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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL COOPERATION

Project on

**"Learning and Teaching about the History of Europe
in the 20th Century in Secondary Schools"**

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Seminar on

**"Teaching the History of Europe in the 20th Century:
Approaches and Problems"**

Hotel Romai,
Budapest, Hungary,
Thursday 11 - Saturday 13 December, 1997

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1. Introduction

This was the first major seminar associated with the Council of Europe's new project on "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th Century in Secondary Schools". It was attended by 40 participants, including 15 representatives from 11 Eastern and Central European countries; 18 representatives from other parts of Europe, and observers from international institutions, international non-governmental organisations and professional associations.

Since this was the first in a series of seminars and meetings which will be arranged during the course of this project, it might be useful to begin this report with some contextual information about the new project: its aims and objectives and the intended outcomes.

2. The Context

At the 19th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in Kristiansand, Norway on 22-24 June, 1997 it was decided that the Council for Cultural Co-operation and the Education Committee of the Council of Europe should, through its medium-term programme, implement a new three-year project (1997-99) on teaching European history in the 20th Century.

The aims of the project would be to:

- (i) interest young people in secondary schools in the recent history of our continent;
- (ii) provide curriculum developers, textbook authors and history teachers with practical advice and examples of innovative approaches and good practice.

The Education Committee then went on to stress the importance of developing innovative approaches that would help young people to:

- understand the forces, movements and events which have shaped Europe in the 20th Century;
- appreciate the richness and diversity of European history;
- understand the historical roots and context of the main challenges facing Europe today;
- reflect on the kind of Europe in which they wish to live in the future;
- acquire attitudes which are essential for citizens of democratic pluralist societies;

- develop key skills of investigation, research and critical thinking, in particular the handling and analysis of written and audio-visual sources and the detection of bias, distortion and propaganda.

It is intended that the outcomes of the project would include:

- Guidelines for curriculum developers and textbook authors and publishers - which will draw on (i) a study commissioned from the Georg Eckert Institute on the ways in which the history of Europe in the 20th Century is presented in curricula and textbooks for secondary schools in member states, and (ii) the discussions and inputs from working groups at a number of seminars and symposia to be organised during the course of the project.
- A Handbook for history teachers, which will include case studies on innovatory approaches and good practice, experimental lesson plans, teaching units, and information on resources and useful organisations.
- A Simulation for use in secondary schools on the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 which re-drew the map of Europe after World War I - a topic which is covered in upper secondary history curricula in most member states.
- Teaching Packs developed around four themes:
 - Human rights and pluralist democracy in Europe in the 20th Century;
 - Women in Europe in the 20th Century;
 - Nationalisms in Europe in the 20th Century;
 - Population movements in Europe in the 20th Century.
- Case Studies illustrating innovative approaches to teaching 20th Century European history will also be developed relating to five geographical areas:
 - Central Europe
 - Northern Europe
 - South Eastern Europe
 - South Western Europe
 - Western Europe.

3. The Aims of the Seminar

The main aims of the Budapest seminar were:

- to discuss the findings of the study by the Georg Eckert Institute on the ways in which the history of 20th century Europe is presented in school history textbooks;
- to review a variety of curriculum approaches for teaching 20th century European history at secondary school level and to identify trends, problems, possibilities and gaps in provision;

- to look at some innovatory approaches and identify some possible case studies for future development;
- and, finally, to look at the possible form and content of (i) a handbook for teachers and (ii) a set of guidelines for curriculum developers and textbook authors.

4. Summary of the Presentations

Dr. Miklós LOJKÓ, The Keynote Address: 20th Century History as Perceived in Central Europe

At a time when a high priority is being given to nation building or nation creation, claims to self-determination and political autonomy, and the rights of linguistic, religious and ethnic minorities, not just in Central and Eastern Europe but throughout the continent, it is not surprising that the potential social and political functions of the study and teaching of history have once again been placed under the microscope. The relationship between the writings of historians (i.e. historiography) and the prevailing political and ideological concerns current at the time they were writing has always been both interesting and problematic, but particularly so when the political map of Europe has just been re-drawn.

It was particularly interesting, therefore, to start this Seminar in Budapest with a keynote address from a professional historian who offered a short history of historiography; comparing the trends and influences which had shaped the writings of historians in central Europe with those which had shaped historiography in the west.

He began by noting that *“Today it is fashionable to say that the 19th century nation creating role of the historian survived itself, and has shackled the Central European view of the world in a way that Western historiography has not. But is that proposition true?”* He then went on to demonstrate that similar tendencies have been apparent in the writings of both Western and Central European historians, particularly when writing about Central Europe.

Dr. LOJKÓ started his historiographical review by observing that for most of the past millennium it was generally assumed that the study of history provided a guide, not just to understanding the world, but to political and moral action within it. By the nineteenth century it was difficult to sustain this kind of mechanistic point of view. A new historiography emerged; the ‘historicist’ view of history as *“an unfolding process directed by some teleological force”* towards a specific goal (liberty, democracy, nationhood, self-determination, etc. depending upon the time and place). Dr. LOJKÓ emphasised here the influence on a generation of European historians of Kant’s Idea for a Universal History (1784). However, several other historiographical trends were emerging at around the same time, not least the empiricist school (concerned with reconstructing the past ‘as it really was’) and the positivists (seeking to reduce history to a series of general laws), and perhaps they owed less to Kant and more to the self-confidence of the age and the recognition that with the onset of

industrialisation they were now more interested in analysing and explaining change rather than continuity.

He then went on to suggest that the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles were instrumental indirectly in bringing about significant changes in historiography. The War had done much to discredit the concept of history as progress in much of Western Europe, while in the new, revived or enlarged Successor States of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy historians tended to “*emulate the exaggerations of 19th Century West European historicism*”. At the same time history teaching in Central Europe tended to be both parochial - little if anything was taught about Russia - and oriented towards Western Europe with both France and England receiving treatments in history books which could be described as wholly uncritical.

However, whilst there might have been some divergence here in the historiographical trends of the two regions, there appeared to be a considerable degree of congruence between the way in which historians in Central Europe portrayed the history of that region and the approach adopted by western historians who were also interested in the region. As Dr. LOJKÓ pointed out, the western historians’ treatment of the history of Central Europe tended to be produced by highly politicised individuals, intent on establishing a case for a Central Europe split up into small nation states (in contrast to Naumann’s concept of Mitteleuropa), and resting on the dual pillars of national self-determination and progressive democracy. In this respect it could be argued that while a number of Central European historians might have presented “*a notoriously starry-eyed vision of the past of their respective nations and their consequent role in Europe in their present*”, the same tendencies were also apparent in the writings of their contemporaries in the west.

He completed his historiographical survey by noting that, in his estimation, the impact of traditional Marxist history and morality on the practice of history in Central Europe after the Second World War was “*undeniably positive. A distinct advantage over the insidious spread of post-modernism*”. By contrast, the vulgar strain of Marxism-Leninism, which had been imposed on the centralised Central European educational establishment, was a caricature of the original idea. However, there were positive lessons and benefits to be drawn from this experience and he concluded his address by asserting that:

“The peoples of Central and Eastern Europe have an advantage. They have been subjected to practically all models of history teaching, including the Prussian and Russian models. One may be hopeful that their choice for the future will be a tutored one to an extent that it may even serve as an example to their less weather-beaten West European colleagues.”

Mr. Maitland STOBART, Issues and Opportunities in Teaching About the History of Europe in the 20th Century: Ideas from the Council of Europe’s Work 1949-97.

Mr. STOBART began by explaining that the purpose of his presentation was to provide a bridge between the Council of Europe’s new history project and the issues,

concerns and possibilities which had emerged out of the Council's work over the past 48 years. To do this he structured his presentation around four broad themes:

Sources and resources:

When the Council of Europe first began its work on history teaching the majority of history syllabuses within the member states stopped in 1914 or 1918. This was often justified on the grounds that 'contemporary history' was a contradiction in terms, that historians and history teachers lacked the necessary detachment from recent events and the benefits of hindsight, and that there were insufficient sources and resources on the period. By the 1970s the place of modern history in syllabuses was no longer in question. Today the problem for historians and history teachers is the plethora rather than the lack of sources and resources. Even in Central and Eastern Europe, where from 1989-90 the Ministries of Education had been faced with a major task of preparing and publishing new, non-ideological history texts within severe financial and technical constraints, the progress made over the last five years had been impressive. The Council of Europe had sought to contribute to this process by holding seminars on textbook publishing and also encouraging curriculum planners and history teachers to consider the potential of using other kinds of learning resource such as oral history, audio tapes, film and video, CD-ROMs and the Internet.

Given that the relative lack of sources and resources for teaching twentieth century history was no longer a major problem, this begged the question: what could the new Council of Europe project provide that was not already widely available. For Mr. STOBART the added value of the new project lay in bringing to the study of twentieth century European history a much wider range of perspectives and illustrative material than ever before, thus reflecting the fact that following the political changes of 1989-90 the membership of the Council of Europe had now expanded rapidly to a total of 47 member states, 21 of whom are located in Central and Eastern Europe.

Some General Principles:

Given that the mass media are an important source of information on the history of Europe in the twentieth century, Maitland STOBART argued that it was essential that students should acquire the critical skills necessary for interpreting the information imparted by television, film, radio and newspapers. In particular, they needed to understand that films, newscasts, documentaries, photographs and other forms of mass media are not records of an event but subjectively selected and edited versions of that event. They also need to understand how these same, rich resources can be used for propaganda purposes as well as for transmitting information and news.

He then went on to review some of the recommendations for teaching modern history, particularly European history, which had consistently emerged from recent Council of Europe conferences and seminars. He referred, for example, to the use of new technologies; the value of opportunities for learning history outside the classroom - through archives, museums, archaeological sites, history clubs, field trips, student and teacher exchanges and inter-school projects; and the potential benefits of teachers being able to co-ordinate and integrate the work which students are doing in history and other subjects such as Social Studies. However, this had implications for curriculum planning both at the school level and within Ministries of Education. He

therefore hoped that the Curriculum Guidelines, which will be one of the outcomes of the new Council of Europe project, would outline a variety of ways in which this flexibility could be achieved.

Teaching European History:

Mr. STOBART started this section of his paper by reiterating the recommendation of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education at Kristiansand in June 1997 that: *'education authorities should review their curricula to ensure that they reflect the richness and diversity of the history of Europe'*. He then went on to suggest two key questions:

- What should be our criteria for the selection of content in order to reflect this richness and diversity and, since selection is unavoidable, what can be done to minimise the problems associated with any selection process; i.e. compression, distortion and omission?
- What organising principles should the Guidelines propose for teaching twentieth century European history? Should it be chronological? Are there certain important themes that need to be covered? Should it emphasise positive mutual influences, as recommended by the Vienna Declaration in 1993?

Teaching about sensitive issues:

Finally, he also referred to the need to look at ways of teaching about tragic and sensitive issues such as the Shoah, the treatment of minorities, violations of human rights, war crimes, military occupations, etc. In this respect he referred to work that had been done in schools in Northern Ireland and the pioneering work carried out in bilateral commissions and projects between, for example, France and Germany; Germany and Poland, Poland and Israel.

Falk PINGEL, The ways in which the History of Europe in the 20th Century is presented in Textbooks for secondary schools

Dr. PINGEL's presentation was based on a Report which had been commissioned by the Council of Europe as part of the new history project. The Report was based on a study of secondary school textbooks for history teaching in 9 countries: Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia and the UK (England & Wales only). The textbooks selected were:

- those most widely used;
- those which had been published within the last 3-4 years;
- those which are in accordance with the curriculum in operation;
- those with an original approach to the subject.

He began his presentation by providing some contextual background relating to the market for school textbooks and the diversity of curriculum frameworks and teaching approaches which can be found across Europe.

Trends in the market for history textbooks:

In most of the countries studied, the market for history textbooks tended to be dominated by a small number of publishers. In spite of the major technical and financial constraints facing educational publishing in most Central and Eastern European states in the early 1990s there was now a clear trend in those countries towards opening up and privatising the market. In general the market for history textbooks reflected two main factors:

- firstly, the degree to which schools were free to decide which textbooks to purchase. In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom this decision was left solely to the individual school; in other states Ministries of Education either issued lists of recommended books or some other form of regulatory control was exercised;
- secondly, the ways in which history textbooks are used in the classroom. In some countries the textbook provided the main resource for the teacher and there was a high correlation between the structure and content of the textbook and the structure and content of the syllabus, while in others it was just one of numerous resources, teachers used them selectively and comprehensive coverage of the syllabus was not required.

Curriculum frameworks and teaching approaches:

In this respect Dr. PINGEL noted that there were some common patterns and interesting variations in the approaches to modern European history across the nine countries included in the study. In Russia, for example, Russian and international history are taught in separate courses and separate textbooks have been developed for each course. In Lithuania the history curriculum integrates Lithuanian and European history but in practice they tend to be taught separately using different textbooks. In the Netherlands, by contrast, textbooks tend to approach twentieth century history from a comparative perspective. There were also some variations in the period covered although the most common pattern was what has been termed ‘the short 20th Century’ ranging from 1914 to the recent ‘silent revolution’.

The Main findings:

It is intended that copies of the full Report from the Georg Eckert Institute will be widely distributed, so in this report I have simply highlighted those findings which seemed to be particularly relevant to the themes which dominated our discussions at the seminar in Budapest.

- Most of the history textbooks currently on the market come into one of two broad categories: conventional texts, with a strong emphasis on chronological narrative; and Workbooks, which emphasise the acquisition of skills and methods of interpretation.
- The layout of textbooks is changing a lot with a much wider variety of sources, illustrations and exercises. Formerly, pictures, maps and photos illustrated what was said in the authoritative text. Now in some progressive textbooks the text is an illustration of what is presented by means of pictures and graphs.

- It is still rare for textbook authors to explain to the reader both the structure of the book and the learning objectives which underpin it. So, for example, it is not made clear to the student why a particular topic is selected or treated in more detail than another. This applies in particular to textbooks where the emphasis is on chronological narrative. However, Dr. PINGEL also stressed that pupils who use workbooks also need to know how to make most effective use of it. The less uniform the layout of the book and the richer it is with different source material the more important this is.
- Generally speaking there was more coverage of European-wide issues and topics in the text-dominated books than in the skills-based Workbooks, possibly because of the need to provide a relatively high level of background information and detailed explanation when dealing with European themes.
- The balance between national, European and global history within most textbooks still heavily favours national history (usually 30-50%). Where the coverage of Europe is good (usually ranging from 30-40%) this is usually at the expense of world history (which usually ranges from 10-20%). Global history mainly focuses on the USA with little coverage of China and Japan. There is some focus on the North-South divide or the economic gap between industrialised and third world nations, though less so in the textbooks produced in Central and Eastern Europe.
- Coverage still tends to reflect whether or not a particular nation is or has been a world power. The Europe of nations is mainly presented as a Europe that has been influenced by England, France, Germany, Russia or the Soviet Union. Often the neighbouring nations with which a country has had much closer relations are only covered in the maps rather than the text and activities.
- Many textbooks still treat the countries of Europe as if they were all ethnically homogeneous states; only a few give any coverage to minorities, including linguistic and cultural minorities. This aspect tends to be covered more in civics textbooks.
- The political dimension is not quite as dominant as it was 20 years ago. There is more attempt to integrate the political with the economic and social dimensions but generally more weight still tends to be given to political history.
- The predominant theme in most of the textbooks which were reviewed is of a twentieth century Europe characterised by wars and crises and divided for most of the period by the opposing forces of dictatorial and democratic regimes. There is not much emphasis on the more positive features and developments (democracy, international cooperation, human rights, etc.)

Dr. PINGEL concluded by suggesting that it does not make sense to give detailed recommendations for the presentation of the European dimension in all history textbooks. Textbooks need to be adjusted to the particular needs of students, to the divergent curricula, as well as to the different marketing structures. He also asserted

that inserting European issues into chapters primarily concerned with national history is not enough. Separate chapters dealing with Europe will help students to foster an awareness of European interrelationships and interdependencies as well as helping them to develop concepts and interpretative frameworks for understanding what is happening across Europe.

5. Round Table Discussions on three Innovative Approaches to Aspects of 20th Century European History

As noted in Section 1 of this Report, the Project Group plans to identify five case studies of innovatory approaches to twentieth century European history, with each case study being drawn from a different region of Europe. At the time when this seminar was held in Budapest three possibilities had been identified. The first, which focuses on teaching about 20th Century cultural history, is being developed in Hungary. The second, which looks at the educational potential of The Historial, a museum on the First World War, is a French initiative. The third potential case study focuses on history teaching in a Russian secondary school, where innovative teaching and learning approaches are being used within the context of a comparative approach to modern European history.

All three presentations stimulated a great deal of discussion and interest, with participants at the seminar seeking more details about how each approach works in practice. However, ultimately their value as project case studies will lie in the extent to which such approaches to events and themes in modern European history can transfer to history teaching in other schools, in other contexts and other countries. In this respect the basis for evaluating their transferability has still to be determined by the Project Group.

Peter BIHARI and Judit STEFANY, A Hungarian Innovatory Project with a multidisciplinary approach.

In practice the two presenters described distinctive projects which had some common features but in other respects were very different. Peter BIHARI reported on a project concerned with teaching twentieth century cultural history which has just begun this year (1997) and will be completed in the year 2000.

The thinking behind this project is innovative in at least two senses. First, in spite of a plurality of textbooks and other resources a traditional approach remains characterised by comprehensive coverage and a strong emphasis on political history and the history of events. Coverage of cultural history has tended to be limited and often omitted by teachers. Second, those involved in the project have opted to teach modern history in the same way as medieval history is often taught. That is to say, an approach which gives less emphasis to chronology and focuses on key themes which have been characteristic of a period or era. The topics to be covered will include: sport, music (including popular music), modern architecture, films, the mass media and literature. However, these topics will not be examined in isolation. This will enable students to see how developments and movements in one aspect of culture may be happening at the same time as and mutually influencing each other, i.e. to establish

links and cross-references. It also enable the students to develop a broader perspective, for example, by looking at the mass media and political propaganda or the relationships between sport and politics.

It is planned that the approach adopted will help students to recognise connections and influences by offering a synthesis at three levels:

- by setting local developments into a global perspective;
- by synthesising knowledge and skills through the particular focus adopted; and
- by breaking down some of the artificial barriers and boundaries created for the students by the structure of the curriculum and by the students themselves in terms of the labels they assign to specific pieces of information and knowledge; e.g. under labels such as literature, art, music.

To facilitate this a series of textbooks on cultural history have been planned with each volume being jointly written by an historian and a specialist in literature.

It is anticipated that there will be some resistance to this approach from some of the more traditionalist teachers, particularly given that the new National Curriculum for History in Hungary, which aims to shift the balance of emphasis between content-based teaching and skills-based learning in favour of the latter, is still being hotly debated within the teaching profession. It is also anticipated that some teachers will not wish to devote as much time to cultural history as others. To this end it is planned to produce two kinds of textbook:

- one specifically on cultural history for those who have more time;
- a general history book which will include a cultural dimension.

Judit STEFANY, who teaches at the Alternative Secondary School of Economics in Budapest, the first Foundation School in Hungary, which was opened in 1989-90, described an approach to social history and the history of lifestyles which is being adopted in her school. The approach has three broad characteristics:

- the students focus on an epoch or era which is then examined in a multidisciplinary way (the specific epoch referred to in the presentation was from the late 1920s to the outbreak of the Second World War, looking particularly at the impact of the world economic crisis);
- the students each undertake a micro-project on the selected epoch. This puts a high emphasis on learning through doing and learning through enquiry;
- the primary emphasis here is on developing transferable skills and know-how. In this respect the learning goals for this approach (and indeed the learning goals for the school as a whole) are:

- [i] to develop orientation skills associated with forming their own opinions concerning social, economic and political issues while preparing to make concrete decisions in their adult lives;
- [ii] to acquire a basic foundation of practical knowledge and skills in terms of using research methods, analysing media, etc.;
- [iii] to acquire fundamental knowledge which will help them with future learning and study;
- [iv] to satisfy curiosity through a strong emphasis on asking questions rather than on providing irrefutable answers;
- [v] to develop behaviour based on humanist values, particularly respect for others through a study of other peoples, cultures and value systems past and present.

Whilst acknowledging that the approach is still experimental, she finished her presentation by observing that the students who produced good micro-projects did not necessarily perform well on tests of basic historical knowledge about the epoch under study. She finished her presentation by asking the participants at the seminar what can be done to ensure that students not only develop the desired orientation and interpretative skills and an historical overview of the period but also acquire some basic historical knowledge as well.

Her question elicited a range of responses. One view expressed was that a significant shift in approach was bound to produce this kind of discrepancy, but the important issue was not how many facts they could remember for a test but what will they have retained long after they have completed their schooling. Others felt that Judit STEFANY had raised a critical issue that needed to be addressed by curriculum planners. Often when they want to move to an approach which puts greater emphasis on skills development they still want to also retain the comprehensive approach to the coverage of content. They want the traditional and the innovative and this may not be feasible within the constraints operating on most history teachers in most educational systems.

Anita DUJARDIN and Francis POQUET, The educative aspects of The Historial of the Great War

The presenters began by explaining that the Historial is an historical museum but it is not a memorial to commemorate those who died in the war. It is a discursive museum which aims to offer an analysis of what happened. Visitors follow a chronological trail but at any point they can also reflect on broader analytical questions which go beyond the sequence of events. As M. POQUET observed, “*we want to pass on the memories but also plant questions and elicit reflections in the minds of the visitors.*”

It is always difficult to *talk* about a museum, particularly one which aims to engage the minds of visitors and provide them with an active learning experience, when the audience cannot actually experience this for themselves. However, this presentation raised some very interesting questions about the educational functions of museums, particularly museums which focus on a period which is still part of living memory, and about the relationships between history and memory and between historiography and public perceptions of the recent past.

Like most recently-developed museums, the Historial makes good use of the new multi-media technologies. Also there are no facsimiles. The objects and documents are real and original. From an educational point of view, perhaps the most important feature is the emphasis given to providing opportunities for the students to put themselves in others shoes, not just to perceive how both soldiers and civilians experienced the Great War or how it changed their lives, but also to look at:

- how, for example, through the press, film and government propaganda the Germans portrayed the Americans, the French portrayed the Germans and the Germans portrayed the French;
- how people's perceptions of the Great War at the time were influenced by public perceptions of previous wars, particularly the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

To ensure that the educative aspects of the Historial would meet the needs of history teachers and students alike, staff at the Museum spent a year planning the educational inputs and consulting with the teaching profession before the Historial was opened. Mme. DUJARDIN then went on to describe the provision made for teachers. This included pedagogical dossiers which are sent to teachers before they bring their students to the museum. The dossiers include ideas for pre-visit preparation, possible supporting activities for students, and follow-up activities. The dossiers are not prescriptive. Teachers are free to choose how best to use them to meet their own particular needs and the needs of their students. Staff at the Historial also run training courses for teachers on handling discussions about the issues, and on developing their own supporting, preparatory and follow-up activities.

Dr. Sergei KUSHNIR, Teaching the 20th Century History of Europe in a secondary school in St. Petersburg

Dr. KUSHNIR teaches in the Russian equivalent of a gymnasium school where history's prestige as a subject is very high. Modern European history is studied by pupils within the 14-17 age range within their world history course. The school follows the conventional Russian pattern of teaching two distinct courses: Russian history and World history. His school and 36 other secondary schools are currently using an experimental textbook which was only published in St. Petersburg in 1997. While writing this book the author held several round-table discussions with Dr. KUSHNIR's pupils as a way of pilot-testing the approach.

Dr. KUSHNIR then went on to describe some of the approaches which he is now using with his pupils. These included:

- extensive use of active learning and experiential learning approaches, e.g. planning and holding mock press conferences about specific events or important decisions;

- encouraging empathy by getting students to put themselves in the shoes of other Europeans during a major event or issue; e.g. acting out the roles of world leaders during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis;
- encouraging them to simulate the Nobel Committee and present and argue the case for different individuals being awarded the prize;
- adopting a comparative approach to specific events and issues;
- collecting information from other countries in order to chart the lives of a family through successive periods of the twentieth century.

Discussion afterwards focused on those factors which either constrain or facilitate this approach. There was a feeling that while this was an exciting and potentially innovative approach it was also likely to be a labour-intensive and time-consuming teaching and learning strategy: a lot of preparatory work has to be done by the teacher to ensure that students have a lot of resource material to enable them to participate fully in role plays, simulations, press conferences, and so on. Dr. KUSHNIR explained that he has the opportunity to teach his pupils for six hours per week and they have been gradually introduced to this particular approach to modern history since 9th grade. Also comparative work was made easier by the fact that the students are fairly fluent in English and French.

However, he also identified some of the constraints within which he has to work. The school has no fax machine, so it is difficult to set up links with schools in other countries. They have even used the diplomatic mail to obtain information from the Netherlands. Secondly, although comparative work is interesting, particularly when it involves students from other countries, the students in other collaborating schools may not always have the kinds of background information needed to facilitate genuinely comparative analysis.

6. Conclusions

It was noted in Section 2 of this Report that the Seminar had four aims: to discuss the findings of the Georg Eckert study on textbooks; to review current trends in teaching 20th century European history and the main problems or challenges which face teachers dealing with this period; to look at innovatory approaches; and to consider the possible form and content of the project's outcomes. The main findings of the research on textbooks were summarised in Section 4 of this Report. Current trends in teaching about twentieth century European history did not really feature in our discussions at the seminar but a number of challenges and problems were identified and these are discussed in section 6.1. Also, during the course of the three-day seminar, the participants, in three working groups, discussed issues relating to innovative teaching, the handbook for teachers and the guidelines for curriculum developers and textbook authors. I have attempted to combine their recommendations with my own in sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

6.1 Some potential challenges facing curriculum planners, textbook authors and history teachers

Teaching on the 'frontiers' of contemporary European history:

The term 'frontier' has two senses here. First, there is the perennial debate which has long exercised academic historians, history teachers, curriculum planners and Ministers of Education. Should history teaching cover the century right up to the present day or should there be a cut-off point. Those who argue against bringing history teaching right up to the present day usually emphasise three concerns:

- the incompleteness and uneven quality of the evidence available;
- the provisional nature of any interpretations or conclusions about recent events and developments because of the lack of hindsight;
- the difficulty for the teacher and the pupils of looking at recent events in a detached way because of their own personal involvement, commitments and loyalties.

The first of these concerns could apply to the teaching of any period of history. Indeed, it might be argued that when we teach about contemporary events and developments we usually have much more information and primary evidence to work with than when we teach about much earlier periods. The third concern is also one which could apply to teaching about events which took place in previous centuries, particularly when they relate to national or group identity or a nation's or group's dealings with other countries and groups. As some participants pointed out, it is important therefore that history teachers maintain a professional stance and they and their pupils look at recent events from a multiplicity of perspectives. Surely we are not saying that the civics teacher can look at recent events with detachment while the history teacher cannot?

The other concern, that is, the provisional nature of any interpretation of recent events seems to me to be a very good reason for teaching about contemporary developments rather than avoiding them. This is surely an important lesson for any history student to learn; i.e. that interpretations of events written by people who lived through them are not necessarily more valid, reliable or truthful than interpretations written by historians some years or centuries later. This, in itself, can be a useful means of learning, firstly, how to critically analyse the glut of information processed and transmitted by the mass media on a daily basis, and, secondly, to transfer that understanding and those skills to their study of texts and primary and secondary source material on earlier periods.

The term 'frontier' can also be used in a second sense because very few national syllabuses and history curricula could be said to offer pupils a genuinely European perspective on the twentieth century. The European dimension is usually introduced to illuminate the country's own national history, or the European coverage is limited to a particular region rather than the whole of Europe, or, as some participants from Central and Eastern European countries have pointed out, the European dimension may focus on western Europe and ignore the history of neighbouring countries.

Clearly the authors of the Project Guidelines to Curriculum Planners and textbook publishers and authors will need to look at practical and feasible ways of encouraging a change of thinking here. This is particularly critical given the finding in the Georg Eckert study that the skills-based Workbooks tend to offer less coverage of European history than the more conventional texts.

The timescale for a course on modern European history:

As we have seen at this seminar and in other recent Council of Europe seminars, many courses and textbooks on 20th century history do not begin in 1900. Some start earlier - even as early as 1870, and others take the First World War as their starting point. Dr. PINGEL observed in his report that many of the textbooks he and his colleagues analysed focused on what he referred to as 'the short 20th century' (1914 onwards) and noted that this often meant that the developments which preceded and contributed to the war were included instead in the syllabuses which covered the nineteenth century. He went on to observe that this was particularly apparent in those textbooks and syllabuses which followed a strictly chronological approach.

This raises another issue that needs to be carefully considered by the Project Group and those who will be responsible for writing both the Curriculum Guidelines and the Handbook for History Teachers. The Council of Europe's Education Committee [see CC-ED/HIST (96)4] has stressed the importance of developing approaches which will help young people to understand the forces, movements and events and the historical roots which have shaped Europe in the 20th century. Now, this suggests that it may be useful both in the design of textbooks and syllabuses to be flexible about the starting point for exploring 20th century European history. I think this applies to teaching about the First World War not only in terms of its causes and origins but also, as we saw in the presentation on the Historial, French perceptions of the Germans in 1914 and German perceptions of the French were strongly influenced by the experience of the Franco-Prussian War. This point could also apply equally to teaching about other aspects of 20th century history, particularly processes rather than events. For example, processes such as urbanisation, science and technology, medicine, developments in the visual and literary arts (such as modernism), etc.

The balance between chronology and thematic approaches:

The debate on this issue sometimes seems to be based on the assumption that the two approaches are incompatible with each other. In practice, it seems to me that it is wholly possible to combine the two approaches quite effectively. In other words, there is no reason why a syllabus on the 20th century cannot focus on events such as the Cuban Missile Crisis; relatively short blocks of time, such as the inter-war years or 1939-45; and themes and processes with relatively long-time scales, such as population movements, urbanisation or cultural movements, which may even refer the student back to topics which they covered when looking at the 19th century. This, after all, is how they often study earlier periods such as in the first millennium, or the middle ages, or the 16th and 17th centuries. What is important is that when looking at these themes and processes they are still set into the context of a broadly chronological framework not just so that they grasp the broad sequence of events but also because they can then see, for example, how apparently distinct political, social, economic, cultural and intellectual developments were actually influencing each other and may have been interdependent.

The balance between political/diplomatic history and social, economic and cultural history:

A number of participants and presenters commented on the tendency for the 20th century to be presented primarily as a period of wars and crises and for history teaching and textbooks to focus mainly on political and diplomatic history at the

expense of economic, social and cultural history. Many of the books written by academic historians, particularly in the dying years of the century appear to adopt a similar focus. This is also a widespread public perception. But, as Eric Hobsbawm, the British historian, has pointed out, perhaps people living through the 16th and 17th centuries also perceived their era as one of almost perpetual wars and crises, particularly religious ones, and yet now historians adopt a much wider perspective on that period. And yet, as he goes on to write, subsequent generations of historians may well find other developments in the twentieth century - economic, scientific, cultural and intellectual - just as, if not more, significant. In this respect, I found the suggestion by Peter BIHARI that history teachers might approach the 20th century in the same way as they approach the middle ages a very interesting and attractive idea. Again this is a possibility worth exploring by the authors of the handbook for teachers and the curriculum guidelines.

The balance between, on the one hand, teaching and learning appropriate skills and attitudes and on, the other hand, helping students to acquire knowledge, and historical understanding:

Judit STEFANY eloquently described her dilemma when she found that her students had undertaken some excellent project work but at the end of this their knowledge, when tested, was often inconsistent and incorrect. Now, at one level it could be argued that what is important here is whether 10 or 15 years on they are still interested in history and have acquired and still use transferable skills to understand the world they live in and the changes they are experiencing. But, at another level, I would argue that it is also important that in studying the history of any period or region, they acquire not only these skills but some kind of historical framework or overview of the century which is partly chronological and partly thematic. In this respect specific bits of knowledge can serve as building blocks for developing this kind of framework or overview and then perhaps it does not matter too much if, with time, young people forget most of these facts. They can always seek out the information again if they need it. The important residue of the learning lies in **both** the transferable skills and the historical interpretative framework.

Teaching about sensitive issues:

This issue was raised by Maitland STOBART in his presentation. He referred to the wider potential of some of the bilateral commissions and projects which have done pioneering work on how to treat sensitive issues in the history of relations between two countries or two groups of people. He also referred to some multilateral projects which have now emerged out of the work which the Council of Europe has promoted on mutual positive influences. Clearly there is scope here in the Handbook for Teachers and in the Curriculum Guidelines to offer examples of interesting and effective bilateral and multilateral projects of this kind. Some interesting educational work has also been done in divided societies such as Northern Ireland which could make an important contribution here. Effective strategies here have included:

- providing students with an opportunity to critically evaluate a variety of source materials which offer them different perspectives on the same events;
- looking at how historical interpretations and accounts have been influenced by the historian's own era and culture;

- using role plays and simulations to help students to put themselves into the shoes of others with different experiences and perspectives;
- and using personal accounts from people who lived through the events and comparing them with the interpretations offered by historians.

Constraints on changing the curriculum or changing the practice of teachers:

Virtually every discussion about introducing innovative approaches to teaching any aspect of the curriculum usually raises concerns about the constraints on teaching time, the limited financial, human and material resources, and the resistance from more conservative teachers. Clearly the Curriculum Guidelines and the Handbook for Teachers will need to take this context into account otherwise the project's outcomes will not have credibility. For this reason it will be essential that the selection of illustrative materials and the accompanying innovative cases studies and teaching packs will need to provide readers with information about the context within which these materials were developed and tried out in schools. The Curriculum Guidelines will also need to demonstrate a range of alternative ways in which innovative approaches can be introduced into history teaching rather than promote a single solution to a multi-faceted problem.

6.2 Innovative Approaches which emerged in discussions

What would constitute some really innovative approaches to teaching modern history? Are they innovative in the sense of using particular teaching and learning methods, or making innovative use of the new technologies, or focusing on topics and themes which are not usually covered in syllabuses on 20th century history. Or are they innovative in a more fundamental sense, for example, by shifting the emphasis away from a knowledge-based approach to one which emphasizes the development of skills and conceptual understanding, or by putting much more emphasis on independent learning or investigative learning?

Furthermore, if these approaches are innovative, can they still be widely adopted? In other words, will they **transfer** from the school or educational system in which they originated to other schools in other countries? And, if so, what needs to be done to ensure that this transference can be made? For example, can the Handbook and the teaching packs facilitate this process? Will it also be necessary to think about appropriate in-service training for teachers?

As has already been pointed out in one of the working groups, what is innovative in one country may be established practice in another. In that respect innovativeness is relative. On the other hand, if we look back at the problems and challenges outlined in Section 6.1, they seem to be common to most countries represented at the seminar. So, at this stage of the project I feel fairly optimistic that what will be developed could well have widespread transferability, particularly given the representativeness of the Project Group.

The three presentations from our French, Hungarian and Russian colleagues were at varying stages of development and it would therefore be invidious at this stage to offer a critical evaluation of their innovativeness and transferability to other countries and other educational contexts. Work now needs to be done by project teams to develop them into case studies with a potential for use by others. For example, it would be interesting to see if an approach which works in a Gymnasium or a Foundation school will work with children in other kinds of school.

However, I do want to identify one or two features of the case studies which already seem to me to be both interesting and potentially transferable to other contexts, themes and ways of teaching 20th century European history.

Many of the points which Anita DUJARDIN and Francis POQUET were making about the Historial could well apply to the development of other multi-media approaches to history learning. The emphasis on a discursive strategy which, as one of them put it, seeks to plant questions in the minds of the visitor and elicit a broader, analytical reflection, and the emphasis on providing teachers with in-service training and a dossier with ideas for support material (including preparation and follow-up work) seems to be a highly suitable strategy also for the development of CD-ROMs, publishable simulations and games, audio-visual materials and educational websites as well.

The emphasis in Peter BIHARI's presentation on the strategy of cross-referencing also seems to have considerable potential. This is a strategy which is often described as good practice in history teaching and textbook writing but not so easy to find in reality.

Cross-referencing in history teaching can be both vertical and horizontal. Vertical cross-referencing is similar to putting the student into the role of a time traveller looking for traces of the longer past in the themes and events they are studying and identifying linkages as well as causal factors to explain not only why something happened but also why people perceive it in the way that they do. By horizontal cross-referencing I mean helping the student to recognise that parallel developments in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres may be inter-dependent and mutually influencing each other. In this respect a project focusing on a cultural theme offers many opportunities for cross-referencing not only with what may have been happening in, for example, the visual arts elsewhere in Europe at the time, but also with what may have been happening in politics and social life at the same time.

The idea of focusing on the history of a family, which Sergei KUSHNIR referred to in his presentation, also seems to offer a great deal of scope for innovative teaching, particularly if the history of a chosen family or families is explored over the whole century rather than just a limited period of time. There are also a lot of opportunities here for involving students in the collection and analysis of oral history, the history of minorities, the impact on social life of major political events and wars, all of which can also be supported with material from film and photographic archives. The teachers' skill, however, may well lie in their ability to help students to make these cross-references and individual links. Again there may be scope within the Handbook for showing how this could be done using some illustrations from the case studies.

Clearly the value of the innovative case studies lies in their potential transferability not just to other schools in the countries of origin but across the whole of Europe. Therefore, I think it will be essential to adopt an agreed and common evaluation strategy for all five case studies, and possibly also the teaching packs as well. I use the term evaluation here in the Anglo-Saxon sense, not of student assessment but of a method for:

- identifying any problems which emerge;
- assessing the likely impact of the approach on pupils;
- trialling the approach in one or two schools not involved in the original development;
- and assessing the likely resource implications for any other school which would like to develop a similar approach.

Thinking about this evaluation process needs to be undertaken now rather than left until the development work on the case studies has been completed.

6.3 The Handbook for History Teachers

There was clear support at the seminar for the idea of a Handbook for history teachers on teaching about European history in the 20th century. It also became apparent during the course of the seminar (and some other recent Council of Europe seminars) that there is a considerable amount of agreement on what the handbook should contain. The following list is by no means exhaustive but covers those proposals on which there seemed to be a virtual consensus:

- suggestions on the kinds of themes and topics that might be included with some examples of topic and lesson planning (and guidance on their appropriateness for different age groups and ability ranges);
- suggestions for different pedagogical approaches and routes that could achieve the same ends (thereby allowing for the different contexts and resource constraints within which teachers in different systems have to work);

In both cases, here, there should be plenty of useful material from the proposed teaching packs and the innovative case studies but it will be essential that any examples include some indication of the circumstances in which they have been developed and trialled (the age and ability range of the students, the development time required, the resources needed, etc.)

- advice, with examples, on how to integrate skills-based learning into a predominantly knowledge-based syllabus or curriculum framework;
- ideas on the use of out-of-school learning opportunities, such as museums, archives and exhibitions, and how to integrate them into classroom teaching;
- ideas on how to integrate the new technologies into schemes for teaching modern European history;

- advice and ideas on the use of visual archive material on the 20th century;
- ideas and advice on using primary source documents and material on recent and current events provided by the mass media;
- advice on how to develop and evaluate their own multi-media resource material for use with their students;
- advice on handling controversial and sensitive issues, particularly ones which relate to national or group identity; relations with other countries (especially neighbouring countries); treatment of minority groups; and experiences of war and military occupation;
- A guide to resources and source material across Europe which teachers can access;
- A guide to electronic resources, including CD-ROMs and useful Internet websites for teaching about aspects of 20th century European history;
- Information on where to find out about possibilities for exchanges and electronic links with schools in other European countries;
- Information on ongoing bilateral and multilateral projects which have relevance to teaching about the 20th century.

In each case I think it will be crucial that all advice, ideas and examples have been tested out in classrooms, preferably by other teachers within the project team and not just those who are writing those particular sections of the Handbook. Also the Handbook needs to be written in such a way that it makes a positive contribution to the continuing professional development of the teachers who use it. This is likely to entail providing the reader with alternatives rather than suggesting ‘the preferred way’ of approaching something; providing opportunities to explore the rationale behind different strategies and approaches and identifying where the reader could find more ideas and information if they wished to follow up a particular suggestion in the Handbook.

6.4 The Guidelines for curriculum planners, textbook authors and publishers.

Generally speaking I suspect that the Project Group needs to give further consideration to the relationship between the Guidelines and the Handbook and perhaps take steps to ensure that the writers of both documents are fully aware of what the others are doing.

The Guidelines could cover such considerations as:

- A checklist for evaluating textbooks which cover aspects of 20th century European history in terms of the needs of history teachers;

- A summary of the key findings emerging from the study undertaken by the Georg Eckert Institute on history textbooks, with suggestions on how some of the problems identified (e.g. the relative lack of coverage of modern European history in Workbooks) have been addressed by some publishers and textbook authors;
- Examples drawn from the Report by the Georg Eckert Institute on different approaches to a particular theme, topic or event and their relative advantages and disadvantages from a pedagogical viewpoint;
- Ideas, with examples, on how to introduce more flexibility into Curriculum frameworks and National Curricula to allow more scope for a broader European perspective on the 20th century;
- Ideas, with examples, on how to introduce more flexibility into National Curricula to provide more opportunities for students to study the cultural, intellectual, social and economic history of the 20th century as well as political history;
- Discussion of possible criteria for the selection of content for teaching about 20th century European history;
- Discussions of the strengths and weaknesses and potential learning gains and losses of structuring the syllabus for 20th Century European history in different ways: e.g. strictly chronological or thematic within a chronological framework or loosely thematic or opting for an epoch approach similar to that often used for teaching about the Middle Ages;
- Guidelines on teaching sensitive and controversial issues and themes, with illustrations of bilateral and multilateral projects as well as examples of teaching (and publishing) on specific themes, such as The Shoah;
- Guidance on appropriate developments in initial and in-service teacher training to support the curriculum and teaching developments proposed in the Guidelines.

7. Some Final Thoughts

We are still in the first year of a three-year project and some of the various elements (particularly the case studies) still need to be finalised. However, as Maitland STOBART observed in his presentation, it is possible now to identify what the added value of this new project could be:

- a wider range of perspectives on European history than is currently the case in most history curricula for 14-16 year olds;
- guidance on how the new technologies can be effectively developed and exploited for history teaching;

- a concerted effort across Europe to work together to further develop textbooks, multi-media resources and curricula;
- a clear strategy for the treatment of sensitive and controversial themes and issues;
- a commitment to assess the feasibility and, if possible, implement the development of a CD ROM on modern European history or some other kind of multi-media software, such as websites, whichever seems to be the most appropriate.