

# **Task Force Education And Youth**

Enhanced Graz Process

Working Table 1, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe



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Seminar on

“Active learning methods and enquiry-based learning  
for history educators”

Belgrade, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,

5 – 7 March 2001

**Report**

Strasbourg



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**Report by**

**Maria Luisa de BIVAR BLACK**

**Portugal**

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

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Included in the activities approved by the Stability Pact, this seminar was organised by Directorate General IV – Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, and EUROCLIO, the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations, and was held in the Institute of Educational Research in Belgrade, whose staff was responsible for the local organisation and selection of participants.

The session was opened and chaired by Dr Snezana Josimovic of the Institute of Educational Research, who thanked the Council of Europe and EUROCLIO for the effort in organising this seminar in such a short time and referred to the need felt by educators in Belgrade to share experiences with experts from other European countries.

Ms Alison Cardwell, on behalf of the Council of Europe, gave a general picture of the aims of the Council of Europe, its main activities, and informed the participants that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had just signed the European Cultural Convention and could now take part fully in the Organisation's activities in education, culture and youth. Ms Cardwell then explained the involvement of the Council in the reform of history teaching, which includes the organising of seminars in different countries, on history teaching and curriculum reform and the support of textbook publishing. She spoke about the project on «Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century History in secondary schools» and its outcomes that will be very soon published and disseminated.

Further, Ms Cardwell explained the importance of the Stability Pact for the region, in enabling the organisation of such seminars, which had been launched following the Conference on “The initial and in-service training of history teachers in South East Europe” (Athens, September 2000), the enormous work of preparation and coordination that it involved, and of the possibilities for future events and initiatives.

## **I. Plenary Session - Presentations**

The first theme for reflection was **Critical Historical Consciousness** and the first presentation was by Dr Vojislav Bozickovic, of the Institute for Educational Research.

He explained, from a philosophical perspective, that self-awareness was the most special characteristic of the human species, as it permitted people to comprehend the flow of time. Some stress was made on the idea that this self-awareness also brought fear and anxiety, along with death awareness.

As self-awareness is the basis of human conscience, it enables people to make sense of the world. Mr. Bozickovic also questioned the Marxist concept of class-consciousness, and extensively referred and quoted the work of philosophers and scientists.

Exploring the same general theme, Mr. Benny Christensen, a practising teacher from Denmark, explained in detail the method used in the Danish Gymnasium for the teaching and learning of history, stressing the importance of *relevance* in reference to the interest the students manifested in history. Learning history in the Gymnasium aims at a combined balance of acquiring knowledge and developing skills and understanding. This is a process that leads to the forming of a critical historical consciousness, which resulted from the ongoing dialogue of:

Understanding the present;  
Interpretation of the past;  
Orientation to the future.

He also pointed out that, as history in the school was but one of the means to acquire historical consciousness, it should be planned, organised and critical, so that it could include and structure the miscellaneous historical information the students received in their everyday social activities. To achieve this critical historical consciousness, the Danish teachers asked and answered questions under multiple perspectives within the general frames of the curriculum that allowed time for students' and teachers' activities and decisions.

The second theme for reflection was **Active learning methods – everyday life history** and the first presentation was by Mr. Milan Lazic, of the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade.

Mr. Milan Lazic listed the enormous variety of active teaching and learning methods, with reference to specific examples of Serbian practice and curriculum, and stressed the need to implement these activities in the classroom rapidly, so that students shifted from a passive to an active attitude.

Ms Luisa Black, a teacher trainer from Portugal, explained the difference between *hard* (what to think/answers) and *soft* (how to think/questions) teaching, and explained that history was a hard subject when it dealt with facts (evidence) and became increasingly soft when it dealt with interpretation. Using examples of classroom practice in Portugal, Ms Black explained the potential of everyday life history which:

- Helps motivation;
- Develops empathy;
- Supports historical reasoning (change, cause and consequence);
- Supports moral reasoning;
- Develops critical thinking;
- Enables/enhances active learning strategies.



Furthermore, Ms Black stressed the importance of accurate description in the active-learning process and explained how this accuracy could be transferable becoming a lifelong acquisition, and how history learning could deal with accurate description by using everyday life methods.

The third and last theme for reflection was **Sources, work with sources, questions and critical thinking** and the first presentation was by Ms Biljana Stojanovic, from the Ministry of Education of Serbia.

Ms Stojanovic spoke about the use of written sources in history teaching, stating that teacher and pupils reproduce and also acquire knowledge using historical sources and that the teacher should act as a mediator between the historical science and the pupils. Explaining the advantages of using sources, Ms Stojanovic defended the need of acquisition of prior knowledge by the pupil to be able to work with sources. Specific examples of written sources were mentioned in reference to specific topics of the Serbian curriculum.

Ms Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, Executive Director of EUROCLIO, spoke about the use of sources related to questioning and the different types of questions (“*it all starts with questioning*”) and began by focusing on the complexity of the process of historical interpretation. Many examples were given on simple questioning and more complex issues, namely in reference to the fact that, in order to achieve the higher reasoning that could lead to the understanding of historical events, complex questioning of a variety of sources was needed.

Examples of German and British textbooks using the same sources and achieving very different results through questioning were shown and plenty of materials (working sheets and check lists) that could be used by the teachers were given.

## **II. Debate after the Plenary Sessions**

All the presentations were followed by lively discussions on curriculum limitations and impositions, the issues of source selection, of clarification of what could be used in the classroom, different active learning methods, etc.

The participants were mainly interested in obtaining information on what was happening in other countries with reference to history teaching, methods and curriculum.

There was also warm discussions on the situation of Serbian history teaching. Some disagreement emerged as to the freedom of the teacher within the curriculum and the teaching methods used in the classroom, but there was a general consensus on the need to promote more seminars of this kind and to disseminate new ideas and methods for further reflection.

### **III. Group Work**

The participants were divided into three groups that worked with the three resource persons who conducted three different workshops, in such a way that all participants were able to participate in each workshop. The participants included teachers, officials from the Ministry of Education, teacher trainers, editors of historical magazines, researchers from the Institute for Educational Research. The groups also had time allotted to their own reflection and discussions.

The three resource persons organised workshops where the participants were introduced to active learning methodology linked to the specific topics of their presentations:

- Enquiry-based learning with a variety of sources  
Benny Christensen;
- Active learning methods – everyday life history  
Luisa Black;
- Sources, work with sources, questions and critical thinking  
Joke van der Leeuw-Roord.

The results of the different workshops were positive as participants worked with enthusiasm and reached the expected aims. Furthermore, the sharing of experiences and the exchange of information related to the specific experience of the resource person was much developed.

### **IV. Group Recommendations**

In the final session, the chairs of the three working groups reported on their own discussions and recommendations, namely regarding ways ahead for dissemination of the results and continuing work.

The seminar was considered a positive learning experience, and all groups agreed on the coherence between presentations and workshops and were enthusiastic about the possibilities to change their own practice (methodology) and attitudes towards active learning.

Agreement was also reached concerning the dissemination of the work that was developed and the historical magazines whose editors were present were committed to publishing the work. However, participants were aware that effective dissemination of this Seminar would have to have systematic support by State and society, through institutions and the media.

The participants also recommended the organisation of seminars in *other parts* of Serbia and Montenegro, in order to reach the practising teachers who needed most support.

Participants were aware of the need to develop international contacts and obtain information on important questions that could be the focus point of future seminars, namely:

- Teaching materials;
- Curriculum development;
- Textbook writing;
- Teacher training.

There was further discussion on the way ahead, and participants were well aware that, to be able to reflect upon and to prepare future reform, it was most important to promote the involvement and co-operation of the different players in this area, and that in future seminars participants should reflect mainly the players in the field of history education.

Ms Alison Cardwell closed the seminar, after referring once more to the work of the Council of Europe in the area of education and the future possibilities which now exist for cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

**APPENDIX I**

**PROGRAMME OF THE SEMINAR**

**Sunday 4 March 2001**

**Arrival of the participants**

**Monday 5 March 2001**

8.00 – 9.00            Registration

09.00 – 10.00        **Plenary Session**

Chair: Dr Snezana JOKSIMOVIC, Institute for  
Educational Research

Opening of the Seminar by:

- i. Dr Aleksandra PETROVIC, Institute for  
Educational Research
- ii. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Educational Policies  
and European Dimension Division, Council of  
Europe;

10.00 - 10.30        Break

10.30 - 12.00        **Plenary Session on "critical historical consciousness "**

Chair: Dr Aleksandra PETROVIC, Institute for  
Educational Research

- i. Dr Vojislav BOZICKOVIC, Institute for  
Educational Research
- ii. Mr Benny CHRISTENSEN, Denmark

Discussion with all the participants

12.00 – 13.30        Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 **Plenary Session on "active learning methods - everyday life history"**

Chair: Dr Vera SPASENOVIC, Institute for Educational Research

- i. Dr Milan LAZIC, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade
- ii. Ms Luisa de BIVAR BLACK, Portugal

Introduction to the group work: Ms Alison CARDWELL

15.00 - 15.30 Break

15.30 – 16.30 **Three Parallel Working Group Sessions**

- i. Working Group No. 1 on "enquiry-based learning with a variety of sources"

Chair: Ms Slavica MAKSIC, Institute for Educational Research

Rapporteur: Ms Dragica KOLJANIN, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad

Resource person: Mr Benny CHRISTENSEN

- ii. Working Group No. 2 on "active learning methods -everyday life history"

Chair: Ms Slavica SEVKUSIC, Institute for Educational Research

Rapporteur: Mr Kalman KUNTIC, Subotica

Resource person: Ms Luisa de BIVAR BLACK

- iii. Working Group No. 3 on "sources, work with sources, questions and critical thinking"

Chair: Mr Vojislav BOZICKOVIC, Institute for Educational Research

Rapporteur: Ms Zorica NEDELJKOVIC, Belgrade

Resource person: Ms Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD

The Chairs and Rapporteurs will stay the same throughout. But the Resource Persons will circulate and carry out one session with each group.

20.00 Dinner

**Tuesday 6 March 2001**

9.00 - 10.30 **Plenary Session on "sources, work with sources, questions and critical thinking"**

Chair: Ms Branka SAVOVIC, Institute for Educational Research

- i. Ms Biljana STOJANOVIC, Ministry of Education of Serbia
- ii. Ms Joke van der LEEUW-ROORD, EUROCLIO;

Discussion with all the participants

10.30 - 11.00 Break

11.00 - 12.30 **Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions**

12.30 – 14.00 Lunch

14.00 – 15.30 **Continuation of the parallel working groups sessions**

15.30 – 16.00 Break

Visit to the National Museum

19.30 Dinner

**Wednesday 7 March 2001**

09.30 – 11.00      **Continuation and end of the parallel working group sessions**

11.00 – 11.30      Break

11.30 – 13.00      Presentation of the conclusions and recommendations by the rapporteurs of the working groups

Comments by the specialists invited by the Council of Europe on the discussions held in the working groups in which they took part

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

Comments by the participants

**Closing speeches of the Seminar by:**

- i. Ms Alison CARDWELL, Educational Policies and European Dimension Division, Council of Europe;
- ii. Dr Aleksandra PETROVIC, Institute for Educational Research;

13.00              Farewell lunch

## **APPENDIX II**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### **RAPPORTEUR**

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Ms Biljana Stojanovic, Councillor for history, Ministry of Education

Dr Milan Lazic, History department, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Dr Nikola Samardzic, History department, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Ms Zorica Nedeljkovic, History teacher

Ms Vladimir Cvetkovic, History teacher

Ms Ivana Pesic, History teacher

Ms Biljana Lekovic, History teacher

Mr Bogoljub Lazarevic, History teacher



Ms Dragica Koljanin, M.A., History department, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad

Dr Dijana Plut, Researcher, Institute of psychology, Belgrade

Ms Slobodanka Jankovic, Reaearcher, Institute of psychology, Belgrade

Ms Biljana Simunović-Beslin, History Department, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad

Mr Dusan Vujcic, Journal "History teaching" Editor in Cheaf, Novi Sad

Ms Gordana Conkic, Association of historians, Novi Sad

Ms Suada Imamović, Federal Ministry of Ethnic and National Minorities, History Teacher, Muslim community, Novi Pazar

Dr Grozdanka Gojkov, Teachers' college, Vrsac

Mr Kalman Kuntic, History teacher, Croatian community, Subotica

Mr Dujo Runje, Pedagogist, Croatian Academic Association, Croatian community, Subotica

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