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Rebuilding a common future: for a critical approach to history teaching

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General report

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Introduction

History as a critical discipline is not only committed to an ongoing search for new evidence to shed greater light on human behaviour in a specific period or circumstances, it is also a self-critical instrument that periodically takes a fresh look at interpretations it proposed earlier.

History teaching can consist of presenting simultaneously a version of the truth and the tools required for this critical approach.

According to Rémi Brague,[1] there are two sources of civilisation to which Europe has long felt and may still feel indebted and inferior: the Bible and Antiquity, Jerusalem and Athens. Brague believes that tension exists between these two heritages and between this feeling of inferiority and a periodical quest to absorb these two heritages.

Denis de Rougemont wrote that, "the conflicts between contradictory referents drawn from these two heritages are the real driving force behind European civilisation." This being the case, "eurocentrism is – like nationalism – a hazard that Europeans aware of their history should avoid at all costs."[2]

Which people or nation could claim to be the sole originator of all its heritage, creative works and culture? European peoples and nations and the continent as a whole owe much to outside influences.

Europe is also home to a profusion of centres of creativity which have throughout its history helped to assimilate contributions from outside, creating, innovating and promoting the development of all the peoples of Europe, or of certain regions or fields of activity. Interactions with the outside world and within the continent itself have been the hallmark of European development, involving many exchanges and acts of sharing. But what might have built a de facto solidarity based on foundations of interdependence, common values and a quest to promote the common welfare, instead fragmented into individual interests, identities and cultures. Aspirations to power and power relations have been fuelled by these multifarious differences, drawing legitimacy from them and using them as levers with which to raise troops and taxes, stir up crowds and win voters.

The conflicts which have regularly brought bloodshed to Europe have arisen from complex mechanisms specific to each situation which a schematic approach of this type does not fully explain. All the same, history does repeat itself, and a number of projects have been initiated which aim to bring Europeans together and prevent conflicts from growing.

History teaching takes place within this context, in the midst of this field of contradictory forces. The desire, shared to varying degrees, to build lasting peace in Europe, raises a number of issues for history textbooks and teachers. Excessively nationalistic or official outlooks, the fact that certain periods or episodes are passed over in silence, and the debatable role played by certain much-lauded figures have sparked off debate and controversy among historians. Considerable progress has been made, but in most countries much still remains to be done.

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1. Rémi Brague, *Europe, la voie romaine*, Paris, 1993.

2. See François Saint Ouen, *Les grandes figures de la construction européenne*, published by Georg and the Centre Européen de la Culture, Geneva, 1997.

At the end of a century which has witnessed huge scientific progress and terrible destruction and loss of human life, we cannot turn the page without remembering that almost 190 million human beings were killed or deliberately allowed to die – more than ever before in history.

Eric Hobsbawm has used the term "the short twentieth century",[3] which he regards as beginning on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary and as ending in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union. For him, history is a chronicle of the crimes and follies of humanity, especially in the 20th century which he regards as a century marked by war, living and thinking in terms of world war, even when the guns were silent and there were no exploding bombs.

What should we transmit to future generations? The idea that human beings, especially Europeans, can only solve their problems by recourse to arms? The idea that it is impossible to prevent factions from taking power and fomenting hatred of others, of their neighbours, of people who are different? The proposition that history is by definition the history of conflict? Glorification of the acts of heroism, of the tactical skills and of the service rendered to their nations by great warriors makes light of their crude morality and of the summary executions or massive liquidations which they ordered. Mosse notes that the myth of war is indissociable from the cult of the nation.[4]

The consequences – some would say the goal – of the European Union project is to downplay the nation and national sentiment. In this perspective, history becomes less national, and assessment of what happened in the past requires scrutiny from opposing and complementary viewpoints, less one-sided approaches. But history must also prepare the ground for the future. What kind of Europeans do we want to shape and what will be the place and role of history in their journey through life?

For Emmanuel Levinas, an educational relationship involves "saying goodbye to dominance and accepting the emergence and alterity of the other."[5] Alain Finkielkraut believes that "it is imperative to bring to an end the odious business of manufacturing people and instead to see each child as a subject, a complete being who has a right to be heard."[6] Auschwitz marked a definitive break in the history of humanity, which "can no longer appear as the epic of reason, the actualisation of truth, the fulfilment of the mind", and caused this radical change in the educational relationship and in our relationship with history. As a consequence, "teaching after Auschwitz, teaching against Auschwitz, involves permitting, not transmitting; it means forbidding oneself to give someone else what one has and instead making room for someone one is not. Rather than communicating a body of knowledge in words, the aim is to encourage the uttering of words that cannot be dictated in advance."

History teaching, as we see it in the Council of Europe context, is part and parcel of democracy. But such a declaration of principle is not in itself enough and Finkielkraut again puts into words something we too often tend to forget, namely that "in regarding the equality of individuals as the basic condition for living together, democracy was condemning itself to eternal dissatisfaction", because "in democracy ... there is no hidden world; all men are equal, except in reality. Hence the discontent. Hence the impossibility of ending history with the happiness of living in such a system."

Fundamentally at odds with democracy is the kind of nationalism that "ruthlessly divides men into the people from here and the people from elsewhere. An extreme right-wing nationalism capitalising on fear and adept at pinning on to 'intruders' the blame for unemployment or inner city decay. But also state nationalism. The more socially minded a state is, the more inclined it is, especially in a period of economic warfare, to make sure that its members are the exclusive

3. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The short twentieth century*, Abacus, London, 1995.
4. George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars*, 1990.
5. Emmanuel Levinas, *Entre nous. Essai sur le penser-à-l'autre*, Grasset, 1991.
6. Alain Finkielkraut, *Une voix qui vient de l'autre rive*, Gallimard 2000.

beneficiaries of its social security and welfare policies."[7] Nationalism is inimical not only to democracy and but also to any form of living together that is not restricted to the citizens of a specific society or nation. It is inimical to the very idea of humanity in which democracy is increasingly rooted. As Finkielkraut puts it, "in modern democracies, if the founding texts are to be believed, people are citizens because they are people and not, as in the ancient world, because they are members of a caste or a nation. Membership of the human race is the touchstone of citizenship ... Although the people are the source of the law, this does not mean that they have *carte blanche* to provide themselves with any laws it wishes. For the first time in history, humankind is keeping a watchful eye on citizens and their rulers. Humanity is no longer merely *the species* to which people belong, it has become *the authority* before which they must be able to justify themselves and answer for their actions." Meirieu and Guiraud have expressed the same idea in different terms: "When equality of conditions is the ground rule for living together, power emanates not only from the people-nation but also, simultaneously, from humanity. Power is exercised both in the name of the people-nation and, simultaneously, in the name of humanity."[8]

Any attempt to build or rebuild arrangements for living together is bound to involve a number of questions and clarifications. We have alluded to some of them in this introduction. Several authors have worked on these issues. They have helped to refocus the debate in the light of change in our societies. This debate should draw on the personal experience of participants from countries which have recently lived through serious conflicts and on the experience of teachers from other countries with a strong commitment to European projects or to an overhaul of history teaching; it should also receive contributions from intellectuals from other disciplines which are relevant to history and historians.

History, as it is officially written or taught, tends to overvalue events, persons, symbols and other representations belonging to the national community. Without necessarily denigrating others, conscientious historians whose work has to be approved by various authorities often produce "good history" that in many cases sweeps under the carpet extremely dubious topics. Is historical correctness not used to back up, legitimise and sustain political correctness?

Is it reasonable today to want to help people live together without recourse to guns and bombs, and if so how can this be done? Under the auspices of humanity, citizens and political leaders are now faced with an equation which has taken some time to become accepted. It has been formulated with great clarity by Charles Taylor: "Now underlying the demand [for recognition] is a principle of universal equality. The politics of difference is full of denunciations of discrimination and refusals of second-class citizenship. This gives the principle of equality a point of entry within the politics of dignity. But once inside, as it were, its demands are hard to assimilate to that politics. For it asks that we give acknowledgement and status to something that is not universally shared. Or otherwise put, we give due acknowledgement only to what is universally present – everyone has an identity – through recognizing what is peculiar to each. The universal demand powers an acknowledgement of specificity."[9]

One might say that this is a *sine qua non* for shaping arrangements for living together. The desire to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict is not new. Throughout history, isolated voices have been raised to express this desire and to propose various solutions. The League of Nations was the first collective enterprise on the part of states in favour of the idea of multilateral dialogue and the development of co-operation and regulation mechanisms intended to find solutions to problems before they degenerated into war. Figures such as Coudenhove-Kalergi, Aristide Briand and Louise Weiss drew up proposals to enable nations and peoples to find ways of living together.

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7. Alain Finkielkraut, op. cit.
8. Philippe Meirieu, Marc Guiraud, *L'Ecole ou La Guerre civile*, Plon, 1997.
9. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "the politics of recognition*", Princeton University Press, 1992.

We know that the League of Nations was a failure, and so to an even worse degree was the agreement signed in a spirit of misunderstood and ill-conceived pacifism between Russia, Great Britain, France and Hitler. We also know that it is dangerous to try to provide explanations based exclusively on the categories of peoples and nations. As Jaspers wrote, "when making judgments, the category 'people' is always unfair; it presupposes a false substantialisation and the result is to deprive the individual human being of his dignity."[10] Finkielkraut adds: "To define a person in terms of his/her affiliation is the beginning of stigmatisation, it is the first step towards all kinds of racism."[11]

The report presents the themes examined during the Sarajevo symposium and selected contributions.

10. Karl Jaspers, *La Culpabilité allemande*, Les Editions de Minuit, 1990, quoted by Alain Finkielkraut.
11. Alain Finkielkraut, *Une voix vient de l'autre rive*, Gallimard, 2000.

Theme 1: History and memory

The citizens of a democratic state have little scope for preventing antagonism towards another state, for example, from escalating into armed conflict. Those who speak out are usually intellectuals, scientists, university teachers or artists. They have little muscle compared with the propaganda machinery of governments or political parties. This type of propaganda often seems to fall on ground that has already been prepared. This raises the question of how to train citizens, and of the development of their critical faculties and mental independence. Are we training free and responsible individuals?

The past is never far below the surface. But it is not widely used to promote mutual understanding, self-criticism and the burial of old antagonisms, or to define ground rules for peaceful coexistence and real co-operation based on respect for others, the law, mutual trust, open government and democratic control. In some respects, European integration sets an example in this sense. In the past and still even today, historians who criticise the activities, decisions, follies and leadership of earlier periods have been given a frosty reception. Mistakes should always be laid at other people's door.

History and memory are not at odds. Our memories of those who went before us, of the difficulties they encountered, the mistakes they made, and the achievements they have bequeathed to us, should be kept in good repair. The role of history is to collect evidence and help us to understand and interpret the past. There is always room for reinterpretation, as Professors Jean-Yves Potel and Mustafa Filipovic remind us.

Political manipulation and the memory of historians

by Jean-Yves Potel
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The relations between history and memory are a matter of life and death. The specific situation in central and eastern Europe illustrates this with a number of pertinent events and factors.

After 1989, the stakes were raised in the debate on memory. Attitudes hardened, controversies arose and conflicts emerged over symbolic issues such as a street name or a flag, as in the case of relations between Greece and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". A new context was created as distinct local characteristics emerged. This was only to be expected after the collapse of communist rule. The same process has also occurred elsewhere in the world under different circumstances.

The usual explanation given is that ancestral hatreds re-emerged when the "thaw" set in. This interpretation is wrong. Not everything was suppressed under the communist system – there were internal quarrels. The authorities attempted to impose an official history but competing and complementary histories emerged which tended to form a counter-history.

The quest for identity is also a process worth investigating. The collective aims pursued before and after 1989 were sufficiently discordant for the people of these countries to be disorientated. This prompted them to look for their collective identities in the past and in memories and myths. In Czechoslovakia, for example, immediately after the collapse of communist rule, there was an extremely vigorous, sometimes violent, quest for identity.

This harking back to the past took on specific forms which mirrored the relations between history and memory under communism. The contrast between official history and other historical interpretations already existed under communist rule and re-emerged after its collapse. We should remember that historians were not just there to sing the regime's praises and justify the revolution and the people's democracy by reappropriating national history and mythology. One example is the former German Democratic Republic where huge efforts were put into celebrating Luther's birthday and the communist authorities fully exploited national history.

Pitted against this, there were research groups and historians such as Nestricht in the Soviet Union who attempted right from the outset to carry out genuine historical research and were often banished for their pains. Nonetheless, they were able to carve out a niche and preserve the tradition of historical research in countries such as Poland, Hungary and Russia. They also succeeded in establishing a niche among the main trends in international historical thought.

It should also be pointed out that collective memories played an ambiguous role under communist regimes. Whole sets of features which made up the identity of some of these countries were wiped out as a result of the repression of certain ethnic, religious and cultural groups. Members of these groups were forced to change their names and prohibited from speaking or learning their language or practising their religion. Others, such as Jews and Roma/Gypsies, saw their history manipulated or were physically wiped out. For example some 30 000 Jews were executed in the Polari valley near Vilnius and all that is left now is a monument engraved with the words: "Antifascists died on this spot".

There was a reaction from the counter-memories of individuals, groups and authorities. The Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Muslim churches promoted efforts to pass on differing memories which were aimed at protecting identities. They even invested these memories with an almost sacred quality. In a text published in 1988-89, Adam Michnik talked of "blanks" when referring to a dozen or so events in Polish history which nobody wants to talk about but are affected by these relations between history and counter-history.

Another ambiguity that has to be addressed relates to the nature of the regimes in place between the two world wars, which were officially branded as fascist because some of them formed alliances with the nazis. However, this version of events is far too one-sided. For example, Meciar founded independent Slovakia with the emphasis on the Slovakians' struggle against the nazis during the second world war. These memories survived in all these countries at the end of communist rule. They were fragile, sensitive and prone to manipulation.

This brings us on to some of the more specific aspects of the relationship between history and politics.

The role of historians in policy-making. Bronislav Geremek and Carol Matsovieski are two historians who have played a major role in this respect. Their argument was that they could talk as historians specialising in the Middle Ages, but they were not entitled to impose a historical outlook on the present. In contrast, Franjo Tudjman drew on his past as a historian to forge a form of Croatian nationalism, and in 1986 the Academy of Sciences in Belgrade produced a founding text for Serbian nationalism used to justify the subsequent attacks on the other peoples of the former Yugoslavia.

Are memories being relieved of their sacred aura? Much still has to be done. There are some rare examples of progress though – in Poland and Hungary for instance the second world war and the relations between Poland and the Jews are being discussed again. Questions are beginning to be addressed in a spirit of real openness and, though there has been some impassioned debate, there have also been efforts to ensure that all sides of the argument are presented.

Manipulation of memories: Policy-makers can easily manipulate memories to make their policies appear legitimate. They try to pander to these memories to capitalise on a reserve of trust. They can take a number of different lines:

- portraying the people as victims. Every nation has experienced trauma. Does this warrant a systematic feeling of victimisation by an ever-present oppressor? Of course it is necessary to assume responsibility and claim compensation but people seem prepared to do anything in the name of this demand for reparation. Even the relations between France and Germany are affected by this;

- stereotypes. Stereotypes are impalpable, flexible and easily disseminated. They usually end up by replacing clear thinking. Lots of people take part in the process without really believing the hidden agenda. But as the stereotypes spread, they come to believe it. Propaganda makes extensive use of stereotypes. Images are an age-old means of manipulation which help to fix memories in people's minds and the power of these images has increased over time.

In the final analysis our most important task is to understand how memories are manipulated and how they conflict with one another. These memories travel around very quickly. We constantly come up against communities which have a different memory of things or hold on to a memory associated with a world which has vanished. For example a recent film showed a Polish Jewish community living in New York which had maintained contact with their home village despite the fact that there was not a single Jew living there anymore. This is an example of a clash between two memories.

If I were asked define the role of the historian as a conveyor of information and an educator, I would address the question from three different angles. In my opinion, a history teacher should bear in mind at least the three following aspects.

The influence of the present on history. History does not finish at the end of the 19th century. What is needed is a historical method. This is particularly important in the light of the resurgence of collective memories and counter-memories. An example is France and one of the major controversies which rages over its history, namely Vichy and its responsibility with regard to the Jews. This whole question has resulted in crucial debates and realisations.

Getting away from the false antithesis between history and memory. Both feed on one another and so they should not be pitted against one another. Instead a clear distinction should be made and all confusion between the two should be avoided. We really must stop seeing things in terms of absolutes and avoid excessively vague definitions.

Safeguarding pluralism and accountability. There is no such thing as a sacred person or event. There are no taboos or absolute truths in historical interpretation. The implication of this is that a pluralist approach has to be guaranteed. It may even be appropriate to encourage people to take a proactive approach to history which would serve as a means of reaching out to others.

J. LeGoff's key definition

The self: The discontinuity of life is offset by the continuity of history, and, even though history has gone through all manner of accelerations and turning points, it is part of this continuity. The distinct nature of our identities and our affiliations forms part of the universal whole which links us together more than it separates us. These two elementary factors are what we all have in common.

History and the community

By Mustafa Filipovic
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I should like to make a preliminary remark. In our country it is hard to come to terms with history, especially recent history, since it is impossible to provide all the explanations and be in possession of all the facts.

When tackling the theme of critical history with a view to learning to live together, we first have to understand the aim of history. How should history be interpreted so that it helps to bring together individuals and communities? In a nutshell, history helps to shape individuals.

European thought has limitations in its understanding of coexistence between its various peoples. We know of periods and regions in which coexistence has existed, for example Jews living in the Netherlands and tolerance of Muslims which enabled relations to develop between different identities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, little tolerance of this type is discernible. Bosnia and Herzegovina is an exceptional case. In this context the historians' job is to provide knowledge, whatever the cultural origins of the community, and stepping stones to help people live together.

To do this we must look back at some neglected aspects of European history. We live in a transitional period in which, despite everything, various factors bring individuals together. Let's not forget that Bosnia and Herzegovina was isolated and was thus able to preserve ancient values. The crux of the problem is how to interpret history and measure its impact on populations from different backgrounds who live together. Historical interpretations can distance people from one another.

In the wider context, several factors coexist today: a universal, human identity; a distinctive identity which sustains our differences and universal values (originating with the 18th-century philosophers) which help us to live together peacefully.

This being so, what does "living together" mean? Human beings can only live in a community, a community with its own distinctive features and objectives.

Individuals have first-hand experience of opposition and difference. They can be helped to make more sense of what happens, especially via a critical approach to history. We can help them to work out a common approach without focusing excessively on differences. We can help them to understand what unites them, what creates a universal community. But does this not take us too far away from the real world?

The purpose of history is to carry out research into ways of life at different periods, to point up the complex, changing nature of the world, to bear in mind that life and forms of self-expression are not absolute truths.

How does homogeneity interact with difference? We share a common history, not parallel histories. In our region recorded history began in Roman times. There have been many interactions between the different peoples of the region. We share common objectives, despite differences in the lives we live.

Our understanding of history shapes us and our understanding of ourselves shapes history. Interpreting history involves understanding our local and national limits and encourages us to ask where we stand in universal terms. This should cause us to resist any temptation to self-absorption. History, on the contrary, enables the nation to fulfil itself by reaching into the past. A subjective approach to history destroys its relevance. If a people focuses too much on the atrocities it has suffered, genocide may result. Nationalism must be avoided and everything possible should be done to bring peoples closer together.

Theme 2: History teaching, conflict and virtue

There seems to be a paradox in Europe today. Our history textbooks refer to conflicts which have brought turmoil and bloodshed to Europe. Wars of all kinds and sizes form a substantial part of the history taught to the pupils in our schools.

And yet, at the same time, the European project as embodied in the objectives of the leading European organisations aims to create conditions for a lasting peace, that is a widely shared paradigm of living together. In most of our countries, history teaching helps pupils to understand how things work, learn about different ways of living, and find out about the reasons for such a wide diversity of interests, ways of doing things, expressing oneself and identifying with a culture and a community. But does it not also legitimise the idea that conflicts between nations are inevitable and that the logic of power relations, escalating threats of armed conflict and the ultimate use of force is a price that has to be paid to preserve the honour and interests of the nation? It is true that appeals to national symbolism have been less prevalent since the end of the second world war, but in some countries school textbooks have lagged far behind changing attitudes in Europe.

It was worthwhile to put these questions before the teachers who took part in the symposium and met in workshops. The workshops followed similar approaches, highlighting a number of points arising from active learning methods or the ideas of Jean Piaget, that is putting children in situations with a variety of stimuli, encouraging them to interact with their peers and to develop as far as possible their own tools of learning, gradually achieving autonomy and developing a critical mind. All this derives from a more relativist approach to history based on comparison of different viewpoints about a specific event or figure and on a variety of sources of information that do not necessarily tally. We have summarised the output of the four workshops as follows.

The role of the teacher remains limited. Political factors and teaching conditions (curricula and textbooks) influence teachers' capacity to contribute to an environment for living together. Teachers should be freed from the influence of the authorities.

Pupils should be encouraged to hold discussions and to carry out research and form their own opinions more independently. They should be trained to use different sources of information, including the Internet. Teachers should also be able to create an area of freedom in the classroom for developing communication, listening and discussion skills, presenting different approaches, and perhaps even teaching the history of history. The classroom should become a place of freedom and openness.

The historical approach means presenting the major interpretations of an event or issue, leaving the door open for the expression of other viewpoints. A history of peace should present controversial options and a range of different opinions. History is not monolithic. The same event can be interpreted and described in different ways. Different approaches should be presented in order to encourage pupils to develop a relativist outlook on historical truth and to train their critical faculties. Not all arguments are equally valid, and pupils must learn to discriminate between them. A critical approach to documents and an introduction to historiography will also be needed.

Another way of helping people to learn to live together is to look more closely at the common heritage, at the cultural and socio-economic history of Europe. Work on transversal subjects like social history or art history will open the way to the broader perspectives and intercultural issues which are indispensable for developing the skills of living together.

Approaches to history teaching of this kind necessitate special training for teachers and regular refresher courses. Appropriate teaching materials and new educational strategies will also be required.

Finally, advanced training seminars should be organised and states encouraged to set up relevant archives for researchers and pupils, thereby helping to increase familiarity with the experience of living together in multicultural countries."

Is there virtue in conflict?

Common sense would suggest that the concept of living together implies a degree of harmony between the members of one or more communities. It also implies that this coexistence will not be necessarily or initially peaceful. History has shown us the extent to which living together or failing to do so can be conflictual. One question that arises is how society holds together when a potential for conflict is always present. It is impossible to ignore the conflictual dimension in human relations, societies and power relations. What does conflict teach us, can there be virtue in it?

Mark Hunyadi suggests defining conflict as being always a conflict about rules. He believes that the advantage of this approach is that it does not reduce conflict to a simple interplay of forces. His approach tends to diverge from an a priori explanation, a fixed framework within which conflicts derive meaning, for example a moral struggle for recognition and a competitive pursuit of interests. Mr Hunyadi contrasts this approach which confines conflicts within a preordained framework with another viewpoint whereby it is always the conflict itself – its protagonists and its object – which says what it is. According to Mr Hunyadi, whatever the object of the conflict and the context within which it occurs, the dispute or discussion always focuses on rules. In this sense, conflict serves to reveal different rules governing human practices, whose validity is called into question by the conflict.

Mr Hunyadi's thesis is interesting because it does not see conflict only in terms of warfare. As he puts it, "any dispute, disagreement, dissension, divergence of views, or clash of convictions, beliefs or perceptions is a form of conflict; war is simply the most extreme form of this." Furthermore, "such medium-level conflicts are less about replacing by brute force a rule whose prescriptive force is challenged, and more about replacing one prescription by another, that is bringing in new rules which will have arisen out of the conflict. This is what I mean by *the virtue of conflict."* This approach brings into sharper focus the issues involved in living together, which is seen in terms of a set of rules that periodically have to be renegotiated, of medium-level conflicts that have to be contained and at the same time allowed self-expression, of areas of co-operation where recognition is not denied and where particular interests can ask for a hearing rather than imposing themselves by force. This view of conflict is in contradistinction to political and economic movements that seek to divest individuals of a sense of responsibility, to reduce them to the status of token citizens and to set directly over them a self-regulated system, without norms, discussion or any possibility of choice. Mr Hunyadi recalls in this connection that in addition to its capacity to reveal the prescriptive force of disputed rules, conflict has the politically more decisive virtue of recalling that established rules belong to those who use them. A demonstration that could be really useful in history lessons!

The virtue of conflict

by Mark Hunyadi
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The notion of conflict has played a decisive role in the shaping of modern social philosophy, which is no surprise considering that the latter emerged at the same time as Machiavelli's theory that individuals and communities did not necessarily form part of, and hence were not constrained by, a teleological system which predetermined their existence prescriptively, but instead had to fight for their very existence. This is the picture, totally at odds with the Aristotelian model which had prevailed up to that time, that Machiavelli gave of the politician, namely a person wishing to protect himself and his community, preoccupied with his own interests and establishing contacts with his equally egocentric counterparts for the sole purpose of preserving or increasing his own power. In Machiavelli's work this social ontology of rivalry on the part of everyone towards everyone else is presented against a background of disenchantment with all normative teleology. This is illustrated, more clearly than in his political writings, by some of his poems and literary works, such as "Ambition".

In the disillusioned world of this poem in which the fate of human beings was no longer governed by any rule or law which could be seen or read in the great book of nature, the main question was no longer how to do things in order to do them well, or in other words in order to act in accordance with the natural order of things, but how to act to ensure and assert one's own existence and, in particular, how to take advantage of the inevitable conflicts which necessarily rage between human beings, and so reinforce one's own power. Put another way, the issue of moral conformity gave way to a concern with strategic effectiveness. With the emergence of the model of the self-interested person fighting for his own preservation and having constantly to assert himself in his position of power to ensure his survival, there also arose the vision of an implacable condition of social conflict which made coexistence with others an ongoing process of strategic interaction. Conflict became the core concept of social ontology and, as I have mentioned, it can be quite reasonably claimed that the emergence of this theory of social conflict marked the beginning of modern political thought.

If we adopt the theory of conflict as the main thread in a history of political thought, we can discern the broad outlines of a few main stages which might serve as paradigms.

1. The first stage was Aristotelian teleological thought, in which human beings, who were viewed from the outset as *zôon politikon* or political animals, were deemed incapable of fulfilling their true nature outside the context of the political community. This political community integrated the people from which it was composed by making them share common values and virtues in which they had to be educated, which was the reason why Aristotelian political theory was at the same time a doctrine of education for a good life. (It should be recalled that the final book of Aristotle's *Politics,* Book 8, is entirely devoted to education, which Aristotle saw as the state's first duty, the overriding principle being that, since each state had to ensure its own survival, it had a duty to educate the people according to its own values. This was also the reason why Aristotle was so strongly in favour of state-run education and so vehemently against any private initiative in this area). However that may be, the fact that this prescriptive, standardising role was assigned to education clearly shows that Aristotle's teleological vision was the very opposite of a theory of conflict; rather, all forms of conflict are a priori absorbed into the teleology to which each type of community is destined, and in this context what we call a *conflict* is regarded more as a *moral misdemeanour*.

2. As I said at the beginning, the Machiavellian revolution (1513: *The prince*) broke radically with this teleological view by introducing the model of a political being whose exclusive concern was the fight for survival. This brought to light an all-pervading condition of social conflict which every prince worthy of the name could exploit for his own benefit. As if released from the teleological yoke weighing them down, conflicts were treated in Machiavelli's works as tools which had to be used for the purpose of preserving or increasing political power.

3. Some 140 years later (in *De Cive*, 1642, and *Leviathan*, 1651), Thomas Hobbes took the same anti-Aristotelian anthropological premises and fleshed them out with more detail and descriptive intensity, using them as the quasi-scientific basis for a theory of state sovereignty. In his opinion, the famous "war of all against all" resulted from the general distrust that everyone harboured against everyone else, since everybody knew, from observing themselves, what others were capable of; and it was the fact that everyone had a basically equal level of capability (particularly in the capability to cause harm), producing a general atmosphere of mistrust, which prompted all rational beings to subject themselves to an authority capable of protecting everybody. In Hobbes's theory, conflict was not so much a tool by means of which the Prince could increase his power but a source of motivation prompting everyone to subscribe to a social pact. Whatever their differences regarding the consequences of their theories, it has to be said that Machiavelli and Hobbes shared the idea that social conflict had a causative role, being the corollary of everybody's struggle to ensure his own survival.

4. Liberal thought has, so to speak, put the finishing economic touches to the emergence of modern individuals and the competitive fervour which inhabits them. According to the valuable commentary of Jean-Pierre Dupuy on this subject, everything appears to indicate that "the decline of the religious organisation of the world has heralded a period of potentially unbounded competition between individuals. The result of this is the market-based organisation of the world".[12] If I understand rightly, Dupuy believes that the emergence of the modern individual has paved the way for three major trends within liberal thinking: first, the artificial model of the social contract, which assumes that the social system depends on the will of human beings; second, the liberal *homo economicus* model, in which free-thinking individuals, resorting to their own private decisions and detached from the community, merely expect society to allow them to pursue their own objectives, and; third, the so-called "political economy" model which takes a middle road between the artificial contractual and the liberal individualist model which, from David Hume and Adam Smith to Friedrich von Hayek, postulates that society creates itself through a process involving everyone but intended by no-one. Whatever else can be said about these three approaches, each one raises and answers the same question: how does society hold together? How can a society made up of competing individuals, and hence always potentially in conflict, bring about lasting order? Here again we see the extent to which the notion of conflict, linked to the emergence of the individual, lies at the very heart of the modern social sciences.

5. Recently, the German philosopher Axel Honneth, the last officially serving member of the Frankfurt School, set himself the formidable task of identifying the *moral nucleus* at the heart of any social conflict. He did this in his book (which also happens to be his thesis authorising him to supervise research) entitled *Der Kampf um Anerkennung* (The Struggle for Recognition). Taking a different general line from Hobbes and Machiavelli but also to the liberal, utilitarian model, all currents of thought which ultimately put social conflicts down to the pursuit of individual or collective interests, Honneth carried out the ambitious task of establishing an *alternative* grammar for social conflicts – not a competition-based grammar of conflicting interests and competing powers, but a moral grammar based on the struggle for recognition. The fundamental premise of his theory is that the struggle for recognition is the driving force behind the development of human societies, and therefore that the emergence of conflicts is the result not so much of individuals' diverging interests but of various denials of recognition. Put in simple terms, his argument can be divided into two main stages: the first point is to show that relationships of mutual recognition are

12. Jean-Pierre Dupuy, *Le sacrifice et l'envie* [Sacrifice and envy], Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1992, p. 35.

an essential component of personal identity, in the sense that no-one can be a person without the permanent ties that interlink him or her with other people throughout life. Honneth therefore strongly rejects the atomistic concept of the individual introduced by Machiavelli which dominates modern political thought, opting instead for an intersubjective concept of identity and referring back to a rich yet insufficiently investigated intuition which Hegel had in his earlier years. At the same time, he takes up – and develops more systematically than Hegel himself ever did – Hegel's theory of the three circles of recognition in which personal identity is formed, namely the family (relationships of love in the broad sense), civil society (legal relationships), and the state (relationships of solidarity). [

However much fleshing out and conceptual fine-tuning Honneth brought to the younger Hegel's theory of the three forms of recognition providing the framework for human identity – particularly through the contribution of the social psychology theories of George Herbert Mead, whom Honneth credits with giving a naturalist basis to Hegel's recognition theory –, Honneth never lost sight of the two main tenets of his argument, namely the three circles themselves, for which he provided much empirical evidence, and the theory that the relationships of recognition in which everyone is inevitably caught up are a constituent feature of personal identity. These two theories are the central core of the first part of his argument and are directly linked to the second part, which is constructed as a mirror-image of the first. Once these three bases for the intersubjective constitution of the self have been established, it becomes possible to view the emergence of conflicts as reactions to what may then be considered as denials of recognition in one of the three aforementioned areas, particularly in the second and third. For the struggle for recognition in the sphere of love is, by definition, limited to immediate social ties and, unlike what happens in the spheres of law and solidarity, it cannot be elevated to the rank of conflicts which might be termed social. These denials of recognition are therefore forms of contempt whose moral basis lies precisely in the fact that they break what Axel Honneth calls "the implicit rules of mutual recognition", which are all preconditions for the integrity of personal identity. This is the reason why Axel Honneth's grammar for social conflicts is a moral one. Rather than considering social struggles as battlefields where the means of survival and domination can be won, Honneth sees them as a demand for recognition which relates back to the intersubjective moral conditions for the shaping of the individual ego.

Therefore, in Honneth's opinion, the commonest forms of social conflict, namely economic demands and the resultant material conflicts, can only be correctly interpreted if we relate their meaning to an issue which is connected with recognition. For, as he says, "What is viewed as an intolerable shortage of economic resources is always measured according to the moral expectations that individuals feed by consensus with regard to the organisation of the community". This means that even when material demands are clearly set out and are the actual subject of the struggle, these material needs themselves are not the fundamental cause to which the emergence of the conflict should be linked, for this type of material conflict can in turn only emerge from a "moral expectation comprising normative demands for recognition and respect – particularly whenever the social esteem of a person or a group is so clearly linked to their power over certain property that only by acquiring that property can they gain the recognition due to them". So it is clearly not Honneth's aim to deny the existence of conflicts of interest, but instead to point out that they can only be restored to their true meaning by referring to the system of recognition relationships.

Using the short-lived attempts of the young Hegel as its basis, Honneth's anti-Hobbesian model (which, in the contemporary francophone context, could equally well be called anti-Bourdieusian) therefore illustrates the moral basis of social conflicts by highlighting the process of recognition constantly inherent in them. It is obvious what a profound change this model implies, since it radically alters the very meaning of social co-operation and the coexistence of social forces. Co-operation and coexistence are no longer interpreted in terms of strategic action or balancing interests, but against the background of the normative demands for respect and recognition which everyone can hope to have satisfied in their own social context and which, when frustrated, give rise to conflicts which are now viewed in terms of a struggle for recognition. In this context, conflicts can always be seen as disruptions of social recognition.

None the less, however indisputably sweeping a transformation the recognition model has brought about in the theory of conflict, I would like to draw attention to a common feature which creates a fundamental link between the model of the moral struggle for recognition and that of the competitive pursuit of interests, bridging the real, substantive, differences between them. This common feature is the identical desire on both sides to define in a general way the very nature of social conflict. The Hobbesian model of competition and the Hegelian model of recognition share the same philosophical aim, seeking to provide a kind of ready-made, pre-established grammar of social conflicts, in other words a framework for interpretation making it possible to decipher social struggles in terms of categories chosen on each occasion by themselves. In this sense, the Hobbesian and Hegelian models share the same essentialist view of conflict. The first interprets it in the light of a widespread bellicosity which characterises the coexistence of individuals motivated by personal interests; the second puts conflict down to the quest for intersubjective approval which inevitably traces out the path towards personal identity. But in both cases we are presented at the outset with the fundamental pattern, the fixed framework within which conflicts develop their meaning. As a result, the significance of these conflicts is predetermined on each occasion by the grammar to which the philosopher himself has sovereign access.

To counter this essentialist viewpoint which always predetermines the interpretation of conflicts and encloses them within a set framework, I would like to put forward another viewpoint according to which, on each separate occasion, it is the conflict itself – its protagonists and its aims – which reveals what it is. A simple way of making this alternative view more plausible before moving on to its more general implications would be to produce one example or another of a conflict which cannot easily be categorised as being in the pursuit of a particular interest or seeking recognition – which, given the comprehensive nature of these categories, would already sufficiently indicate the fundamental problem encountered by any essentialist theory of conflict. In point of fact, I think there is no difficulty in producing examples of this type in which the dispute relates neither chiefly to the protection of interests for the purpose of self-preservation or dominance nor primarily to a call for recognition voiced by a scorned protagonist. This applies in those cases, which are after all quite frequent, where conflicts are centred on definition. I am thinking mainly here, are not of disputes such as those between scientists about the ultimate nature of matter or the identification of a new carrier of illnesses like prions, in other words debates over scientific definitions – although these types of conflict do indeed fall into the category I have in mind; above all I am thinking of debates which are given much more public exposure such as those which have taken place, and still continue, on the question of abortion or those other, more specific debates which arise daily in the courts whenever there is a problem of classifying offences. Of course, in a case such as the possible decriminalisation of abortion, the problem can and sometimes must be expressed in terms of a grammar of interests. This will mean taking account of circumstances and weighing up the various interests of those involved, including the mother, the unborn child, the family circle, the community, and so forth.

The problem could also be described in terms of a grammar of recognition, and in this case the focus would be on the question of respect for the integrity of the persons concerned, possibly also including that of the potential human being whose existence is at stake. However, in this instance, these two approaches – which we know to be upheld in practice – fail to address the key issue, namely that of the definition of a person, in other words the criteria that people are prepared to adopt to class an individual as a legal person. If we follow the logical utilitarian line and adopt the criterion of the ability to feel, it is entirely consistent to argue that, before the emergence of the nervous system, around the fourteenth week of pregnancy, there is no moral problem, since the biological individual in question is no more than a mass of cells, incapable of suffering or pleasure; if, on the other hand, we adopt a much stricter biological criterion, as the Catholic Church does, it is logical to prohibit all abortion, irrespective of the stage of development. The question relates to the grammar of the person and hence the definition on which we must agree, and the conflicts that emerge in this connection are conflicts of definition. I do not mean to say by this that the only real conflict on a question such as that of abortion is one of definition, and that once agreement has been reached on this matter the conflict will be nipped in the bud. A conflict of definition does not rule out other types of conflict over the same issue, such as conflicts of interest or recognition.

Through this example I was merely trying to draw attention to the danger of interpreting conflicts from the outset as being exclusively related to interest or recognition. Other types of conflict are possible – and can be just as crucial – and any essentialist approach, however all-embracing its ambition, by its very nature, runs the risk of fundamentally, and hence dogmatically, overlooking this diversity.

The problem with essentialism, therefore, is that it identifies the objective content of conflicts too early, classifying them from the outset either as conflicts of interest or conflicts of recognition, for example. To avoid the simplification which inevitably results from advance identification with a given aim, it is essential to avoid this kind of substantive identification, without however emptying the notion of conflict of all its content, which would make the concept unworkable. It is for this reason that I would like to put forward the hypothesis that the notion of conflict is most appropriately described not as a dispute focusing primarily on one *aim* or another, but relating on each occasion to the *rules* governing that aim, whatever the aim might be. Whether we are talking about the definition of the person, as I have suggested, about demands for inter-subjective recognition or satisfaction of an individual or collective interest, to say nothing of the distribution of territory or conditions governing the acquisition of national citizenship – which are just some of many examples of cases which are potentially if not actually conflictual – it is always *rules* which are argued over or discussed, rules which can of course differ quite markedly in each instance, but which conflicts at least have the merit of highlighting as such. In this respect, conflicts serve to reveal the various rules governing human practices while at the same time raising doubts about their validity.

Defining a conflict as something that always relates to rules both avoids the substantivist essentialism I mentioned above and opens the door to a theory on the introduction of social rules, the main tenets of which I would like to outline here. They can be divided into four areas.

If a conflict always relates to rules, that means that it cannot be reduced to a mere interplay of forces, or a simple battlefield where the strongest ultimately wins. The latter approach would misinterpret the meaning of conflict or, to be more precise, it would assume that its outward signs – which are indeed struggle, divergence, dispute and hostility – represent what it actually is, in other words the reduction of conflict to its manifestation. As I have already pointed out, there has been a major tendency towards this in the social sciences, from Hobbes to Bourdieu.

The theory I advocate thus makes it possible not to settle for the model of an all-pervading struggle for domination: if conflicts are about rules, then they are challenges to the validity of the rules in force, in other words their normative nature. If we look beyond the outward appearance of conflicts, they reveal a dimension which force itself cannot conceal and which can only be overlooked if we give way to hasty analysis and hurried simplification, namely the normative nature of rules, which exists in some ways *despite* force and independently of it. It seems to me that this becomes even more obvious if we do not see conflict exclusively in terms of war. If every form of dispute, disagreement, discord, difference of opinion, clash of convictions, beliefs or world-views is indeed a form of conflict, of which war is only the most exacerbated form, then it may be easier to identify the normative aspects of these less pronounced forms of conflict which acts of brute violence inevitably push into the background. In this type of moderate conflict the aim is not so much to replace the contested norms established by a rule by brute force but rather to replace one set of standards by another, in other words to introduce new rules which the conflict has brought about. This is precisely what I call the *virtue of conflict*.

First, if conflicts are always about rules, then they can only be settled in a normatively satisfactory manner by introducing new rules likely to fulfil the aspirations of those concerned. It is important in this context to talk of *aspirations* rather than, for example, of *interests*, because the broad meaning of the word aspiration in no way prejudges the type of reason that can be invoked to justify a rule, unlike the concept of word interest which, as I demonstrated earlier, places the issue of conflict in a sphere of utilitarian competition. The notion of aspiration is in keeping both with the grammar of interest and with the grammar of recognition because, unlike essentialism, it predetermines neither the nature of a conflict nor, therefore, the motives that triggered it.

However, what this does highlight is the link that can be made between the contested rules and the aspirations of those concerned. For if a conflict is a conflict about rules, it means that it raises a question-mark over the aspirations of all those who are in some way affected by the rule and so wish to defend these aspirations. The people involved make use of the rule, otherwise they would have no reason to begin a conflict over it. And it is precisely because the rules are linked to the aspirations of those concerned that these rules are *flexible*, in other words can be changed. If there were no link between rules and the aspirations of those who make use of them, there would be no more sense in beginning conflicts over them or wanting to change them than there would be in seeking to rebel against the orbits of the planets. So there is a close relationship between rules, the aspirations of the people making use of them, and the flexibility of these rules, without which it would be impossible to settle any conflict in a normatively satisfactory manner, because if rules were inflexible there would simply be no point in wanting to change them.

Second, this link between rules, aspirations and flexibility provides us with valuable information about the concept of a rule itself and about a key distinction which any critical theory on rules must of course thoroughly investigate. This is the distinction between two radically different types of rule, which I shall refer to as rules of regularity on the one hand and instituted rules on the other. This distinction was explained in great detail by Wittgenstein in his letters to Waismann for Moritz Schlick, recently published in French, to which I shall refer here. To put it briefly, rules of regularity are generally natural laws which we observe from the outside and whose validity therefore depends neither on aspirations nor *a fortiori* on consent between those affected; whereas instituted rules are ultimately based on an agreement between those who use them – a fact which conflict sometimes reminds us of in a negative manner, as I have tried to show above.

Regularities, therefore, are observed from the outside and it is possible to verify the "rules" which apply to them (for example when we say "fever is a sign of infection"). Therefore, the regularity that we observe is strictly a theory linking two events, A and B, and is expressed in the form of a rule which, though possessing varying degrees of plausibility, even when extremely plausible, is still only a hypothesis. Wittgenstein then uses the example of the rules of a game to demonstrate the grammatical difference which distinguishes them from regularities; in fact the word "rule" has an entirely different meaning when we use it in the expression "the rules of a game". This other meaning is not one which originates from the position of an observer attempting to describe the regularity which links event A to event B, but one which derives from the position of a participant *who tells us what rule he or she is obeying when asked*. "So the rule of a game is not a hypothesis which will be confirmed by the movements of the player but *the rule that a player questioned on the rules gives in reply*".[13]

This is precisely the sense of a rule as a convention or an institution – not an observed law that is formulated and serves as an explanatory hypothesis, but an instituted rule, which is followed in practice and makes it possible, as in a game, to distinguish correct behaviour from incorrect behaviour. Hence, the two meanings of the word "rule" differ in two respects: firstly, an instituted rule is expressed from the viewpoint of the participant, in other words the person obeying the rule, and not from that of someone who observes a regularity; secondly, an instituted rule is not a *hypothesis* which can be verified but a *grammatical rule* which establishes the dividing line between the correct and incorrect application of the rule. It is for this reason that the use of instituted rules or grammatical rules ultimately requires *agreement* between the people using the rule. Wittgenstein stated this in quite clear terms: "Therefore … the grammar of a language can only be established with the consent of the person speaking it, whereas the path of the stars cannot be established with the consent of the stars".[14]

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13. Unofficial translation of the French version quoted in Mr Hunyadi's original from A. Soulez (dir.), *Dictées de Wittgenstein à Waismann et pour Schlick, 1, textes inédits (années 1930)*, Paris, P.U.F., 1997, p. 54.
14. Op. cit., p. 54.

The aspect of the foregoing that is most specifically relevant to the theory of conflict is the fact that since the rules which are the subject of conflict have to be instituted rules, they are always linked in some way to the people who use them and hence to the aspirations they express. Therefore, all institutions and the entire range of instituted rules can be seen as social constructs, and conflicts viewed as an incentive to social reconstruction.

Third, if we consistently apply this distinction between the definitions of rules, then we are also tracing the outlines of a wide-ranging political programme, and it is on this point that I will conclude. For to postulate that instituted rules are fundamentally linked to the aspirations of the people concerned is to imply that it is for these people to establish their own normative framework, in other words the system of rules governing their coexistence. The normative framework belongs to the social forces themselves. However, at the present time there is a broad-based, underlying political trend seeking to delude people into believing that the rules of society do not belong to the social protagonists that use them. This trend cannot be put down to a party, a political leader or a school of philosophy; rather it is a pervasive *Zeitgeist* which, drawing on the globalisation of the economy, would have us think that *all* the institutions of life in society must inevitably follow the same liberalising trend, that being allegedly in the nature of things. Market-based thinking would thus apply to all areas of public life throughout the world. The currently fashionable argument that this process is inevitable, is in fact a way of obscuring the fundamental difference that separates rules of regularity from instituted rules. It seems to me that, by insisting that there is an inescapable destiny for *all* social rules and that this destiny is modelled exactly on the new sacrosanct rules of the economy, what these people are actually pursuing is the politically suspect goal of *depriving social protagonists of their normative framework.*

For when we are confronted with the implacable force of natural laws, all we can do is quietly endure them; and it seems to me that there is another quite considerable advantage for today's decision-makers in echoing this message that everything is inexorable, namely that it enables them to deny social forces the political possibility of re-appropriating these so-called inescapable rules and changing, bending or, where necessary, abolishing them – in other words, preventing them from taking advantage of the virtue of conflict. Of course none of this can be done with natural laws, because it is not possible to contest natural laws: they simply have to be endured. So, apart from its ability to reveal the normative nature of rules on disputes, as I have attempted to show, conflict has another more politically decisive virtue, which is to draw attention to the fact that instituted rules belong to those who use them.

Theme 3: History and difference

The continuity of history compensates for the discontinuity of life. History is continuous, although it sometimes gathers speed and sometimes abruptly changes direction. The distinctiveness of our identities and affiliations fits into the universal context that links us together more than it separates us. These two essential facts are what we have in common.

Ways of representing others fall within the scope of the historical approach. Monuments, poems, songs, folk art, slogans, literary works, films, photographs and press headlines tend to convey a particular image of others, who are depicted in terms of a value system which commanded particular loyalty at the time when nationalism was triumphant. This type of cultural history has been developed to a notable degree by George Mosse.[15] As Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau notes,[16] it "is less concerned with the history of ideas than with the history of the representations, attitudes and sensibilities of the greatest number." Mosse produced his work with a view to understanding and remembering that a society needs cohesion, and that without it not only dictatorships but also parliamentary regimes cannot function.[17]

The system of representation has been particularly active and has made great strides, according to Mosse, since the first world war, which with its toll of 10 million dead was the first mass war. Mosse wrote that during and above all after the hostilities … it was necessary to remember not the horror but the grandeur of the war. It was essential to transform a particularly painful past into something acceptable, not only to comfort and soothe the population, but even more to justify the nation in whose name men had gone into battle. The war was sanctified by the myth that glorified it, but at the same time there were attempts to regard it in a more commonplace light by associating it with the problems of everyday life, with popular theatre and tourist trips to battlefields.[18]

Mosse uses examples to illustrate his cultural reading of history, demonstrating how people were mentally prepared for war, how an evil, threatening image of the other had to be created, and how people living through a conflict represent it and picture it to themselves.

The role of the media in dealing with difference and conflict

The media write a history of the present. As a rule, this history lacks many of the data, the perspective and the critical analysis that form the basis of the historian's usual approach. Over and above their topicality, world events have roots in the past. More often than not, their importance cannot be precisely assessed without reference to the past. Appreciation of current events calls for perceptiveness, the ability to know where one stands personally and collectively, and wariness of overemotional reactions. If pupils' critical faculties are to be sharpened and they are to be provided with tools with which to perceive the world and handle information as well as learning to think independently, they must be involved in real-life situations and be taught how to decode representation systems so as to make good use of the various information media to which they have access. Alongside history lessons, media education has existed for many years in several countries. Unfortunately it is struggling to achieve wider acceptance. Courses of this type, sometimes known as "information criticism", have several aims: to develop a more active and critical attitude towards the media, to stimulate a taste for research and making comparisons and the capacity to see situations from different viewpoints, and also to develop debating, speaking and advocacy skills.

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15. George Mosse was a professor at the universities of Madison and Jerusalem. His work dealt with European nationalism, the history of Germany and totalitarianism. Notable among his works are *Fallen soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars,* 1990.
16. In the preface to the work cited above.
17. George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and sexuality, respectability and abnormal sexuality in modern Europe,* New York, Howard Fertig, 1985.
18. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the world wars*, op. cit.

An educational approach of this type to the media and contemporary history often covers the same ground as history lessons and may even constitute an important extension of them. Clearly, media reports may present a distorted picture of events and behaviour, as well as bolstering attitudes, encouraging hardline opinions and behaviour, and supporting a rationale leading to the use of force. An increasing number of projects, notably that conducted by the World Association of Newspapers, have been designed to teach pupils to resist simplistic interpretations of media images and texts and to adopt a more circumspect attitude towards them, the aim being to encourage a non-aggressive, more constructive approach to living together in peace. It was important to bring in a number of specialists from teaching and journalism who are active in such programmes so as to introduce a new and extremely pragmatic focus to the question of living together in peace with our differences, our wounds and our memories.

Increasing attention is being paid to methods of resolving conflicts and reconciling enemies. Via experimental work and situation analyses, some specialists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are starting to suggest approaches and methods of grappling with these questions. These approaches have now been incorporated into the field of conflict-related issues. Some of the media have taken a hard look at their role in escalating or de-escalating conflicts and at their coverage of diversity-related questions. Experiments have been carried out in schools, with journalists taking part in information criticism lessons and helping to train pupils how to approach different media.

Images of war or a war of images?

by Dominique Chansel
Certified history and geography teacher in France, and author of Europe-on-screen: the cinema and the teaching of history

When the cinema goes to war: from avowed patriotic propaganda to the insidious dissemination of stereotyped images of war

In past decades, national film industries have often been used to fire a people's collective enthusiasm, or at least to try to rally them round a shared sense of peril or common destiny. To this end, many film-makers have played on popular expectations and representations, manipulating national historical figures and events (often still viewed in the rigid, uncritical terms advocated in primary school) so that they better suit the needs of the film, to exalt the "eternal soul of the homeland" and demonise the current potential enemy through transparent allusions to yesterday's enemies.

Totalitarian regimes are not the only ones to be held responsible for manipulating history in epic, fallacious cinematographic reconstructions. Hollywood and most of the major European film industries have taken part in this great war of images, often in a more subtle and perhaps more effective way.

Today, at a time when this confrontation of portrayals, or this war of images, has been taken over by other, even more powerful media with larger audiences, it is worthwhile questioning the way in which art and the film industry have helped to prepare for and intensify conflicts and also, in certain cases, in a more beneficial manner, to open the way for dialogue, lay the foundations for reconciliation and restore peace.

In this plenary session, given the short time available for a collective study which would require us to watch and analyse film sequences, I propose that we limit our discussion to three aspects of this modelling of the collective imagination by art and the cinema industry.

First, the use of historical films in a context of international tension in order to stimulate strong patriotic feeling and call upon people to fight in the name of a common, glorious or tragic memory. (In contrast, in certain periods, film-makers have tried to convey a pacifist message based on a different interpretation of history.)

Second, the creation and dissemination of portrayals which demonise or caricature the designated adversary, and the way in which these portrayals are adapted as time goes by and attitudes change.

Third the widespread dissemination of stereotypes of war in films that are supposedly made for pure entertainment purposes but, by force of repetition, foster numerous, inaccurate images which can serve as an anchor point for tenacious prejudices or dangerous fascinations bathed in the aura of prestige of spectacular productions, and which the education system has great difficulty in combating.

This is why I should like to stress once again that the work presented here is directly modelled on practical exercises conducted in the classroom (in French upper secondary schools) and that, wherever possible, it fits into a wider, generally multidisciplinary activity of interpreting, analysing and deciphering cinematographic or televisual images.

Without dwelling here on the importance of educating members of the public in interpreting images, which, as we all know, exert a power of fascination over us and our pupils, I shall simply emphasise that teachers are perfectly free to use fiction films as long as they do not use them merely for illustrative purposes and they adapt the methods of critical investigation (more or less complex depending on the pupils' level) applied to every other document studied in history lessons to this medium.

The aim is indeed to reinstate film extracts as genuine historical documents, which provide information not only on the accuracy of the events portrayed, but on the national and social imagination that has gradually crystallised around this or that figure or event.

The aim is also to initiate pupils to the pleasure of deciphering images by teaching them how to analyse the processes whereby specific emotions are stimulated, the sometimes multiple and contradictory networks of meaning that are established by the aesthetics and narration of the film, and the ideological objectives of the work.

1. The use of historical films in times of crisis to stimulate patriotic feeling or, in certain cases, convey a pacifist message[19]

Great national heroes and patriotic epics of the past are reinterpreted to suit the imperatives of the hour. The use of history as a tool for currying "patriotism" can be illustrated by three well-known examples of the clash of propaganda during the second world war.

- How the Soviets rediscovered the defence of Holy Mother Russia against the German threat may be seen in the film *Alexander Nevsky* (Eisenstein, 1938). Three scenes in particular highlight this – the epilogue, the opening scene and that of the return of the victorious prince.

- How the British used their great commanders of the past to appeal to everyone to do his duty, at the cost of a number of contradictions, may be found in *That Hamilton woman* (also known as *Lady Hamilton,* Alexander Korda, 1941) in the scene showing Nelson at Trafalgar and the scene where Lady Hamilton tries to hold back her hero to stay with her.

- How the nazis glorified the mass rising against the invading Napoleonic army. – *Kohlberg* (Veit Harlan, 1944). This is illustrated in two scenes in particular, that of the devastation of military siege and that of the call for resistance to the bitter end, a mass uprising against the enemy – all out war.

Ancient history does not escape being harnessed for national needs: the glory and power of the Roman Empire can also be called up to sound the march on the road to war or, on the contrary, pave the way for peace.

2. The creation and dissemination of portrayals of the enemy as the devil incarnate or as caricatures, and the adaptation of these portrayals as time goes by and attitudes change

The choice in this field is obviously enormous: there is vast "anthology" of portrayals steeped in hatred or scorn from European and American films.

19. The film scenes described in what follows were shown and commented at the symposium.

One example of this is the hateful character or “bad guy” found in:

- *The Manchurian candidate* (John Frankenheimer, 1962) – the KGB agent as a cruel and demonic Asian. Over the top!

- *Topaz* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1967) with the Soviets and the Cubans as the “bad guys” (there is a very interesting interplay of the misused newsreel images, thus anchoring the film in reality;

- *From Russia with love* (Terence, 1963) – caricatures of spies from the East: Slav charm and red-tape nightmares;

- *The dear hunter* (Michael Cimino, USA, 1976) – the portrayal of sadistic Vietnamese torturers.

Metamorphosis of the German soldier

In what way do the different portrayals of the German soldier coincide with major changes in French public opinion of a “hereditary” enemy who has become a friendly partner in European integration? The following may be found in French cinema during the 1930s:

- the pacifist trend; respect for the enemy before you – *The wooden crosses* (Raymond Bernard, 1933) and *Grand illusion* (Jean Renoir, 1937):

- the triumph of the nazis changed the international climate very quickly. In Germany, films with pacifist leanings disappeared and were replaced by films which glorified war. Examples of this are *Red dawn* (*Morgenrot*, Gustav Ucicky, 1933), a film praising the courage of submarine crews and *Shock Troop* (Hans Zoberlein, 1943) a film pleading military values unconditionally and justifying war with nationalistic arguments.

In France, awareness of this caused some to stir up old Franco-German conflicts. The purpose was clearly to rekindle past fear of a hereditary enemy rather than to denounce a totalitarian regime. It is no secret that this type of confusion weighs heavily on French mentality.

Marthe Richard (Raymond Bernard, 1937). The director used the backdrop of the Great War for his film. In the opening scene, he resuscitates anti-German stereotypes. An officer, played by Eric von Stroheim, complete with monocle, cigarette holder and Prussian arrogance, has Marthe’s elderly parents executed as snipers. The same director made *Les Otages* (The hostages) in 1938, a title which speaks for itself.

3. The widespread dissemination of stereotypes of war and uncritical portrayals in films

Many adventure films with a vague historical backcloth insidiously and repeatedly portray stereotyped situations and can encourage dangerous, aggressive, chauvinist and racist attitudes.

Teenagers, certainly in the west, are often slaves to mainstream portrayals: those of their national film industry and, increasingly, those spawned irresistibly by Hollywood productions. It is becoming urgent, though still very difficult, to give them an alternative point of view, an essential reverse shot from a different style of cinema.

The new role of media

Aralynn Abare McMane
Educational programmes for the World Association of Newspapers

Our goal in this session will not be to discuss how historians view media, though that is a subject close to my own heart, a key element of my Ph.D. work and university teaching and a topic we could validly discuss for hours. Our assigned mission here is to look at a relatively new role of media in this area.

Specifically, we will look at how teachers in old and new democracies are using newspapers with their students to better understand the diversity of their cultures and the insidious components of conflict.

I direct educational programmes at the World Association of Newspapers, which represents 18 000 newspapers in 93 countries. Part of my job entails working directly with newspapers in new democracies and co-ordinating a worldwide effort to help build basic education and democracy through the use of newspapers in classrooms.

We all know that once a conflict erupts and a country is at war, a classic and very specific media role takes priority: mobilising us, whoever we are, against them, whoever they are. A key element of that role is what one scholar called “major polarising medialogems” – more simply put, the adjectives and metaphors intended to unify opinion by demonising the enemy. In his analysis of what he called the “Kosovo news and propaganda war”, Peter Goss and his colleagues listed several such phrases, and I would like to share a few of them with you now.

To pro-Nato media, the war was inspired by humanitarian motives and saving the Albanian population in Kosovo, while in pro-Yugoslavia media, the war was a barbarian effort with the aim of imposing American ambitions for a new world order on the Balkans, world domination and hegemony. Nato portrayed a world society that was almost unanimously backing its actions, while Yugoslavia portrayed world society as sharply condemning the Allies’ actions.

Nato considered itself as a peacekeeping and peace-sustaining force and Yugoslavia as a totalitarian regime, a dictatorship and a bastion of communism in Europe, undertaking brutal ethnic cleansing. Yugoslavia described itself as a sovereign and independent state, victim of the aggression of the United States of America and its obedient allies, with Nato as villains, aggressors and barbarians. For Nato, Milošović was Hitler, a psychopath, an unscrupulous ruler and double-dealer, a financial oligarch and scoundrel and a war criminal, who has to be convicted.

For Yugoslavia, Clinton was a sexually perverted Hitler, inferior with complexes, a victim of his own emotional stress and compensating for his lost authority with waging a war.

When teaching media history, I found that the manipulation inherent in these time-honoured techniques became clearer when students looked back. I would even guess that, as you heard these statements, your own minds transferred the ideas to other times and other places. I am absolutely persuaded that knowing what went on *then* helps arm young citizens to thinking more critically about the information they receive *now* and what they will receive in the future. With an understanding of the workings of the “us-them” dichotomy, they become a bit better protected against repeating it – or better able to recognise it. And newspapers provide a useful tool for that lesson through programmes called “Newspapers in education”, which build teaching partnership with schools.

One of the deficiencies we have seen in democracies around the world is the lack of quality materials to help teachers instruct pupils about the theory and practice of the new civic societies that confront them, or indeed, in some case, a lack of educational documentation for even traditional, basic learning.

Thirty years of experience in democracies all over the world has shown us that newspapers can be extremely effective tools for enabling young people to develop a range of democratic values and to enable them to become well-informed and responsible citizens.

These programmes exist in at least 40 countries and aim to teach:

- an appreciation of the value of democracy in people's lives;
- an understanding of political processes and the role that a free press plays in maintaining democracy;
- an understanding of rights and responsibilities;
- improved reading skills;
- an ability to interpret media messages critically;
- an ability to deal with negative emotions and resolve conflict;
- tolerance of the views of others and sensitivity to bias.

Let me just give you some examples of exercises that some people around the world have developed along these lines. My first example is from Korea, where the newspaper *JoonAng Ilbo* created exercises focusing on the Kosovo war with teachers after students started saying: "You adults always preach to us not to fight each other. I don't see that you solve any conflict peacefully!"

This exercise is useful to us here, I think, because it comes from a place both physically and politically distant from the event. The techniques can be transferred to treat news from other wars by substituting a historical distance.

First, teams of students were asked to debate on whether human nature is fundamentally peace-loving or addicted to conflict and war. They circled headlines representing aggressive, war-like behaviour in red, and peace-like behaviour in green. Next they identified commonalties and differences for each situation. They wrote do's and don'ts about peace. They even created anti-war posters!

They read stories about the Kosovo conflict and then set up two negotiation teams to try to resolve the war, to do their best to arrive at a satisfactory agreement. Then they were asked what they had learned from the negotiation process. They looked at photos and articles of people in refugee camps and explored what they might feel if they or their families were refugees.

Students also played the roles of the people they saw in the news – pilots, doctors, reporters, refugees – trying to feel and think as that person. It was not all about war. Teachers also asked students to identify a person or organisation which deserved a peace prize, and provide reasons for their recommendation. Part of the reason Koreans could be so reasonable was because they were not dealing with their own "us" or "them". In dealing with Kosovo, they had the advantage of political and physical distance from the events. One hopes, though, that the effect will linger.

How does the notion of historical distance work? One very simple exercise is to have students create newspaper front pages based on a particular period or event in history. There can be ads, pictures, reporting and commentary. Our website has links to sites in four languages (English, French, German, Spanish) that can help you learn about other kinds of such exercises, and about the components of newspapers. (See www.wan-press.org/nie)

A variation of this exercise looks at history and the future by asking students to create a page from 30 years ago, and a page 30 years hence. The recentness of history encourages them to consult their parents and grandparents about the realities of everyday life three decades past. (See www.nytimes.com/learning)

The *New York Times* put extensive resources into an Internet-based project that includes a focus on using contemporary newspaper articles as a starting point to look at important issues in global history. Let me give you just three examples.

One lesson plan examined first-person accounts from Bosnia and Herzegovina to analyse how past wars affect present lives. The plan provided links to historical background about Bosnia and an exercise based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Another "daily lesson plan" examined perspectives on Israel's new "safe passage" route by having students look at Israeli and Palestinian newspapers. How did students get access to Israeli and Palestinian newspapers: through on-line editions of the *Jerusalem Post*, the *Ha'aretz*, and the *Palestine Times*. The lesson plan also gave websites addresses for finding relevant historical articles from the newspaper's archives.

Still another lesson plan used a story about the decision to intertwine both the positive and negative histories of Weimar, Germany, in celebrating its selection as Europe's cultural capital for 1999. The lesson was called "Remembering to never forget".

Even more importantly, educators in several countries are also using newspapers to try to help prevent conflict by giving children the opportunity to look a past historic stereotypes.

The input of the daily press in teaching recent history at primary level

by Olivier Hinderberger
Head of teacher training at the
Département d'Instruction Public in Geneva

Thanks to a partnership between the local press publishers' union and the cantonal education authorities, a pilot project was launched in Geneva in 1972, enabling teachers who so wished to have a number of daily newspapers delivered to their classrooms every morning. Over the years this very interesting initiative has made it possible to develop a more dynamic approach to history teaching.

At first glance it appears difficult to broach the subject of the major conflicts of the 20th century with 11- and 12 year-olds, who still find it difficult to grasp more general concepts of time and space. And yet they are confronted with history on a daily basis in the media: the press, radio, television and, recently, the Internet.

Today, teaching history in primary schools can no longer be a mere matter of simplifying the academic discipline. Primary schools do not set out to train historians but to prepare their pupils to consider human lifestyles at different periods and draw comparisons with current ways of life, without jumping to hasty, sweeping conclusions. Presented in this way, history is part and parcel of a more general educational approach aimed at raising children's awareness of their own temporality through their individual history and that of the community and helping them to forge an identity while developing values such as tolerance, respect for others, solidarity and group spirit. It must also be a means of instilling knowledge conducive to education for citizenship, helping to develop individuals capable of discernment through gradual mastery of the tools specific to that discipline. While at primary school pupils acquaint themselves with chronology, are taught to use maps and commit a number of key dates to memory. In the press they read and study documents and reports on subjects of relevance to their everyday life. Through this initial approach to history learning they gradually come to understand their place in the development of human society.

At the beginning of the 21st century the scope of history is considerably broader than before. Everything has become a history subject; nothing that has a bearing on humankind is irrelevant to history. Whereas traditional history was more concerned with politics and outstanding events, the modern discipline pays greater attention to daily life, economic and social systems, spiritual, religious and intellectual concerns and aspirations and mental attitudes, to the point that it is now possible to talk of "history in the plural".

In Geneva, where 47% of pupils come from a variety of cultural backgrounds, history can be taught only by constantly bearing in mind the often conflicting views expressed by pupils' parents, which are propagated by the children themselves. It is therefore important to develop a climate of tolerance and openness in the classroom, enabling pupils to live together with their differences and avoiding replicating the disputes of the outside world inside school. For instance, studying the historical aspects of emigration and immigration in Switzerland is a means of overcoming the fear of foreigners often mentioned in the daily press. Similarly, the problem of child labour in Third World countries is easier to understand in the light of examples drawn from 19th-century Europe, although the circumstances are sometimes different.

For teachers the press is a tool in the same way as a history textbook, a video-cassette or tape recordings of interviews with people bearing witness to a bygone era – a tool which, over a period of time, can be used to enrich the pedagogic approach to a historical event.

Reading press articles helps a child to form an opinion by comparing information from a number of sources. The diversity of the newspapers' editorial approaches enables children to gain a better grasp of the variety of opinions on a given subject.

The newspapers made available to our pupils have not been written with them in mind. The texts require genuine deciphering, an activity which improves pupils' general understanding of our language, sharpens their analytical skills and equips them to detect the clever traps laid by advertisers.

In the press news is presented with hardly any regard for its relative importance. Often a fairly trivial, sensational local news item is given greater coverage than a war at the other end of the world. A tempting TV broadcasting schedule will capture pupils' attention more than a dry commentary on current events. What is alleged to be true one day may be refuted the next; the press is constantly undermining historical certainties.

Newspapers contain a growing number of pictures, and studying these is often a means for children less skilled at reading to comprehend a historical question without having to decipher a text. At a later stage, pictures are used to enable children to compare the past and the present.

Newspapers and mutual understanding

By Jennifer O'Reilly
The Belfast Telegraph

From small acorns grow strong oak trees

Enormous progress has been made in Northern Ireland in both the political and peace processes in recent years. The threat of violence, through not yet totally eliminated, is much diminished. The Good Friday agreement promises legitimate cross-community government and the chance for political stability. It has run into enormous difficulty lately but there is still the hope and belief that we will not go back to what we have had for the past 30 years. Within that time over 3 637 people were killed with thousands injured, some permanently invalided. In war terms, the number killed is not high but the persistent drip of violent conflict over a long periods of time has left a much-traumatised society.

The recent spate of trouble, beginning in 1969, is firmly rooted in the partition of Ireland in 1921. To ensure a Protestant majority, only six of the nine countries of Ulster were absorbed in the United Kingdom. One party rule, Unionist, was the order of the day with often unjust methods being used to sustain that domination. Unionist rule was eventually brought to an end 50 years later when direct rule from London was imposed in the early 1970s.

Violence continued and many atrocities were perpetrated by all sides to the conflict –the Irish Republican Army (IRA), loyalist paramilitaries and the British forces – until the road to the Good Friday agreement was embarked upon.

In the light of the agreement, our newspaper has had to change. There is no longer the daily diet of mortar attacks or bodies found in ditches, a bloody history which the *Telegraph* had to cover for those three decades. Instead, our readers want more coverage of national news, health, education, ordinary crime prevention –"bread and butter" issues as we put it. The paper must now become more proactive as we try to equip ourselves, and all of Northern Ireland, to put the legacy of violence behind us and to look to our future with hope.

However, there is an undercurrent of continued, even deepened community division. There is a feeling that large sections of the community are once again retreating to the trenches out of which they dared to move in the early days of the ceasefires and political progress. Despite this, tremendous and often unheralded work goes on at street level to bring the Catholic and Protestant communities together in greater understanding of each other.

At present, however, almost 97% of children attend segregated schools. Because of this and the presence of religion-based ghettos, the department of education has included the mandatory element of “Education for mutual understanding” (EMU) into the common curriculum for Northern Ireland. One aspect of EMU requires Catholic and Protestant schools to work together in a meaningful and constructive way in their locality, on some aspect of the curriculum. As well as schools actually working together, EMU underpins the teaching of history in our schools. Through the study of history pupils should know and understand the nature of conflict within and between societies and should have the opportunities to compare possible reasons for conflict within Northern Ireland with possible reasons for conflict in other areas of the world.

Most schools embrace the working together aspect of EMU enthusiastically, however, there can be problems particularly with some parents who object to their children being involved in cross-community activities. Schools have to be very careful when considering their plans for EMU.

It is therefore the *Belfast Telegraph's* position of being largely acceptable to both sections of the community, which places it in the perfect position to facilitate cross-community work.

The *Telegraph* is the only indigenous cross-community daily newspaper in the province. It has the highest daily circulation at 117 207 with an average nightly readership of 387 000.

The readership profile by religious breakdown shows how in cross-community terms, it surpasses its major indigenous rivals, the *Irish News* which lately caters for the Nationalist/Catholic community and the *Newsletter* which caters for the Unionist/Protestant community.

The *Belfast Telegraph* is the only newspaper in Northern Ireland which has a presence in EMU. I am the sole member of that department and regard the cross-community aspect of my work as very important indeed. Many of the projects do not have a compulsory cross-community involvement but through encouragement from us and the schools' inspectorate many schools have taken up these projects under the auspices of “Education for mutual understanding”. Most of the projects are core “Newspapers in education” (NiE) projects and are undertaken on an annual basis but the cross-community opportunities in using them have been taken up by many schools.

The following is an overview of some of the projects.

Cross-community newspaper publication. Catholic and Protestant school children work together on a joint newspaper publication which we print. These are one-off publications which we facilitate when requested by any one of the five education boards we have in Northern Ireland.

Previous publications involved cross-community special needs children and a group of small country schools.

The most recent project was developed in this way. The Anne Frank exhibition toured Northern Ireland this year and was used as a catalyst to help young people consider their own situation in Northern Ireland.

The aim of the project was to provide opportunities for pupils to engage in a cross-community project which would meet a variety of curriculum needs. Many schools wanted to co-ordinate their courses with teachers of other subjects. In this case the project was developed with the English department in the participating schools and focused on the literature of exclusion, prejudice, persecution, bigotry and injustice, culminating in the publication of a newspaper.

The main objective was to provide an opportunity for pupils to consider their own position in the Northern Ireland conflict by using the exhibition to explore in an unthreatening way a range of issues such as those already mentioned.

This year's joint project involved 16 schools, 8 Catholic and 8 Protestant. The schools were drawn from areas which have seen a lot of sectarian violence over the years, areas including Portadown, Dungannon and Newry. The school groups visited the Belfast Telegraph and journalists took workshops on news reporting.

The project turned out to be a time intensive one for all involved. Discussions were of a high standard and many concluded that these young 14-year-olds could teach the wider community, as we say in Northern Ireland, a thing or two. Their commitment to working together was very inspirational.

Cross Community literacy schemes. This involves the NiE meeting with school pairs which want to develop their EMU programme with an emphasis on literacy. A typical brief outline plan for these schools working together on such schemes may involve:

– an ice-breaker – the schools come together for a newspaper quiz organised and based on the contents of a particular day’s *Belfast Telegraph*. Groups are mixed for the quiz. In this way pupils get to know each other and rely on co-operation for success;

- joint classroom literacy scheme – usually the “Reading passport” scheme for primary schools or the “Newspaper challenge” scheme for high schools. Both schemes last a number of weeks and involve children doing activities based on the newspaper. Schools will come together for the children to share in their work and at other times they exchange ideas via e-mail and fax. Better equipped schools also use video conferencing. Schools at the end of the project will host a joint certificate presentation at the end of the six-week scheme.

- A tour of the newspaper plant – the two schools will often come together for a tour of the *Belfast Telegraph*. We had around 20 such groups visiting our plant comprising on average 60 children in each group.

Inter-school quizzes. These are not compulsory cross-community quizzes but many schools use them as an opportunity for EMU schools to get together. This is actively promoted by us both in explanatory literature and editorially.

School Focus. Once a month a school is given a page of the *Belfast Telegraph* newspaper to write about itself. As I have already said, most schools in Northern Ireland are segregated so we feel it is important to give an insight into everyone’s work and the ethos of different schools. One comment of the many we received sticks in my mind: “Congratulations! Such a page can help banish perceptions and misconceptions about schools on the ‘other side.’” In a society where perceptions and misconceptions can lead to murder, this was very gratifying to hear.

We have been approached by Catholic and Protestant schools working together under EMU wanting to write up their experiences for this page. We have plans to invite those schools to take part.

“Post-primary news day competition.” Last year’s competition illustrates the often spontaneous nature of the NiE programme being used by schools for cross-community interaction.

In this competition we send schools on a particular day in November “live” news via the Internet or fax. The task back at school is for pupils to put together their eight-paged tabloid newspaper on that one day using some of our material and much of their own.

That year one of the winning supplements was done by two schools working together, one Catholic and one Protestant from Omagh, the scene of a terrible bombing the previous August which left 31 people dead, including two unborn children. The schools were Christian Brothers Grammar (Catholic) and Omagh Academy (Protestant). According to the co-ordinating teacher, it was the pupils’ own idea to come together. They were determined to show solidarity with each other in the face of this terrible attack on their town and on the hopes of everyone.

Their newspaper dealt only briefly with the bombing. On speaking to them they said they wanted to show that Catholics and Protestants could work together and that both wanted to look to a normal and bright future.

One of our most recent developments has been of enormous benefit to history teachers. The *Belfast Telegraph* has linked with one of Ireland’s foremost historical libraries, the Linenhall Library, to host archival, mostly primary source material, on our Internet site. This material is unique and has not been publicly available before except through a visit to the library in person. The topics chosen are in line with the Northern Ireland curriculum and provide an invaluable insight into our shared history.

I hope that this has given some indication of what NiE does in terms of cross-community work in Northern Ireland. I realise that there is a limit to what it can do. But I hope you can see that the projects which are central to our overall programme can be and are used by many schools to fulfil their cross-community interests.

Theme 4: Divided societies – putting the pieces back together

After the rift, reconciliation

by Jacek Wozniakowski,
professor of history at the University of Cracow

First of all, I should like to begin by making three points about social divisions.

First, under communism, societies were split up and fragmented because pressure was applied to fault lines in them.

Second, in the communist system, the state divests citizens of their responsibilities and their role by giving them artificial responsibilities which make them afraid. This is the rationale of the welfare state.

Third, a lie is imposed and everyone eventually comes to believe it. By repeating it, people come to think that it is true and eventually they believe that they must have been wrong. In such a system, reality was distorted to such an extent that people found it hard to believe in reality as it actually was, but which they could no longer recognise as such.

Several points can be made about reconstruction in the period that followed the collapse of communism.

1. Those whose mental faculties were not totally destroyed by the suppression of personal initiative have an opportunity to see things happen. The spirit of initiative revives very quickly, but not necessarily in a positive way. It revives with short-term, selfish effects.

2. Society is still fragmented, partly because of the large number of political parties and the appearance of wheeler-dealer networks which in extreme cases are linked to the Mafia. Under communism, these networks were forms of opposition which had a good image in the west. In an open society, organisations of this kind are pernicious. They weaken civil society.

3. A society is judged by its leaders, by the standard-bearers of the opposition who endured atrocities or imprisonment and behaved courageously. They are regarded as representatives of society. But in fact most of society is indifferent to them. The people live in a grey area, ground down by the problems of everyday life. They do not want to run risks or join in efforts geared to reforms, discussion and opposition movements. We often make the mistake of judging a society on the strength of its big success stories; we ought to take more notice of this kind of social inertia.

4. Tension also exists between the cynical former communist officials who have had experience of wielding power and the untried new officials who are not prepared for the pitfalls of power, especially corruption. They too give in to corruption, whereas we think they are immune to temptation. In fact, these two types of officials should co-operate, but that is something very difficult to organise.

5. During this reconstruction period, all the various institutions should be set up at the same time, especially political parties. The prime objective should be to restore the rule of law and ensure the independence of the legal system. All the elected or appointed bodies and institutions should function openly, things should be done without subterfuge, and clear information should be given about intentions, operations and outcomes.

As a rule, when peoples have lived through a conflict, reconstruction is even more of an uphill job. The key problem is how to allocate responsibilities, for example the responsibilities of those who did the shelling and those who should have intervened at the international level. Many believe that nation-states embody the highest form of sovereignty. All sovereignty should be limited by human

rights. Nowadays there is too marked a tendency towards relativism. People want to understand everything. But to understand everything is not to excuse everything. When a link is established between executioners and victims, it is impossible to sort out responsibilities. Certainly, faults and crimes can be excused, but responsibility for a crime cannot be erased.

The challenge facing us in the 21st century is how to remember responsibilities, how not to expunge them, but also how to look away from them, not succumbing to a desire for revenge and not allowing our minds to be poisoned by unsolved problems.

When it is only a parochial phenomenon, nationalism can be seen as a danger of limited extent. How can it be avoided? To my mind, cultural values offer a solution. For example, the common or universal relevance of poetry, music and architecture create an awareness of what is universal, of our common heritage. Mutual understanding must go hand in hand with readiness to pardon without forgetting. We must oppose any sign of vengence and encourage an attitude of respect so that pardoning can become possible. To have a parochial mentality does not mean that one has roots. All human beings need to have roots in a place, a job and a culture if they are to play a constructive role in society.

It is dangerous and misguided to forget history. To be blind to the past is to be blind to the future. When reconstructing a strife-torn society and mending relations with our former enemies, the first thing to do if we are to move forward and put our sufferings behind us is to identify those responsible and then go on to forgive them.

We must encourage the younger generations to shoulder their responsibilities by raising their awareness of the past, of what must not be repeated, of what to build, consolidate, reconstruct and start over, of what to persevere with in order to move forward the social project. They must be taught to be both constructive and critical, to be open to discussion and to play an active part in projects.

Conflicts are inevitable as long as humanity exists. The important thing is to confine them to the arena of discussion and the search for solutions and to avoid recourse to weapons, forms of exclusion and denigration. That does not mean destroying cultures and identities. The nation should be an administrative framework which helps people to live together within frontiers and with others who live beyond those frontiers. But when the map of languages, religions and cultures concides or when they follow different frontiers, it is preferable … I support an open regionalism which leads to groupings within a context of ongoing change.

Question from Jean-Yves Potel: I should like to come back to the question of recognition of responsibilities. This recognition often takes a very long time to materialise. In the case of Katyn, for example, where 24 000 Polish officers were massacred, that is almost all of the Polish intelligentsia, or the round-ups of Jews during the Vichy regime. The responsibilities of the Soviet regime and of Vichy were established. But it was not until 1991-92 that Boris Yeltsin and France accepted their responsibilities.

Reply by Jacek Wozniakowski: The entire west said nothing, including about Katyn. The British ambassador, of Irish origin, Owen O'Malley, wrote a report. The British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden did nothing about it and in an extraordinary display of hypocrisy pinned responsibility on the Poles. Lying by omission and secrecy have played too big a part in politics.

Theme 5: Building a way of living together

When two communities look back over their past, each of them becomes afraid of being dispossessed of its history and of having a rewritten or manipulated version of that history foisted upon it. Each nation tends to set its history in stone, giving it a quasi-sacred character upon which it is hard to cast doubt without bringing the whole national edifice into jeopardy. Historians who propose a new interpretation of events, periods or the deeds of certain figures in the light of new research or the discovery of new evidence, often meet with stiff resistance from official historians or even from the national community.

History as it is written and transmitted helps to mould the identity of individuals and communities. It helps to sustain their systems of representation and justification. It forms part of the differentiation mechanisms which enable a community to mark itself off from others, especially its closest neighbours, people who might contest matters of precedence or territorial claims. Interpretations of historical matters may be so divergent and so sacrosanct that there often seems to be little room for negotiation about them.

History teaching is central to this issue. We know, for example, that the transmission of culture to young people during pre-puberty and puberty has a lasting impact on them, a process which Cairns[20] has called cultural "badging". When two communities are at odds, the behaviour and identity of each become increasingly polarised, particularly via segregated education. In this kind of setup pupils from different communities are educated separately, and educational content overvalues one community and denigrates the other or others. Countries where there are strong ethnic tensions manifest to an extreme degree the tendency to use history and culture to make denigratory comparisons with others in order to buttress their own national identity. Whyte[21] noted that education in Northern Ireland divides the population more precisely than any other factor.

These are thought-provoking observations. Should we not implement in our own educational systems the principles that inspired the educational experiments embodied in Lagan College and in the schools established by the All Children Together parent group in Northern Ireland and in the Neve Shalom/Wahat Al Salam school in Israel, where Catholic and Protestant children, and Jewish, Muslim and Christian children respectively are educated together? These educational institutions are based on "equality in the teaching of the history, culture and political thought of the communities involved." Would it not be advisable, before tensions appear and in the context of European construction, to envisage more experiments of this kind, along the lines of the Franco-German schools? Would not this help to promote in each of our countries an approach to history and culture that would be concerned with the minority communities of the country and of neighbouring countries, about which people still retain more or less painful memories? How can we think pragmatically about constructing a way of living together, when school curricula continue to favour an excessively national approach to history and culture?

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20. E. Cairns, "Intergroup conflict in Northern Ireland", in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations,* ed. H. Tajfel, Cambridge University Press, 1982.

21. J.H. Whyte. "How is the boundary maintained between the two communities in Northern Ireland?" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* vol 9, No. 2, 1986.

Conclusions

European history is rich in examples of power relations, violated rights and armed conflicts between nationalities and states. Our history books are so full of them that one might well wonder whether a rationale of antagonism is Europe's inescapable destiny. The 20th century was marked by the most destructive of wars. It also saw the birth of a plan to try to build a lasting peace and set up institutions, systems of exchange and common working rules that ought gradually to lead to a situation in which more peaceful solutions can be found for the conflicts that break out between states, peoples, regions, and economic forces.

Is it already possible today to identify and analyse the initiatives and achievements that are conducive to a system of European partnership? In what sense would such a partnership mark a historic change and improve conditions for living together?

In view of the move towards European integration and the efforts that are being made to encourage a negotiated resolution of antagonisms, should not the teaching of history, which is an analytical, knowledge-based discipline, contribute to the development of attitudes, tools and principles that might help to forestall conflicts, or to manage and resolve those which have proved unavoidable?

The core objective of the Sarajevo symposium was first of all to examine the processes involved in refusal to recognise equality of status despite differences, and to understand the role of political groups in escalating tensions, fanning the flames of hatred and interpreting history in such a way as to justify their own grievances. Secondly, the symposium also sought to highlight changes in mentalities and institutions in Europe which might be conducive to identifying dangers at the earliest possible stage, responding to them with maximum effectiveness and enhancing conflict resolution and reconciliation between peoples.

In such a context, and as part of a programme on teaching 20th-century European history, is it not timely and indeed urgent to recognise that historians and history teachers have a particularly important role to play? Do we not have an opportunity to prepare future generations to shoulder their responsibilities in a critical and independent-minded spirit and at the same time to work towards situations in which people can live together more successfully?

A number of conditions are needed to construct a framework for living together. We have reviewed the difficulties involved in creating these conditions, the historical setbacks that have occurred and the vital importance for humanity of learning to settle conflicts peacefully. Five terms have been used to describe the conditions in which people can live together. These conditions are the result of a process of development and of collective progress. The values involved are those of universality, reciprocity, mutuality, solidarity and equity.

Recognition of the distinctiveness of others is implicit in the principle of universality. People's right to speak and study their own language, preserve their identity and maintain their culture is a right that should be universally recognised. But this recognition goes hand in hand with a duty: granting the same rights to others and not discrediting them in the name of one's own culture. This duty of reciprocity is indissociable from the principle of universality. A minority can only ask for its distinctiveness to be recognised if it promises not to overvalue its distinctive features and agrees to respect the collective rules which tie it to other minorities or to a majority. Collective rules acceptable to and recognised by all the partners have yet to be established, however.

The guarantee which gradually takes shape between the partners and which constitutes a kind of mutually agreed safeguard against the risks of discrimination and aggression is consonant with the principle of mutuality. The actors are indissociably and freely bound in spite of or rather by their differences. These differences even form the basis of the mutual bond that unites all the members

of a community and reorganises the role of the state. Here, we are far from the "compassionate conservatism"[22] which is seeking to establish itself, particularly in the United States. The freedom that is guaranteed for some is by implication guaranteed in return and simultaneously for others. My freedom is given to me because I give it to others, because together we set ourselves working rules which transcend the local or national framework and involve us actively in humanity. This process presupposes solidarity. In solidarity we are interdependent. My particular existence is recognised by virtue of the singularity I recognise in others. The principle of solidarity implies that identification of a risk of conflict should not be a motive for discrimination. The state and society must protect citizens, but citizens must also be trained and take an active part in this protection. Law and democracy are ramparts against the danger of discrimination, but they are inadequate ramparts. Recognition of civic equality is essential, but it does not ensure the recognition of differences. Equality before the law is a stronger guarantee. But the law and constitutions of states still have some way to go if they are to guarantee real recognition of differences. Internationally, human rights have represented a major advance. But their recognition by all states and cultures still poses major problems. Current thinking in many countries and within international and humanitarian organisations is opening up new possibilities which were echoed in the Sarajevo symposium.

Perhaps what is missing from the values that underwrite a framework for living together is the principle of equity. Before the members of different cultural and social communities can endorse a project to construct and bolster a process of living together, they will need to feel certain that a degree of impartiality exists and that the principles of justice and injustice are generally respected. It is true that equity "is not inspired by the prevailing rules of law" (it contrasts with positive law),[23] but it expresses a need on the part of citizens which cannot be shrugged off. They need to be sure that everyone is treated in the same way, to know there is a political environment in which the same values are shared as well as the benefits accruing from their active participation in the strengthening and extension of the process of living together; they need to participate personally and collectively in dovetailing the project for living together into the common heritage of all humanity.

This goal is far from being achieved and experience of the real world is bound to bring dissatisfaction, as Finkielkraut's words quoted in the introduction remind us. "In regarding the equality of individuals as the basic condition for living together, democracy was condemning itself to eternal dissatisfaction", because "in democracy … there is no hidden world; all men are equal, except in reality. Hence the discontent. Hence the impossibility of ending history with the joy of living in such a system."[24]

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22. A term invented by Marvin Olasky, professor of journalism at the University of Austin (Texas) and editor of the Christian weekly magazine *World* in the early 1990s to describe the political tendency taken up by George W. Bush, which tends to push for privatisation, reducing the state's field of action and calling on the churches to deal with the social and cultural problems caused by this policy.
23. The *Dictionnaire Le Robert Micro Poche*, ed. A. Rey, 1995.
24. Finkielkraut A. Une voix qui vient de l'autre rive, Gallimard, 2000.