library with at least two sets of textbooks and other pedagogical materials provided by the Ministries of Education and Pedagogical Centres.

The issue of training history teachers and raising their professional skills was considered from different angles:

- educating future teachers;
- raising the professional skills of the new teachers;
- developing the professional skills of experienced teachers.

The participants in the Round Table also considered the issue of evaluation of the teachers' work and their promotion.

The following proposals were made in connection with the initial training of teachers:

- i. the Council of Europe should be asked to send materials for the in-service training of teachers to bigger centres of teacher training in the respective countries;
- ii. the possibility of following the example of Scotland and introducing a special qualification examination for teachers in addition to standard examinations for a master's degree /higher education. (The graduates of higher educational institutions should work as assistant-teachers for two or three years before they take this examination.)

As for further training, it is important to use, during the transition period, the potential of special education establishments devoted to raising the professional level of teachers. In future, the accent will be put on self-education of teachers and decentralisation of the education process. Their constantly developing skills must correspond to the appropriate certificate, in other words, with continuous evaluation of their qualifications. We have already started working in this direction in our region, but, in order to improve the results, the requirements for each particular stage have to be unified. Regular professional certification of teachers, who have already reached the required professional level, is of special importance. The participants considered it worthwhile to devote a workshop to the methods of assessing teachers' qualifications and the methods of experts' assessments of textbooks and professional literature for teachers.

The participants of the Seminar:

- i. pronounced themselves in favour of publishing a European magazine on the methods of teaching history; materials with recommendations on the methods of teaching with a «portrait» description of the experience of the best history teachers, and modern technologies applicable in this sphere of education could also be included into the bulletins;

- ii. welcomed the idea of organising seminars (meetings) of the best history teachers in Europe so that they could exchange their experiences and discuss new experimental elements in their work;
- iii. thought it desirable for the Council of Europe to publish the techniques of the best teachers on the INTERNET for the benefit of history teachers;
- iv. believed it necessary to advertise, in the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS, the best computer curriculum (educational software) and other innovations in history teaching.

2) The preparation of the new history curriculum and standards in the Russian Federation

Chair: Dr Ludmila ALEKSASHKINA

Secondary education in Russia, like society in general, faces big changes. The general trend in the development of Russian schools can be defined as multi-faceted. The unified linear structure of the curriculum is now being replaced by a step by step concentric structure and professional differences at the senior level (10-11th form, the students are 16-17 years old). Curricula combine federal, regional and school components. And the more diversified the school, the more topical is the question: what should be included in the obligatory part of education? What components are necessary for the development of a personality, for the needs of society, the state and school?

By educational standards, Russian teachers understand «a system of the main parameters that should be taken into consideration as a general state norm of knowledge, reflecting the public ideals and taking into consideration the abilities of each individual and of the education system in general to achieve the ideal». The introduction of educational standards does not mean that the educational process will be measured rigidly. On the contrary, by defining the minimum necessary level of knowledge, the standards give wider possibilities to prepare various curricula and educational aids, new textbooks and readers that meet both the general requirements and the specific needs of various educational establishments as well as the social and personal needs of the pupils.

The functions of the educational standards can be described as follows: the standards *regulate* the educational process (plan, provide guidance and control over the educational process), *promote the best model for education* (define the minimum level of knowledge necessary, the level of training capacity, provide new wider possibilities for different approaches to school subjects and to the improvement of the quality of knowledge), *make the education human and democratic by nature* (the possibilities and requirements of the pupils are taken into consideration), etc.

In accordance with the approach now applicable to educational standards in many countries, the standards reflect two main components of school education: *knowledge* and *skills*. In defining these two components, Russian history teachers adhere to general principles (selecting the major issues for history courses, which are important for the individual and society. At the same time, the Russian approach has its specificities. It is always difficult to select the main invariable nucleus of historical knowledge, because the approaches usually have some major difficulties, and there can be many versions and different assessments of a given event. In our case, the task is twice as difficult because the methods applied in Soviet historiography have

changed. When defining the standards, our experts not only have difficulties in selecting facts, they also have to develop a system of knowledge, a dialectic approach to history on different levels: human history, world history, the history of States and peoples, regional history and local history. Greater attention is now being paid to various areas of history - our pupils now study not only the socio-political development of the states, but also the history of material and spiritual culture, life styles and the ways of thinking of people in various countries and periods, etc. The educational standards should include both general (federal) and regional components of historical knowledge.

Russian experts have also proposed some specific approaches to defining the skills of pupils in history. History is often considered to be a descriptive subject in which the knowledge of facts is the main component, contrary perhaps to mathematics or foreign languages where practical skills are of great importance. However, many Russian history teachers tried to overcome this limited view of history. In 1970, the following classification of knowledge in history within the school curriculum was suggested:

- i. knowledge of facts (dates, names etc.);
- ii. knowledge of general ideas, theories and notions;
- iii. knowledge of the main activities that form the basis of any creative work;
- iv. knowledge based on evaluation (developing a personal experience of evaluation).

Russian curricula for the history of the 1970-80s contained a list of skills to be developed by the pupils on different levels of education including that of working with documents. This approach was further developed in the draft educational standards in history that were recently prepared in Russia. In accordance with the demands as to the level of knowledge, the pupils must be able to:

- i. work with chronological data;
- ii. work with historical maps;
- iii. work with the sources of historical knowledge (materials, documents etc.);
- iv. prepare a historical description (a story) ;
- v. prepare a historical evaluation (make an analysis);

- vi. work with historical notions and make general conclusions;
- vii. analyse historical versions, attitudes and assessments.

For each group, special action and procedures (from simple to more complicated ones) are recommended. The students should grasp the skills gradually, step by step. This general classification has laid the foundations for the requirements of different age groups. It is also very important to develop a mechanism of implementing the standards and getting appropriate feedback.

3) Progress with new standards and programmes in history. Preparing and introducing new standards

Chair: Tamaz TATISHVILLI (Georgia).

Professor Medzmariashvilli from Tbilisi State University gave a presentation on "Working out new standards and programmes in teaching the history of Georgia". The speaker mentioned that Georgia had made great progress in this area. State standards for teaching world history and the history of Georgia have been introduced. When defining the standards, the authors took into consideration the recommendations of the experts of the Council of Europe and laid particular stress on the need to develop educational skills. The academic curriculum for teaching history has been drawn up.

Georgia entered the second stage of working out a new programme that is laying the foundations for the new textbooks on world history and the history of Georgia. While carrying this out, the authors of the textbooks faced serious difficulties:

- i) textbooks had to be completely purged of the remnants of Marxist-Leninist ideology;
- ii) the authors had to re-write both factual and conceptual parts of the history textbooks, particularly the chapters concerning modern and contemporary history.

In spite of all the difficulties, the work proved to be a success.

Dr L.Aleksashkina (Russian Federation) also made a presentation during this session. The title of her presentation was "Teaching history in Russian schools: approaches to standards".

The speaker described the main trends in developing school education in the Russian Federation. She mentioned that, by educational standards, Russian teachers understand "a system of main parameters that should be considered as a general state norm of knowledge, reflecting the public ideals and taking into consideration the abilities of each individual and of the education system in general to achieve that ideal".

The introduction of educational standards does not mean that the educational process will be measured rigidly. On the contrary, it facilitates creative approaches to teaching history in secondary schools. The standards will both optimise the level of teaching and learning and make the educational process more human and democratic.

Ms Joke VAN DER LEEUW-ROORD, President of EUROCLIO, gave a presentation on "The preparation of the new history curriculum and standards in the Netherlands". She described the education system in the Netherlands, formulated the goals of the new programme, saying that the curriculum was particularly aimed at giving knowledge about society. History teachers should concentrate on the main historical concepts, sequence- consequence relations, the notions of time, space etc.

Teaching history has two dimensions:

- i) political, socio-economic and cultural history;
- ii) the history of individuals, community, ethnic groups, people and nations.

The lessons should provide pupils with knowledge and teach them to reach independent conclusions. The pupils should acquire a feeling of civic responsibility. The new programme focuses on world history, adhering to the principle - from local to global history. The programme is aimed at teaching students to analyse and come to conclusions.

During the discussions, the following ideas were expressed:

- i) joint discussion and co-ordination of efforts is preferable;
- ii) history is closely connected to economic and social geography and it would be advisable to merge the two subjects. This approach should be reflected in the curriculum;
- iii) it is necessary to shorten the list of facts to be studied and include, in the programme, some controversial issues, develop skills and promote an independent style of thinking for the pupils;
- iv) standards should be pluralistic and reflect the elements of social, economic, political and cultural history;
- v) standards should include both pan-European and local issues, the role of religious and national factors, the relations with neighbouring states and peoples;
- vi) they must be helpful to teachers and define the final aims of the educational process;
- vii) standards should become one of the main criteria in evaluating school textbooks;

- viii) some participants argued that the aims of teaching history in different countries may differ because countries are facing different problems. That is why standards for teaching world history may be similar for all countries, standards for national history should take into consideration specific features of the historical development of the States. It means that, in the second case, a general standard is not applicable;
- ix) the participants also pronounced themselves in favour of setting up a commission of competent scholars, who could be specialists in working out an approximate general standard in world (European) history in accordance with the requirements and Recommendations 1283/1996 of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly. The standards will not be an obligatory framework. They will only be recommendations;
- x) the teachers, especially those who come from post-Soviet countries, must get rid of oblique imperial and Marxist-Leninist ideas;
- xi) it would be worthwhile offering to the participants of the Seminar the possibility to prepare a course on the history of the Caucasus and have it included into the programme of history for schools and world history textbooks.

We have to educate the generation of the 21st Century, without racist and ideological ideas. A search for truth and common human ideals should be their main principles

- 4) "Preparing and publishing history textbooks in Azerbaijan"
Mr Asker GULIYEV, Head of Education, Government House
Mr Aydin ASLANOV, Methodologist of the In-service Training
Institute

The Republic of Azerbaijan considers education to be of strategic importance, and a top priority for the State. Education lays the foundations for the future development of the State and society.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, which only became independent six years ago, now faces the need to reform the education system for secondary school. The education system corresponds to the Constitution of Azerbaijan, to the Law on Education and to the appropriate international legal norms. The education system of Azerbaijan was worked out in conjunction with specific national values, universal human values and is democratic.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, in its education policy, tries to develop a system of continuous education within the framework of the State standards. All pupils have equal opportunities for using their knowledge, skills and talents. The education system is democratic and guaranteed by the State. The education system of the Republic of Azerbaijan reflects specific national and regional values. The education system is secular and has a solid academic basis. The educational institutions have close relations with R&D bodies as well as with educational establishments and agencies of foreign countries. Educational establishments are independent of political parties, public and religious organisations and movements. The new system guarantees freedom and pluralism in education. The educational level of the students corresponds to international standards.

In 1995, the Republic of Azerbaijan published a full-scale curriculum for an 11-year school including textbooks on world history and on the History of Azerbaijan for 5-11 classes. The curricula marked the end of the dependency of school history courses on ideology. Historical facts to be studied were selected so as to reflect the historical processes objectively. They were developed in accordance with the modern level of development of historical studies and the experience of other countries.

One of the top priorities of the above-mentioned curriculum in history for the 11-year school was to provide deeper knowledge of the history of the Republic of Azerbaijan; 40% of all school classes on history are devoted to this subject. At the same time, the new curriculum in history includes not only the history of Azerbaijan but a course on world history, that has an appropriate place in the curriculum - 60% of all history lessons are devoted to this subject.

The materials included in the curriculum correspond to the historical principle of development: formation of ancient class societies, States and civilizations in the Orient and then, later, in the West. That is why world history is studied region by region as follows: Azerbaijan - the Caucasus, - Central Asia and Kazakhstan - the Volga basin and Siberia -East- West. In certain periods of world history, namely when oriental societies were lagging behind the west in their development, the curriculum moved away from the above-mentioned principle, and, for those periods, greater attention was paid to the history of the west.

A real novelty in the new curriculum is the synchronised approach to history. This allows students to gain a deeper knowledge of history and provides a clear understanding of the role their country has played in different periods of world history. This approach allows the students to gain deeper knowledge of history and allows them to understand more clearly the role their country played in different periods of world history.

Ten years ago, only a few hours were devoted to the history of Azerbaijan in Azeri schools. In accordance with the previous curriculum, only two textbooks were acceptable for secondary schools containing 37 and 43 paragraphs each. Children only began to study the history of Azerbaijan in the 7th form. Not only did we lack the textbooks reflecting our history and the past of our people, but the literature on methods of teaching history was also lacking, as well as history readers, maps and other educational aids.

The situation has now radically changed. The number of hours devoted to studying the history of Azerbaijan has increased and now equals 306 hours (and this was not at the expense of world history; for the classes on world history, 425 hours are allowed). For the first time, secondary school pupils will begin studying the history of Azerbaijan not in the 7th form, but in the 5th form. The textbook on «The history of Azerbaijan» for the 5th form has already been prepared, and, by the beginning of the new academic year, our schools will have it published. The textbooks for a completely new course «An Individual and Society» (9th - 11th forms) have also been published. The school pays special attention to studying the Constitution of Azerbaijan, as well as other international legal acts and constitutions of other countries. A new textbook on the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been prepared.

The context of history textbooks in Azeri history has also changed. They are now characterised by an academic approach, respect for universal human values and the sense of national dignity.

In accordance with the Law on Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, we now have educational establishments working in the languages of other ethnic groups living in the country and also in some Western European languages. In accordance with the Law on Education, in such schools, the

Azeri language, as well as the history, literature and geography of Azerbaijan are obligatory subjects. In this connection, we have to translate into Russian all the textbooks on the history of Azerbaijan. The textbooks for the 6th, 7th, 8th and 11th forms have already been prepared. The textbooks for the 9th and the 10th forms are being translated at the present time.

Our educational agencies have to prepare new textbooks on world history for the 6th - 11th forms which is another complicated problem. For many years, our schools used textbooks on world history which had been inherited from the former Soviet education system. It is no secret that, in those textbooks, the authors sacrificed the principle of historic truth to ideology. Many facts are distorted, the emphasis is placed on the history of some peoples and ethnic groups, while the history of the others is described as the story of wild nomads and barbaric tribes, who only had wars and massacres to contribute to world history. You will never come across the names of such geniuses as Avitzenna, Khorezmi, Birouni, Toussi, Nizami, Fizuli, Roustavelli in those textbooks, although the above-mentioned people belong to the history of the world civilization. The Soviet textbooks paid considerable attention to the political figures of western countries (sometimes, even minor ones), but they did not devote a single line to the political figures of the Orient. You will not find in them the names of Tchingiz-khan or Mekhammed II, Souleiman the Great, Ismail I, Nadir Shah and other statesmen of the Orient. Not a single word was devoted to the great Amir Teimour whose 660th anniversary was celebrated throughout the world last year.

Now, the time is ripe to have our own textbooks on world history (6th - 11th forms) that would meet modern standards. Several groups of authors working on textbooks (from ancient times to contemporary history) were set up by the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan. The groups are made up of prominent scholars, experts and the best specialists in teaching methods.

Unfortunately, we cannot carry out all the projects quickly and solve the problems that our education system faces today because our financial resources are limited. As a result of the war and the occupation of 20% of our territory, more than 1,000,000 people have found themselves refugees in their own country. It means that hundreds of thousands of children need free textbooks and readers. We badly need the assistance of our colleagues from the Council of Europe. The progress in preparing and publishing new textbooks in our Republic will, to a great extent, depend on our cooperation.

- 5) "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks in Armenia"
Mr Arakel GYULBOUDAGHYAN, Leading Specialist, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia
Mr Ashot GHOUKASYAN, Expert responsible for history textbooks and programmes in secondary schools

From the very first days of its independence, Armenia introduced significant changes into the history curriculum for secondary schools, as well as into other parts of its education system. First of all, a new concept of teaching history in school was developed, and thus the aims and goals of the educational process, the forms and methods of teaching, the structure and context of the courses had to be reconsidered. New textbooks have been written.

In order to gain better understanding of the reform in teaching history in the secondary school, we will have to consider the above-mentioned problems separately.

1. The aims of teaching history in school

In the Soviet period, history was taught to promote Marxist-Leninist ideology among the pupils. Today, the main goal of teaching history is to promote a national historical consciousness of the citizens that includes:

- i. a system of knowledge and skills;
- ii. a system of moral values.

A system of values based on those components of national historical consciousness can be singled out. The pupils are expected to have a sensitive attitude to the history of their country and to the history and culture of all the peoples.

2. Updating the context of the course of history

Qualitative amendments also took place in the context of the course of history:

- i. complicated, too ideologically biased subjects and abstract conclusions were removed from the curriculum. Historical knowledge became clearer, specific and more sincere;
- ii. the schools gave up the theory of formations when defining historical periods. The notion of "civilisation" laid the basis for the division of history into periods;

- iii. the role of political and military events is no longer over estimated; wars are considered to be the greatest evil and tragedy for people;
- iv. history regained its humanistic component. Less attention is now paid to socio-economic relations and class contradictions. Greater attention is paid to the description of individuals who are considered to be the main characters of history;
- v. educational elements became stronger. History should promote affection for the State, for the environment, respect for other peoples. All those notions should become links between all parts of the history curriculum;
- vi. artistic description of historical events and aesthetic understanding of those facts has facilitated the interpretation of history;
- vii. the authors of the curriculum removed the bias and the technocratic approach to history; historical development is considered to be an all-round process for individuals and their creative activity.

3. The new structure of the curriculum

The previous education system was linear, which means that the pupils, beginning in the 5th form and to the end of their schooling, studied history strictly chronologically. Now, the linear principle has had to give way to the concentric principle (the principle of repeated studies).

In the secondary school (5th - 8th forms), pupils study a complete course on history, beginning from ancient times up to the present day. At this stage, they receive specific and systematic knowledge and acquire a certain image of history. In the senior classes (9th - 11th), they will have to go through the history course once again: they will get deeper knowledge, will be able to classify the information and make it more systematic and, finally, to gain a philosophical view of history.

The curriculum for the 4th form is now on the agenda: pupils of that age should study history in the form of interesting and highly attractive stories. We are considering a curriculum on the history of Armenia that would take into consideration the specific intellectual, emotional and psychological characteristics of each particular age group of pupils.

4. The forms and methods of teaching

The forms and methods of teaching have also been changed. Practical studies and discussions now have an important place in the curriculum. Passive listening and retelling is gradually being replaced by methods that focus on independent studies. It increases the interest of the pupils in the subject and develops an independent way of thinking.

The methods of teaching history depend, to a great extent, on the relations between a teacher and the pupils. Before, a teacher was the main source of knowledge and the only subject in the teaching process. A pupil was considered to be the passive object of teaching.

The educational reform is aimed at turning a pupil into an active subject in the pedagogical process in the teacher-pupil relationship.

Considerable changes have been introduced into history textbooks, and new textbooks have been published. The new textbooks, however, do not yet fully reflect the qualitative changes that have taken place in our education system. The textbooks on the history of Armenia (5th - 6th and 7th - 8th forms) and world history (9th form) are to be replaced by new ones in the near future. These new textbooks are already being prepared.

IV. CONCLUSIONS BY THE GENERAL RAPPORTEUR

As a preface to my overall summing up of this Seminar and before I go on to submit my recommendations, I should like to pay tribute to all the participants for the happy spirit of mutual co-operation within which this Seminar has been conducted. This has been due in no small measure to the thoughtfulness, commitment, tenacity, enthusiasm, indeed even passion of the participants: all have worked hard here towards achieving the Reform of History Education in their respective countries. Moreover, it soon became apparent that we were all involved in this together even those of us who come from western European backgrounds. It is obvious too that we have indeed a lot to learn from each for History Education and the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance.

I have to state also that my task as general rapporteur has been made easier by the excellence and comprehensiveness of the reports made earlier by the round-table rapporteurs.

Each has put very succinctly the main thrust of the discussions, and, with those in mind, I do not wish merely to repeat points already made but, wish, with your agreement, to emphasise or reinforce the most significant in my observations.

Undoubtedly, the question of standards for history and their development in ways appropriate to improve and enhance history education in each of the participating States was the dominant feature of the Seminar. It is gratifying to report that considerable progress has been, and is being, made towards their production - hopefully the process of development and revision will continue so that a clear definition of standards will provide the basis for constructing secondary school history syllabuses.

It has to be said that so far what we have seen of the standards leads me to say that they are probably too knowledge-based and, if applied to schools, will probably compel teachers to concentrate on the familiar traditional didactic or narrative-type approaches to teaching rather than to promote more innovative approaches to child-centred learning and encourage strategies for critical thinking and skills development. In other words, in my opinion, the standards should take on board an encouragement of pedagogical approaches appropriate for children at the beginning of a new millennium: the development of skills and critical thinking in pupils should be clearly part of the statements on standards, and certainly more explicit than they are at present.

As far as content knowledge is concerned, anxiety has been expressed in the earlier discussion about its national overtones and the predilection to separate "national" from world history. While I understand why this division has been put forward, opportunities to integrate national historical

developments within the wider context should be highlighted to avoid a national or nationalistic bias. In other words, a clearer statement of a more balanced approach and reasons for it has to be achieved. This could involve the introduction of optional or alternative topics to encourage local, regional and European or world history alongside the national. Also, a more flexible definition of the knowledge might advance multi-perspectivity, multiculturalism and pluralistic thinking within the history curriculum.

However, those responsible for the work on the standards have to be commended for their efforts so far.

The same is true for the new textbooks that have appeared or are about to appear. Of course they, too, at this time reflect the knowledge-driven standards, rather than offer opportunities for questioning, interpretation, evaluation of evidence and the promotion of active learning techniques. They tend to be strong on actual detail and free from the constraints of the Marxist-Leninist dogma which bedevilled the previous textbooks and were obstacles to objectivity. Most of the lay-outs have a "traditional" orientation and, while sometimes illustrated, there is a need to provide supplementary materials either quite separately as self-standing learning and teaching packages or deliberately linked to the textbooks. These might usefully include documentary sources, maps, charts, diagrams, and activities for pupils.

That, in most cases, textbooks and teaching materials still require approval by officials or committees set up government officials causes some anxiety in respect of teachers' freedom to choose appropriate textbooks. As yet also, a free market in books for school use has not emerged. Both factors constrain teachers' freedom of choice and could hinder multi-perspectivity and democratic thinking.

The Seminar gave an indication also of worthwhile intentions to develop teacher-training systems within the present States. It is a vital aspect for history education and has to be tackled both in the short and long terms. However, steps are being taken, albeit in limited ways because of economic factors, to improve and enhance teachers' basic skills, and above all, their understanding of the aims and objectives of history teaching, the knowledge imperatives as well as the development of historical thinking skills in their utilising many different sources of evidence. Progress seems to be hindered unfortunately by economic circumstances and financial constraints. In one State at least (Azerbaijan), some steps towards teacher appraisal or examination is developing: but such a development demands clear and appropriate criteria for promoting teachers as effective practitioners not simply assessing them on acquisition of the knowledge demanded in the standards. Such elements as personality, enthusiasm, commitment, interactive skills, attitudes to pupils and colleagues and other professional retraining is so hindered by severe financial constraints. However, that those responsible for teacher training are pursuing

the issue at all is a credit to their tenacity and commitment to improving history teacher education. The recruitment of suitable, well-qualified and trained people has also to be continually addressed along with the issues of the social status and the financial rewards of those who are in or enter the profession.

Now I should like to put forward to you my recommendations:

1. *Standards:*

While the stage they have reached is impressive, there are important aspects which need to be reconsidered:

- a) the standards should be more "balanced" in terms of the actual content knowledge to be learned: there is a need to attempt to balance local, national, regional as well as European and World History topics, and to explore a more integrative approach at least in some of the topics selected. At the same time, the standards really need to encapsulate openly, clearly and coherently multi-perspectivity and multi-culturalism. The "national" thrust, which seems to be dominant at this present stage of development, requires re-examination;
- b) moreover, I would also like to recommend the inclusion of a section or sections on confronting controversial issues. Dare I suggest this could be achieved co-operatively by a group of Caucasian history experts;
- c) the development of "values" within the standards should be included. I contend that there has to be consideration of moral conduct and justice, fairness and tolerance within history syllabus design, especially for children growing up in new circumstances: what is taught in school history syllabuses has important ramifications for the present and future;
- d) I would like to recommend too that whatever Standards or documentation on standards are produced have to be made accessible to history teachers in schools. These should not just be imposed on teachers but implementation-approached in ways whereby teachers gain a sense of ownership; that syllabus design should have an air of reality to it and the standards seen to have a distinct practical value for developing school history both in terms of syllabus construction itself and in promotion of appropriate teaching methodologies which emphasise historical understanding, critical thinking, debate and discussion - all elements capable of sustaining democracy and democratic thinking. In other words, it would be valuable for

the authorities to develop an implementation strategy involving teachers to set up the new standards.

2. *Textbooks:*

- a) while I have already highlighted the efforts made to overcome the problems associated with the production of up-to-date and reliable textbooks, I feel compelled to suggest that more attention to activities, strategies to encourage learning, inclusion of documentary and visual sources of evidence, more interesting and attractive layouts would all be beneficial and encourage "increasing dialogue between the textbook and the reader";
- b) even more textbooks and, if possible, more teaching materials to supplement those textbooks already in place, are required. More teacher choice from a number of available textbooks would also allow teachers to select texts more relevant to the needs of their pupils and help encourage multi-perspective and multi-cultural approaches;
- c) external agencies such as the International Book Development Association and the World Bank etc... should be approached to help fund textbook and teaching materials development;
- d) teachers should be encouraged to engage in cooperative efforts and to form associations to promote textbook writing and teaching materials development;
- e) a more flexible approach to textbook approval is recommended and a role for teachers found within in it if such systems continue. But the liberty of the authors is critically important and state monopoly practices for textbooks should be removed. Finally, once the standards are in place a free market approach to book writing and development would be appropriate.

3. *Teacher Training:*

- a) development and enhancement of the provision for initial teacher-training and for continuous professional development or in-service training should be made a priority in all States;
- b) associated with it, there should be consideration of the teachers' social status and salaries so that educational development can be sustained;

- c) tackling both issues is not an overnight job but rather more a long term project. I would recommend, however that much care has to be exercised to build-up teacher confidence, to promote their re-education and to appraise their abilities according to clear and appropriate criteria;
- d) alternative strategies for teacher re-education should be investigated. These could include:
 - i. the "cascade" model of in-service development - well tried in many Western European States;
 - ii. the development of independent history teachers' associations, both locally and nationally, for the dissemination of new ideas, innovative learning strategies and teaching materials etc...
 - iii. the enlistment of the considerable expertise which exists among history educators in Western European States, through perhaps the development of joint projects under the aegis of bodies such as EUROCLIO and the Council of Europe itself;
 - iv. the exploration of the new information technologies: especially e-mail and the Internet to improve communication between schools and teachers and for the dissemination of information on history education in all its aspects.

APPENDIX I

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EXPERTS INVITED BY THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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APPENDIX II

PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR

Wednesday 24 September 1997

Arrival of the participants at the International Conference Centre in Tabakhmela

Dinner at the Centre in Tabakhmela

Thursday 25 September 1997

Breakfast at the Centre in Tabakhmela

09.30 - 11.00

Plenary Session

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Mr Zurab SHVANIA, Chair of the Parliament of Georgia;
- ii. Mr Petre MAMRADZE, Chief of the President's Staff, who read a letter from President Eduard SHEVARDNADZE to the participants in the Seminar (see Appendix III for the letter);
- iii. Mr George SHARVASHIDZE, First Deputy Minister of Education of Georgia;
- iv. Mr Shota DOGHONADZE, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs;
- v. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator, Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport of the Council of Europe.

11.00 - 11.30

Break

11.30 - 13.30

Plenary Session - Round Table on "The progress achieved in the preparation of new history curricula. The question of standards, their preparation and their implementation"

Rapporteur: Professor Nodar ASATIANI, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilissi State University, Georgia

Presentation on "The preparation of the new history curriculum and standards in Georgia" by Ms Helen MEDZMARIASHVILI, Professor of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilissi State University, Georgia

Presentation on "The preparation of the new history curriculum and standards in the Russian Federation" by Ms Ludmila ALEXASHKINA, Head of the Laboratory of History, Russian Academy of Education, the Russian Federation

Presentation on "The preparation of the new history curriculum in the Netherlands" by Ms Joke VAN DER LEEUW-ROORD, President of EUROCLIO, Netherlands

Discussion with all the participants

13.30 - 15.00

Lunch

15.00 - 16.30

Plenary Session - Round Table on "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks"

Rapporteur: Mr Alexander SHEVYREV, Head of the Laboratory of History Education Institute for Development of Educational Systems, Russian Federation

Presentation on "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks in Armenia" by Mr Arakel GYULBUDAGHIAN, Leading Specialist, Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Armenia, Armenia

Presentation on "The preparation and publication of new history textbooks and what constitutes a 'good' textbook from the point of view of the Georg-Eckert-Institute" by Ms Magdalena TELUS, Georg-Eckert-Institute;

- Discussion with all the participants
- 16.30 - 17.00 Break
- 17.00 - 18.00 **Continuation of the Plenary Session - Round Table**
- Discussion with all the participants
- 19.00 Official dinner at the Centre in Tabakhmela

Friday 26 September 1997

- Breakfast in the Centre in Tabakhmela
- 9.30 - 11.00 **Plenary Session - Round Table on "The initial and in-service training of history teachers"**
- Rapporteur: Dr Demir DRAGNEV, Director of the Institute of History, the Academy of Science of the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of Moldova
- Presentation on "The initial and in-service training of history teachers in Azerbaijan" by Mr Ayadin ASLANOV, Methodist of the In-service Training Institute and Mr Yagub MAHMUDOVI, Head of the History Department, Baku State University, Azerbaijan
- Presentation on "The initial and in-service training of history teachers in Scotland " by Mr Ian McKELLAR, Senior Lecturer in History, Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom
- Discussion with all the participants
- 11.00 - 11.30 Break
- 11.30 - 13.00 **Plenary Session - Round Table**
- Continuation of the discussion with all the participants
- 13.00 - 15.00 Lunch at the Centre in Tabakhmela

15.00 - 17.00 **Plenary Session - Round Table on "The main achievements and difficulties in the reform of history education in secondary schools in the countries represented at the Seminar"**

Discussion with all the participants on the basis of the National Reports

17.00 - 17.30 Break

The preparation of conclusions and recommendations of the rapporteurs of the Round Tables. The reports of the Round Tables must be submitted to the Secretariat by 20.00 hours on Friday 26 September at the latest.

19.30 Dinner at the Centre in Tabakhmela

Preparation of the conclusions by the General Rapporteur of the Seminar on the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of the rapporteurs of the Round Tables sessions.

Saturday 27 September 1997

10.00 - 11.30 **Plenary Session**

i. Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the rapporteurs of the Round Tables

Discussion with all the participants

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

Comments by the participants

11.30 - 12.00 Break

12.00 - 13.00

Closing speeches of the Seminar by:

- i. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Administrator, Directorate of Education, Culture and Sport, Council of Europe;
- ii. Mr George SHARVASHIDZE, First Deputy Minister of Education of Georgia.

13.00 - 14.30

Lunch at the Centre of Tabakhmela

14.30

Excursion for the participants of the Seminar

19.00

Farewell Dinner

Sunday 28 September 1997

Departure of the participants after breakfast

APPENDIX III

