



# The Palgrave Handbook of Conflict and History Education in the Post-Cold War Era

*Edited by*  
Luigi Cajani · Simone Lässig  
Maria Repoussi

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“History textbook expert Terence Leonard once lamented that if only Foreign Offices would read the history textbooks of other countries they could save all the money they spend on agents’ reports about public opinion abroad. As this unprecedented guide finally brings together dozens of recent history education conflicts around the globe, one would hope that diplomats and their masters will take this golden opportunity and act smarter than they did in Leonard’s time. This Handbook’s advice is threefold: watch the tribulations of history education, peer into a country’s soul in the process, and, most of all, handle that knowledge responsibly.”

—Antoon De Baets, Professor of History, Ethics and Human Rights, *University of Groningen, the Netherlands*

“From “Argentina” to “Zimbabwe”, Cajani, Lässig and Repoussi have assembled a collection of fifty-seven accounts of conflict over history education since 1989, arrayed in alphabetical order by country. This encyclopaedic project is an invitation to international, comparative theory building, with the raw materials provided largely by locally grounded participant-observers in the history education conflicts. The editors provide a stimulating introduction to open up the comparative possibilities: who are the main actors and how do they exercise power? What are their key forms, forums and strategies? How do war, decolonisation, the fall of dictators and the rise of nationalist populism shake up assumptions about the teaching of the past? What is internationally shared and what is nationally distinctive? The Palgrave Handbook of Conflict and History Education will be an indispensable tool for researchers examining these questions in the coming years.”

—Peter Seixas, Professor Emeritus, *University of British Columbia, Canada*

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Editors

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## Preface

It was in 2010, during the 21st Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences in Amsterdam, that the idea for this book was born. Even if ‘History Wars’ had not been a major theme of the congress, the topic would undoubtedly still have featured in many formal and informal discussions held during its course. It became evident that history-related conflict has become a worldwide phenomenon and increasingly the subject of public debate in many societies. It also became clear that these wars over the events of history as such were often translated into battles over the teaching of history in schools.

This was a phenomenon, we realised, that called for examination from a global perspective. We felt that a comprehensive reference work on contemporary conflicts over history education, which would analyse not only internationally well-known cases but also instances that have received little attention outside their national or regional contexts, would encourage research in this area and provide a useful guide for those approaching the field. Our intention in embarking upon the compilation of such a work was to map the conflicts, identify commonalities, locate and illuminate hidden rationales and connect the individual cases with the fundamental changes that have taken place globally since the early 1990s. We therefore invited scholars from around the world to submit case studies. To ensure consistency across the contributions, we held a number of workshops and were able to present some results of these efforts at the 22nd Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, which took place in Jinan, China, in 2015. The joint session on ‘Memory Wars: History Education between Politics, Scholarship, and the Media’ drew a wonderful arc between

the original idea for this book, which had come into being at the previous congress, five years previously and thousands of miles away, and the presentation of initial results in the same intellectual environment.

The editors would like to take this opportunity to express their grateful thanks to all those who have actively supported and furthered this project. First among them are the contributors, who undertook the task of mapping public debates on history education and providing tools for further study. We owe them gratitude for their patience as well as their labours; a book with this kind of scope and so many scholars from highly diverse academic cultures is never a speedy publication project. Our thanks also go to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza', both of which organised and co-funded our two project meetings in Rome and Thessaloniki. We are particularly indebted to the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, without whose long-standing commitment this ambitious project would not have been possible. The institute offered a unique scholarly space in which to develop the rationale for this handbook during several workshops held at the 'Villa von Bülow' in Braunschweig, Germany. The GEI's research library was an indispensable resource for such an international project, as were the network of scholars and the digital infrastructure the institute has developed over many years. Additionally, the GEI supported the publication itself by allocating the resources necessary to achieve such a complex project.

*Dr Marcus Otto* enriched our discussions and contributed enormously towards developing the categorisation of cases employed in this handbook. Thanks are also due to *Michael Annegarn-Gläß*, *Lisa Gerlach* and *Dr Wendy Anne Kopisch*, whose assistance in the coordination of this project was indispensable. Without their commitment, diligence and reliability, this book would never have reached publication. The same is true of *Dr Katherine Ebisch-Burton*, who did a wonderful job in translating some of the case studies. The time, the impressive knowledge, and the formidable passion she invested in translating and editing the introduction was extremely valuable. *Sophie Perl* and *Nicola Watson* edited and/or translated the contributions to this book with precision, skill and experience. We are also grateful to *Eva Fischer*, *Meyrick Payne* and *Karolina Kubista* for their support at various stages of the publication process. The German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, supported the completion of this publication in many ways during its final stages, for which the editors express

their gratitude; particularly to *David Lazar*, senior editor at the GHI. At Palgrave Macmillan, we extend our warmest gratitude to *Eleanor Christie* and *Rebecca Wyde* for their expertise and understanding of the complexities involved in such a project; their invaluable support is much appreciated.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all colleagues and fellows at the Georg Eckert Institute who supported us over the course of this project with their knowledge, access to their networks of scholars and their comments on our rationale, and of course to the two anonymous reviewers whose input and expertise were vital to the completion of the book.

Rome, Italy  
Washington, DC  
Thessaloniki, Greece  
September 2018

Luigi Cajani  
Simone Lässig  
Maria Repoussi

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Directives, Mechanisms, and Challenges in Lebanon, Syria, and Oman', in *The Politics of Education Reform in the Middle East: Self and Other in Textbooks and Curricula*, edited by S. Alayan, A. Rohde and S. Dhoub, 15–39. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012; *From Citizenship to Citizenship Education: Processes and Challenges*. Byblos: International Centre for Human Sciences, 2012; *Holistic Education for Basic Education Students*. Beirut: Dar Al Fikr Al Lubnani, 2008; *Civics: Its Curriculum and Teaching Methods*. Muscat: Ministry of Education/Beirut: Dar Al Fikr Al Lubnani, 2006.

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sobre la enseñanza y aprendizaje de la Historia: Chile 1990–2012’. In *La investigación en la enseñanza de la historia en América Latina*, edited by J. Pagès and S. Plá, 87–109. Méico: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional/Bonilla Artigas Editores, 2014; ‘Las habilidades para la comprensión del pasado: comprender e interpretar históricamente’. In *La didáctica de la historia y la formación de ciudadanos en el mundo actual*, edited by I. Muñoz and L. Osandón Santiago. Chile: Centro de Investigaciones Diego Barros Arana, 2013.

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Literacy: A Review of the Literature'. In *Yesterday & Today* 2 (2009), 41–66 (with J. Wassermann); 'Can PowerPoint enable History learners to "do History"?'. In *Yesterday & Today* 3 (2008), 120–135.

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School Textbooks as a Tool of Understanding and Stability'. In *Is Southeastern Europe Doomed to Instability? A Regional Perspective*, edited by D. A. Sotiropoulos and T. Veremis, 90–105. London: Frank Cass, 2002.

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Selected publications: *Der Wille zum Subjekt. Zur Genealogie politischer Inklusion in Frankreich (16.–20. Jahrhundert)*. Bielefeld: transcript, 2014; ‘Postcolonial Memory Politics in Educational Media’. Special issue of *JEMMS. Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 5, no. 1 (2013) (edited with E. Fuchs); ‘Das Subjekt der Nation in der *condition postcoloniale*. Krisen der Repräsentation und der Widerstreit postkolonialer



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# 1

## Introduction: History Education Conflicts Around the World—Backgrounds, Settings, Foci

Luigi Cajani, Simone Lässig, and Maria Repoussi

Part of the importance of both historical research and the history taught in schools lies in the broad consensus among historians and wider society that our past is determinative of our way of being and of responding to the present. It is therefore self-evident that the right to determine the character of this being and pass that character down to succeeding generations may well find itself contested. History's power to arrange, define and interpret the past on behalf of a given society, state or group has consistently exempted the discipline from the allegation levelled, on occasion rightly, at many other academic fields—of existing in an ivory tower, under privileged shelter from the influence of conflicting interests. To this day, historical narratives have been integral to the agendas and rhetoric of a wide range of political stakeholders, and have been challenged, battered and shaped by the rigours of public discourse and controversy. Countless examples from all periods of history and almost all world regions highlight the extensive use of history for political and ideological purposes, many of them nationalistic and chauvinistic in nature. It seems almost inevitable, then, that history is one of the most culturally and politically sensitive subjects taught in schools. Since it was first incorporated into school curricula in the nineteenth century, governments and political authorities have assigned to history education a central role in shaping social and political consensus, conscious of its power to help define allegiances, collective identities, social cohesion and the boundaries of social exclusion. States continue to recommend, impose or enforce official versions of history in the educational sector, despite the challenges to this practice articulated by historians, educators, intellectuals, journalists and social movements or political groupings.

Recent years have seen mounting academic and public interest in conflicts around history education, triggered primarily by significant global, social, cultural and political transformations in the wake of the Cold War, the development of a multipolar world order, the re-emergence of ethnic nationalisms, accelerated globalisation processes and the digital revolution. Awareness is growing of the fact that controversies about history education often act as flashpoints of conflict between and within nations over interpretations of the past, which in turn are closely related to social orders, their legitimacy in the present and visions of the future.

## The Background to This Book

### Conflicts Around History Education and History Textbook Diplomacy: A Look Back

History education and textbooks have been at the core of processes of national identity-building and of relationships to other countries since the rise of modern education systems. The debates, controversies and conflicts around the subject date back to history's first appearance in formal school curricula. Considered a veritable *instrumentum regni* for forming good citizens, patriots and in many cases soldiers, school history was soon befallen by militaristic tendencies, reflected in the vision of raising 'soldiers who love their guns',<sup>1</sup> which likewise became its first objective to come under critical fire. Textbooks and other educational media occupy a significant space in this nexus of identity-building and controversy. They are both constructions and constructors of social orders and of the knowledge to which a society ascribes particular relevance, which always includes and reflects representations of a collective self and of the value systems upheld by a societal body. History textbooks thus acquire the status of prime instruments driving national and citizenship education and the formation and transformation of public consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

At the outset of the twentieth century, pacifist movements, socialist circles and teachers' organisations critiqued this function of educational media, seeking to revise history textbooks in order to rid them of images of 'the enemy'.<sup>3</sup> The imperative of the broad commitment to peace undertaken in the aftermath of the First World War drove the evolution of these movements at both international and non-governmental level; a rich literature<sup>4</sup> details the various inter- and supranational initiatives aiming at the elimination of extreme nationalism and militarism from history textbooks. At the very first general meeting of the League of Nations in 1920, Japanese teachers petitioned for

the examination and amendment of history and geography textbooks, an initiative in which they were supported by English trade unions.<sup>5</sup> Soon afterwards, in 1922, the League of Nations set up the *Comité International de la Coopération Intellectuelle*, whose mandate included the revision of history textbooks.<sup>6</sup> In 1933, several Latin American states signed an agreement to periodically review their history textbooks, and in 1937, under the umbrella of the League of Nations, 26 states signed the first and to this day only international declaration on the teaching of history and the revision of textbooks. Non-governmental initiatives in this area included the foundation of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace<sup>7</sup> and, in 1926, of the *Fédération internationale des associations d'instituteurs*. Rooted, notably, in an initiative of two teachers' associations, the French *Syndicat National des Instituteurs* and the German *Deutscher Lehrerverein*, the *Fédération* sought to promote educational collaboration 'to prepare for peace through the cooperation of peoples in freedom'.<sup>8</sup> In the interwar period, 20 international and 44 national historians' organisations were involved in textbook-related discussions.<sup>9</sup> These included the International Historians' Congress of 1928 in Oslo and the International Conference of History Teaching, which had been set up in 1932 in The Hague with the explicit aim of revising textbooks with a view to promoting international understanding.

The practical outcome of these initiatives was very limited. The international political situation between the world wars, especially during the 1930s, was not conducive to moral disarmament and most states were unwilling to accept any interference in a field as important and delicate as history education.<sup>10</sup> One meaningful case is an initiative of the German and French teachers' associations referred to above, whose representatives met in Paris in 1935 to revise their history textbooks in relation to sensitive issues. After a frank debate, they produced a set of recommendations, only to see them disavowed by the German government in its endeavour to implement the National Socialist version of history in Germany's textbooks.<sup>11</sup> This hurdle notwithstanding, the initiative cannot truly be called a failure, as its existence enabled the rapid resumption of communication after the war, leading to the early establishment of Franco-German agreements on textbooks.<sup>12</sup>

After the Second World War, endeavours to disarm history education and to radically transform it into an instrument for the promotion of peace and cooperation were resumed with renewed commitment, above all on the part of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe (CoE). Progressing beyond the idea of bilateral or multilateral history textbook revision, UNESCO proposed a new comprehensive vision, calling upon schools to teach world history,

emphasise cultural and scientific topics and highlight ‘the interdependence of peoples and cultures and their contribution ... to the common heritage’.<sup>13</sup> French historian Lucien Febvre, referring to the limitations of earlier initiatives for the revision of national history textbooks, emphasised the relationship between a history conceptualised as the history of humanity and the notion of education for peace when presenting the plan for this project:

[T]extbooks, nationalist by definition, designed to glorify the individual spirit of a people, cannot but place it in opposition to neighbouring peoples ... National history based on politics, as it is taught more or less everywhere, will never tend to reconcile peoples. All one can ask of it is not to set off one against the other. If one wants to do more than this it is necessary to do something new ... to create the opportunity for a new kind of teaching: an apolitical approach to world history, which is by definition pacifist.<sup>14</sup>

UNESCO’s engagement produced two major, multivolume historical works: *The History of Mankind*,<sup>15</sup> published in the 1960s, and the seven-volume *History of Humanity*, published from 1994.<sup>16</sup> UNESCO also had history teaching and textbooks in mind when it initiated its project to write a *General History of Africa* in 1964. This endeavour, conducted over the course of 30 years primarily by African historians and resulting in nine volumes, took a pluralist perspective on the continent’s history but has found only limited use in classrooms. History teaching in many African countries persists in taking a Eurocentric or nationalist view.<sup>17</sup> A similarly low impact emerged from the ‘Cultural Charter for Africa’, issued in 1976 by the Organisation of African Unity, which addressed the issue of history teaching and textbooks within a conflict-laden post-colonial framework.<sup>18</sup> An attempt to remedy the limited influence of these initiatives commenced in 2009 in the shape of a project aiming to use the groundbreaking volumes produced under the ‘Cultural Charter’ in educational settings.<sup>19</sup>

The Council of Europe, in line with its mission to create the cultural foundations for a European union, focused on developing a common European vision of history with the potential to overcome dangerous nationalisms. Its first initiative was a series of six conferences, held between 1953 and 1958, which provided a forum for an unprecedented exchange of ideas among historians from all the Council’s member states and gave rise to lists of specific recommendations for textbook authors.<sup>20</sup> The CoE’s activities did precipitate long-term effects; over the decades, in tune with the new European political climate, the accent of the narrative in the history textbooks of many Western European states slowly shifted away from exclusively national viewpoints and

towards a broader European perspective. After 1989, the accession to the CoE of many states with specific histories east of the Iron Curtain and tendencies towards a novel form of ethnic nationalism changed the landscape.<sup>21</sup> Historians and teachers from these states 'in democratic transition' have been involved in efforts to diffuse the idea of a shared European history and to enhance mutual understanding in post-authoritarian and post-conflict contexts.<sup>22</sup>

From the outset, the European effort in reorienting history education has included a significant contribution by the *Internationales Institut für Schulbuchverbesserung* (International Institute for Textbook Improvement), founded in Braunschweig in 1951 by the German historian Georg Eckert, in whose honour it was renamed the *Georg-Eckert-Institut für internationale Schulbuchforschung* (Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research) after his death in 1975. The institute has organised a number of international, mainly bilateral conferences on collaborative textbook revision. While, from the 1950s onwards, it was possible to establish conference series or even textbook commissions with NATO member states such as France,<sup>23</sup> the United Kingdom,<sup>24</sup> and Italy,<sup>25</sup> the involvement of states under socialist regimes generally remained restricted during the Cold War. The dialogue on textbook revision opened between West Germany and Czechoslovakia in 1967, during the Prague Spring, was subsequently suspended by the Husák government and not resumed for another 20 years.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, the commission formed of Polish and West German members established in 1972 as part of West Germany's policy of détente with the Eastern bloc has been active ever since.<sup>27</sup> The first German-Israeli textbook commission was convened in 1981, and a second followed in 2010.<sup>28</sup>

Another impetus for rethinking history education was the advent of calls for democracy and justice in historical representations of various social groups. During the 1960s, social activists and scholars, principally in Western states, alleged that history curricula and textbooks were conservative instruments of control.<sup>29</sup> As Linda Levstik argues in the context of the United States, 'in a society torn by [issues of] civil rights[,] women's rights, and anti-war protests, it was difficult to maintain the illusion that a unified history of progress and consensus was possible'.<sup>30</sup> The transformations in history education emergent at this time drew further momentum from new epistemological premises in various fields of scholarship. Julian Dierkes attributed the changes to West German curricula that took place, for instance, in the 1960s to the shift from *Historismus* to *Sozialgeschichte*,<sup>31</sup> from an emphasis on historicism to a focus on social history. Western societies in particular witnessed a revolution in education during this period and in the decades that followed, with a shift from teacher- to pupil-centred and from expository towards investigative



learning.<sup>32</sup> Previously silenced agents of history gained a voice in the *public* historical narrative, and new topics and historiographical approaches entered the *educational* canon.<sup>33</sup> Research on the histories of minority groups, non-Western cultures, childhood, women and everyday life challenged the notion of one single national narrative revolving around political events and the actions of ‘the great and the good’. Textbooks evolved with the times<sup>34</sup>; Francis Fitzgerald claimed for the US context that ‘the text[book]s of the 1960s contain the most dramatic rewriting of history ever to take place in American schoolbooks’.<sup>35</sup> The introduction to a collective work appearing in 1970 under the direction of Martin Ballard, entitled *New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History*, called for history teaching ‘to break out of [its] narrow nationalistic straitjacket ... In a century of worldwide communications—and indeed of worldwide warfare—it has become inexcusable that teachers should continue to work from syllabuses which were designed to prepare pupils for life in a narrower environment’.<sup>36</sup>

Such new approaches to history education, however, taking root primarily in Western nations, did not serve to quell conflict around what and how to teach when it came to history. Indeed, the reverse appears true: with the dramatic changes in global politics that unfolded in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new and more complex phase of controversies on history education took the stage. The collapse of the Soviet Union and of the geopolitical system of the Cold War engendered a new proliferation of historical voices speaking out for the first time in and beyond the domestic public space. Additionally, these changes permitted the opening of wider historical debate and reinvigorated interest in the historical past. This was particularly the case in the post-communist world, in relation to issues and periods of history which had in Soviet-era societies been subject to either proscription or treatment in line with specific ideological strictures. A similar process unfolded after the collapse of Yugoslavia. The profound shifts in international power structures and relationships that occurred alongside societal and technological developments as the century’s last decade unfolded widened the participatory sphere in public debate to an unprecedented degree. This development had an inseparable and seemingly inescapable converse: the other side, so to speak, of the progressive coin. This manifested in the resurgence of nationalisms and ideologies centring on ethnic identity as the major, contentiously interrelated blocs that had dominated the post-war political landscape crumbled and made room for the return of the long-repressed in the shape of identities previously subsumed to overarching alliances and antagonisms. In this atmosphere, the ongoing legacy of conflicts around the world has continued to exert an influence on history education, and new conflicts, or new forms of conflicts, are emerging.

In a development contrasting with this rise of nationalisms, the accelerating process of globalisation since the 1989/1990 caesura has engendered an increasingly worldwide dimension to history and memory, manifest, *inter alia*, in the emergence of post-colonialism, the multicultural transformation of many hitherto homogeneous and culturally mono-hegemonic societies and increasing internationalisation among academic historians and history educators. These trends are concomitant with a rise in awareness of the problematic nature of traditional allegiances to nation states. It is important to note in this context that transnational perspectives alone do not necessarily protect against the infiltration of history teaching by identity politics or the influence of ideological concepts on curriculum development and textbook writing; as some case studies in this book demonstrate, transnationality does not automatically translate into multiperspectivity.

The growing influence of global standards and norms in national and regional education policy, as formulated and promoted by such organisations as UNESCO, the World Bank, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and UN agencies and frequently delivered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), is a further facet of the rise of transnationality in relation to history education. Interventions based on such standards, which have frequently come in the wake of or in response to conflict, represent both illustrations and conduits of convergence in education policy and practice across the globe. To a certain extent, textbooks and curricula in nearly all countries show traces of the presence of global horizons, and calls for the acceptant recognition of cultural, ethnic or religious difference are becoming increasingly familiar tropes of history education discourse. This phenomenon both emerges from and illustrates the evolution of what Stichweh has termed 'global spaces of relevance'.<sup>37</sup> However, according to this interpretation—and as a caution against assumptions of ever-increasing convergence and concomitant homogenisation—the definition and application of global standards, which like national discourses are often redolent with images and discursive figures from hegemonic centres of symbolic power, do not necessarily lead to the standardisation of norms, values and practices. Instead, global standards are culturally translated into specific local, regional and/or national contexts, leaving uniquely configured traces of global horizons in the classroom.<sup>38</sup> In some instances, international involvement and cross-border debate have had a direct influence on the course of nation-specific history education conflicts. These include the case of Slovakia, the involvement of international institutions in drawing up and evaluating new educational standards in Georgia and the various international initiatives in Burundi. In her chapter on Bosnia and Herzegovina in this book, Katarina

Batarilo-Henschen further raises the pertinent issue of potential conflict between ‘the need to promote local initiative and capacity-building and the need to provide guidance from above’.

## **This Handbook and Its Objectives**

This handbook fills a research lacuna by presenting an unprecedentedly broad perspective on the new quality of debates around history education since the early 1990s. The work on which it is built includes a number of important publications: theoretical examinations of the relationship between schooling and social conflict<sup>39</sup> alongside research exploring specific public debates on history education<sup>40</sup> and history education policies around reconciliation after periods of conflict.<sup>41</sup> A rich literature takes account of instances relating to individual states<sup>42</sup> or regions.<sup>43</sup> Other work has sought to cast light on the correlations and interconnections between memory, historiography and history education.<sup>44</sup> A recent publication, likewise conceived as a handbook, explores, *inter alia*, the return of ‘the nation’ in history education.<sup>45</sup>

We invited 62 scholars to report on 57 states that, since roughly 1990, have witnessed and experienced major controversies over history education with significant media coverage and/or public attention. Cases limited to expert discussions on pedagogical technicalities have not been included, unless their prominence obscured broader disagreements on history education. We have, however, highlighted selected cases of states where, contrary to reasonable expectation, the end of the Cold War did not spark profound public controversies over history teaching; reunified Germany is one notable example. In these cases, our interest is in why history education, notwithstanding any controversial discussion, did *not* come under public fire after 1990. The resulting book is intended to provide readers with a fundamental map of these controversies. It explores the similarities and divergences characterising them and issues that transcend national contexts, as well as supplying comprehensive guides to further reading and research on each case study. In an increasingly multipolar world, the analysis of conflicts over history education requires national, transnational and global perspectives. Accordingly, this book, while exploring specific cases as regional phenomena, also applies a transnational and in part comparative approach to individual national or regional controversies in history education and to their impact on discourses around social cohesion and national or collective identities.

The book is thus designed as a systematic work of reference. All entries follow a specific model: each author reconstructs a particular national debate,

first tracing the historical background of the controversy and outlining any relevant antecedents and then proceeding to narrate and contextualise it. The entries include documentation consisting of excerpts from and/or discussions of original sources relating to the conflicts and conclude with a guide for further reading.

The analysis of each case was guided by the following questions:

- Has there been any substantial conflict, public debate or controversy on history education in the country in question since the beginning of the 1990s?
- Had debates and controversies on history education taken place previously in the country? If so, what continuities and/or changes can be observed?
- What prompted the more recent controversy or conflict? What are the main concerns of the debate, its principal agents, its primary competing discourses and central arguments?
- What roles have the state, social groups, and agents and agencies of memory played in discussions of the controversy in public media? Have there been moves towards polarisation or resolution? Specifically, how have teachers, academics, journalists and politicians been involved?
- What was, or is, the nature of the relationship between collective memories, master narratives and counter-narratives of the past, and the progression of the conflict? How do memories and narratives interact with broader historical and educational discourses?

These guiding questions and the research perspectives brought to bear on the case studies by all authors have inspired a detailed analysis of each case study. Due to its systematic approach, the handbook not only provides significant new insights into specific cases but also enables us to recognise common factors shared by multiple instances of conflict. The next part of this introduction goes on to provide a multidimensional categorisation of the conflicts detailed in the book. Here we highlight similarities, parallels and contrasts among the discursive configurations within which controversies took place and the historical, political and societal factors which shaped the dominant type(s) or mode(s) of conflict in each instance. In thus outlining broad forms and settings of controversy and conflict and linking individual instances, we are consistently conscious that the complex, multifaceted nature of these debates produces a significant overlap. The entries on all case studies are listed in alphabetical order. Other classifications would have been possible but would have reflected neither this overlap nor the complexity of the debates narrated by the authors and the entanglement of causes and effects of the conflicts

covered in this book. This introduction, rather than any running order of entries, thus serves to provide a sense of key configurations and categorisations relating to the types of conflict the book discusses.

Before going on to categorise the conflicts as described, we commence this section with an overview of the protagonists, forms of manifestation and strategies typically featuring in the conflicts the book details, across all national settings and politico-historical backdrops. We note at this juncture that we mention a number of case studies more than once in various contexts and others not at all, which is by no means to be read as an inference as to relevance or importance. Rather than giving an exhaustive summary of the volume's content, we seek to provide an analytical overview, illuminating on an exemplary basis the forms, elements, backdrops and settings of the controversies seen across the globe since the 1989/1990 rupture and realignment of the world order. Overall, this handbook draws a complex picture of both continuity and discontinuity. It gives readers comprehensive access to numerous contemporary cultural, social and political controversies around history education, locating them within their global contexts. Finally, it remains our duty to point out that some highly relevant cases could not be included in the book due to the sensitive political circumstances in which they have unfolded.

### **A Note on Terminology**

In discussing and explaining these historical phenomena, we use a scale of terms compatible with the differing degrees of intensity and the divergent significance of conflicts around history education in different periods and spaces. The entries variously refer to 'debates', 'conflicts', 'controversies', and, in some instances, to 'history wars'<sup>46</sup> when highlighting or referring to conflicts marked by intense hostility or of a particularly adversarial nature. All of these terms are charged with a variety of conceptions and perceptions, dependent on their national and historical contexts. In this sense, and in light of the great geographical, cultural and ideological diversity characterising the entries in this book, it is impossible to provide fixed global definitions of these terms to ensure their connotations remain consistent. Each author uses the terms in a manner commensurate with his or her academic, socio-political and socio-cultural background; we did not issue binding definitions or guidelines when inviting authors to contribute. We define 'conflicts' as intense controversies about substantial political, social and national issues related to or moving beyond history education.

## **Recurring Patterns in the Conflicts: Actors, Themes, Forms and Strategies**

This part of the introduction seeks to plot the ground for our global map of history education conflicts. In so doing, it takes account of manifold features and differences in the terrain. Debates about history education may remain within a national context or incorporate a binational, transnational or international dimension. For instance, we might distinguish between international (bi- or multilateral) issues, internecine conflicts within a (national) society, and general domestic controversies about national history and identity construction. Controversies may revolve around, for instance, nationalism, national identity, interpretations of past regimes, violent conflict, or issues of reconciliation. One central theme of the conflicts is the struggle for primacy between one national master narrative and more than one multiculturally informed narrative of diversity and plurality; this struggle may reflect conflicts along the lines of political ideology (left/right) and power relations between majority/minority groups or issues of federal/national versus regional identity. Debates on history education also frequently make reference to the resignification of collective narratives about past conflicts, dictatorship, or imperial domination, narratives formed by a sense of victimhood on the one hand and complex approaches to culpability and responsibility on the other. In numerous cases, the lines of conflict are drawn along a basic antagonism between the upholding of national identity or nationalistic ideology and the advocacy of critical historical thinking, multiple perspectives and new approaches such as gender history, oral history and historical anthropology.

### **Actors and Themes**

The debates analysed in this book differ markedly in terms of the range of societal actors involved. A central factor characterising changes in the nature of debate around history education since the dawn of the 1990s is the widening of the participatory sphere in line with the democratisation of public discourse on history. At the same time, new and distinct agencies and forums of memory have emerged, such as social media, which have increased the numbers of societal actors involved in conflicts around history education in the post-Cold War era. A contrasting yet closely linked development is the rise of a new wave of nationalism or national populism.<sup>47</sup> Rather than being a completely new historical phenomenon,<sup>48</sup> national populism is remarkable in current historical culture due to its growth and its dimensions. Appealing to public anxieties in

the wake of rapid change, national populism uses the past as a refuge and national history as the foundations for an argument based around a putative national exceptionalism. This development has engendered a proliferation of public figures claiming legitimacy in speaking for the history of their nation. Such protagonists in the debates from which conflicts have emerged have included politicians, war veterans' associations, lobbyist groups, journalists and broadcasters, historians, history teachers, educational experts, intellectuals, advocates for the memory of past atrocities or other events, ethnic and religious communities and social movements. We have witnessed the new phenomenon of groups being constituted specifically in order to enter the debates and, in many instances, exacerbate the conflicts.

Such public figures exercise their agency where and how they believe they can be most effective. One group, for example, might turn to mass political action; another might opt for lobbying or attempting to influence diplomatic relations between states. Alongside the growing involvement of international organisations in history education and its controversies, the rise of NGOs in this field has constituted a striking new development that can be observed in Serbia or in Moldova, for instance. Those active in history education are now less connected with national teachers' organisations, as had primarily been the case between the world wars, and are instead organised along more 'bottom-up' lines, with the support of institutional or private funders. Developments seeming, perhaps ironically, to pull the other way appear, for instance, in the **Balkans**, where the spread of nationalism and the degree of its influence are significant factors in the debates.

We may identify three principal fields which inform conflicts on history education: politics, historiography and media (both print and, latterly, digital). While education and its academic study undoubtedly comprise a further influential arena, these have rarely initiated or perpetuated conflict themselves. Bearing this in mind, we therefore identify three primary categories of actors: historians, policymakers and public commentators. The interrelationships and attitudes among these groups vary from country to country and from conflict to conflict. In **Australia**, for instance, the then minister of education invited eminent historians and public commentators to participate on an equal footing in a national history summit seeking to develop a new national narrative for schools. This represented an official recognition that history is a *res publica*; authority over the content and narrative of history does not reside with the academic discipline alone. Several instances of conflict presented in this handbook revolve around the authority of historians in history matters and the boundaries between academic and popular history. In **Sweden**, non-academic historical narratives have attempted to break through



the monopoly of the historians, producing historical accounts which denied professional historians their erstwhile role as sole mediators of historical knowledge to the public. Churches and religious organisations are also involved, in cases such as **Greece**, **Serbia** and **Cyprus**, where they have responded to ongoing processes of secularisation by invoking the concept of an indivisible alliance between religion and nation in resistance to any attempts to change national master narratives. In the following, our focus is on the three primary groups of actors outlined here and, where relevant, on their interrelationships.

## Historians

The community of historians worldwide constitutes a significant element in the conflicting field of memory and history characterising the post-Cold War era, and the positions taken by historians in this regard cover a broad spectrum and reflect a wide variety of considerations. As the historians of the nineteenth century fulfilled the task of compiling the official national narratives required by emergent or consolidating nation states, their late twentieth and early twenty-first century successors faced the challenge of rewriting history in the new context after 1989. One example is **Slovakia**. The establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993 following the break-up of Czechoslovakia saw a rewriting of history whose nationalistic spirit provoked critical responses when it entered the classroom. Historians in many formerly communist countries embarked upon an endeavour to renationalise history, not without difficulties and opposition. In **Georgia**, for instance, academic historians have hesitated to renounce the traditional 'Georgian grand narrative' and accordingly found themselves in conflict with new imperatives for history textbooks.

Where professional historians defend established national paradigms, they also defend national cultures, events with key places in the narrative and pre-eminent personalities, and the thrust of their intervention may in many of these cases be distinctly anti-innovative. In **China**, history scholars successfully banished from schools a new series of high school history textbooks published in Shanghai in a local initiative contrasting with central policy; the historians criticised the books as distant from 'the realities of Chinese society' and 'deviat[ing]' from Marxist historical materialism. The word order in the historians' allegation that the textbooks had 'erred seriously in their political, theoretical and academic orientation' points discursively to the priorities driving this action. In **Croatia** in 2007, some historians advocated the withdrawal

of new textbooks offering a more critical perspective on the recent war, admonishing their authors that 'history textbooks should ... acknowledge national and state criteria'. In **Romania**, the Romanian Academy's historical sciences section argued via its president that history textbooks should have a clear purpose, which is national in nature. We should note here that, in both the Croatian and Romanian examples, these positions did not go unopposed within the historian community.

Historians have carved out key moments and touchstones of national and group identity whose influence has radiated into the classroom and caused conflict. In **Armenia**, historians created the irreplaceable role of Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenian identity. In **Tatarstan**, historians established the Tatars' leading cultural position among other non-Russian nationalities in the Volga region. In **Burundi**, 'refugee historians' kept alive traumatic memories and Hutu victimhood as well as this group's continued fear of annihilation. Historians active in post-colonial contexts sought to decolonise history and insert previously excluded colonised populations' history into the historical account. African historians in **Senegal** have turned their research towards anti-colonial struggles, thus casting a spotlight on Africans as agents of historical evolution. In post-dictatorship regimes, historians attempt to provide an interpretation for the pre-dictatorship period as well as the dictatorship itself, and challenge the emergence of what in their view are inaccurate accounts. There are historians who have resisted new official nationalistic mythologies, as in, for example, **Senegal** (the myth of the slave house of Gorée), **Serbia** (the Battle of Kosovo) and **Greece** (Ottoman rule and the Greek-Turkish relationship), and have advocated the inclusion of their findings in history education.

Conflicts can arise between historians and educationalists where the former, without particular pedagogical experience or expertise, seek to intervene in curricular or methodological matters; cases include **Canada** and the **Netherlands**, where historians have privileged overview knowledge over the development of historical skills and competencies, voicing concerns that new source-based approaches which seek to train historical thinking have resulted in the destruction of a coherent narrative. This privileging of the narrative may, in some instances, have a closely connected concomitant in the defence of a national historical account. This has been the case in the **United Kingdom**, where some high-profile historians were critical of the 'New History' emerging in the 1970s and 1980s and of its emphasis on source analysis. In **Lebanon**, by contrast, historians advocated significant methodological changes to the end of developing a student-centred critical approach. In the **Czech Republic**, historians opposed the integration of history into an overarching discipline of

social studies. Historians in **Serbia** broadly fell into two camps, with the first defending a closed narrative and the second in favour of multiple perspectives and the increased interaction of students with learning materials.

Maria Grever, writing on the **Netherlands**, has described historians and history teachers as engaged in a 'love-hate' relationship. This interaction emerges in varying permutations and manifestations. In some cases, as in the **Caribbean**, collaboration proves impossible. Open conflict has also occurred, as in **Belgium**, where the authors argue that the attempt of left-wing school history inspectors to promote history education as an instrument of peace and democracy met the fierce resistance of some historians, alongside the conservative press. In other cases, mutually affirmative communication appears possible; historians have worked with history teachers to compile new history textbooks, as in **Bulgaria** or in reunified **Germany**. In **Northern Ireland**, recovering from a situation of near-civil war, their shared objective appears to be securing informed and critical public debate. An exemplar of collaboration is provided by the **United States**, where over a thousand history teachers worked with academic historians to draw up standards for history teaching and forged a solid alliance during and after the conflict around these standards.

In some instances, the entirety of the primary political debate has taken place within the historical profession; the exposure of its internal divisions in the public sphere has served to heighten the existing controversies. Such cases have included the characterisation of the dictatorship in **Chile**; the legacy of communism in **Poland** and the role of the Polish in the Second World War; the disputed occurrence of a civil war during the Second World War in **Slovenia**; and the national status of **Lebanon**.

Many conflicts show shared tendencies regarding the political position of the historians involved. We observe a distinction between right-wing/conservative and left-wing/progressive historians in **Argentina**, for instance, where historians of the left proposed a critical perspective on the actions of the guerrillas idealised in the immediate post-dictatorship era. In Italy, the new Right has attempted to revise the negative historical judgement on Italian Fascism. In **India**, the apparent formation of the controversy's opposing camps along the left/right political divide was complicated and deepened by the added factor of the conflict between secularism, aligning with a perceivably 'left-wing' approach, and a religious, primarily Hindu focus. In **Croatia**, the attempt to introduce multiple divergent perspectives to the teaching of recent conflicts and to address crimes committed by both the Serbian and Croatian sides in the recent war faced a fierce attack from right-wing politicians, journalists and historians.

In terms of the relationship between the historical and political spheres, the cases presented in this book cover a broad spectrum of positions, with many of them showing multiple contrasting iterations. Historians who reject any official or political interference in school history and regard it explicitly as a specialist sphere have included academics from a university in **Romania** who issued a statement of protest against the involvement of non-specialists in discussion around history textbooks. Elsewhere, as in **Poland**, policymakers and ministries of education may exclude or marginalise the input of historians. In other cases, academic historians perceive the issues at stake to relate to wider audiences and collaborate with social activists and parents to drive public campaigns, as in **Malaysia**. **Chile** provides a comparable case, with historians, history teachers and students in the forefront of a massive mobilisation of civil society aiming to reverse changes promoted by the country's ministry of education. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we witness historians who advocate a state monopoly on authority over the national history taught in schools against other agencies and initiatives for reform. In extreme cases, this may lead to a scenario such as the decoration in **Azerbaijan** of prominent historians by the country's president, to which the director of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Science responded by declaring: 'All of us ... are your soldiers'. In **Rwanda**, one of the principal progenitors of Hutu extremist ideology was a historian. There are instances in which historians actually become politicians; one is **Bulgaria**, where, during the conflict in 2007, the then president and prime minister were both historians. In some cases, politicians have defended new history content for schools and reforms on history teaching against the protests of academic historians. Open conflict between politicians and historians arose in **France** when the government attempted in 2005 to mandate the teaching of a positive vision of French colonialism.

### **Policymakers, Public Commentators, and the Multivocal Rise of Memory Discourses**

The intimate, and in most states of the world structurally inevitable, links between education and the political sphere mean that *policymakers* are prominent in conflicts over history education. A frequent phenomenon, **India** being a case in point illustrated in this volume, features a redirected evaluation of a history textbook or curriculum as concomitant with a change in government. In a number of cases, the political leadership, in concert with the institutional educational authorities, has attempted to impose progressive measures in order to overhaul the history taught in schools. In other

instances, a country's ministry of education becomes a mediator between opposing sides, frequently called upon to balance the interests of nationalists with those of a desired and apparently requisite reform. In **Latvia**, for instance, in the debate around the autonomous place of national history in the history curriculum, notably initiated by a group of secondary school students, the ministry of education effectively found itself mediating between history teachers defending an integrated approach to European history and politicians who viewed this approach as a threat to national history.

Direct intervention on the part of politicians has been a factor in several conflicts. One notable case is that of **Lebanon**, where during the controversy the then minister of education stopped the distribution of new history textbooks produced by more than 45 historians, educationalists and history teachers, and formed another committee for the development of a new curriculum based on his convictions. Similarly, in **Russia**, President Putin has been known to take personal charge of a series of far-reaching modifications in the content of school history lessons.

In recent years, advancing information and communication technologies, with the internet at their heart, have created a new, virtual public sphere, where an almost complete lack of regulation in some areas meets censorship in others. The formats available for debate may thus lend themselves to discursive polarisation, and multiple voices of ordinary citizens can merge to become one, effectively sole, quasi-actor. Such interactive online spaces have exponentially expanded the participatory scope of controversies and essentially created a new form of mass authorship mediated—quite unlike more traditional forms of discourse—through anonymity or pseudonymity. The digital revolution, and specifically the rise of social media and the interactivity characteristic of the electronic public environment, have widened the circle of participants in debates around history and produced the phenomenon of anonymous actors debating alongside well-known public figures and eminent academics.

The period since the end of the Cold War has seen an unprecedented 'memory boom' which has both arisen from and lent momentum to the democratisation of historical discourse. Societal stakeholders, in a process of gaining historical consciousness, have begun to seek official recognition of their specific interpretations of the past. Adding momentum to the empowerment of victims and their descendants within societal discourse, the diffusion during this period of the concept of human rights, and its application to historical and current issues worldwide, has supported the emergence of discourses of victimhood and survivorship. The digital turn has presented groups hitherto neglected in official discourses with the opportunity to find an audi-

ence hitherto difficult to reach via traditional media, school textbooks or scholarly publications. The discursive voice thus assumed by a mass actor consisting of diverse individuals speaking on a shared issue has added a competing authority to the traditional authorities of academic and political opinion-leaders. The emergence of this new voice is evidently a double-edged sword. Speaking on the intervention of the wider public in the case of **Canada**, Christian Laville comments on this challenge to established loci of power to define and comment on debates, observing that '[s]omeone who would not consider themselves qualified to speak out about chemistry or mathematics would not hesitate to speak as an expert in the case of history'.

## Forms, Forums and Strategies

Conflicts over history education take many forms and trajectories, which influence the dynamics of debates as well as their outcomes. A controversy might emerge or evolve incidentally or may represent an ongoing presence in the discursive arena; the conflicts may manifest in an intense, moderate or latent manner. Some potential debates are either suppressed or remain absent due to specific factors, as in the diverse cases of **Belgium**, **Germany** and **Norway**. Some controversies arise around public contestations of specific contents or modes of history education, of curricular decisions, or of particular history textbooks. Such was the case with a public uproar over a history textbook published in 1999 in **Romania** which provided a more 'colloquial' view of the past than the traditional grand-narrative-centred material. Mirela-Luminița Murgescu's entry explains how the scandal and the short-lived 'history fever' it induced also revealed conflict-laden attitudes towards more balanced modes of teaching and disputes within the historical profession over established authority versus the right to question and over national cohesion versus diversity of opinion. The case detailed by Johan Wassermann writing on **South Africa** is more specific still: his entry explains how a single cartoon in a secondary school textbook ignited an intense conflict in both the public and political spheres. The remaining content of the book was engulfed—both literally and figuratively—by flames during demonstrations and by the controversy thus sparked. An additional differentiating factor in these conflicts is the degree to which they impact history education. For instance, to what extent do they precipitate, hinder or influence changes or modifications in the contents or modes of history teaching? This impact evidently depends not least on the intensity of the debate as well as on the attitudes, involvement and positions of policy decision-makers or history education stakeholders more broadly within societies.

Conflicts initiated or decisively fuelled within the content of mass media are an inevitable feature of the information age. Alongside the role of social media as a quasi-actor as discussed above in the context of the digital turn, conflicts playing out within more traditional print media have seen the latter develop a form of independent historical agency, structuring social frames of memory, co-defining historical culture, and locating the debate at the centre of society and everyday life. Christian Laville describes for the case of **Canada** how the media constituted the exclusive arena for discussion of a new curricular programme on history and citizenship, eventually metamorphosing into an echo chamber in which ‘the same facts, the same sentences, the same objections [were] repeated’. In **Sweden**, journalists have assumed the task of revisiting the national past, questioning the monopoly of historians on the production of history and claiming an active role as mediators of history to the public. The entry on **Romania** details the extent to which a conflict over an upper secondary textbook issued by a group of young historians and taking an attitude of distance towards the traditional master narrative became a public symbolic ‘war’ after reaching the media sphere and undergoing magnification within this discursive context. From there, as Mirela-Luminița Murgescu further elucidates, the conflict entered the realm of the personal and initiated discussion among relatives and friends. In **China**, in a notable instance of cross-border media influence which may be characteristic of things to come as globalisation advances, an article entitled ‘Where’s Mao?’, appearing in the *New York Times*, initiated intense controversy regarding the representation of the Cultural Revolution and Maoism in history textbooks. In **Chile**, a series of articles on Pinochet’s arrest initiated the conflict described in this entry. In **Croatia**, amid war crime trials and war anniversary commemorations, daily newspapers and television networks inaugurated an attack on a new interim textbook supplement issued in 2005. And in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, debate in the media sphere sparked a public discussion around the ‘pressing’ issue of whether to teach about the recent war in schools.

Participants in history education debates have adopted a range of different strategies in dealing with divisive issues. Points of inadequate historical procedure may in many instances be identical to strategies employed in the defence of a specific position or the attack on an opposing one. We might take here as an exemplary—yet not exhaustive—list of problematic practices the potential abuses of historical narratives defined in 2013 by the UN. The selection or removal of particular facts and the emphasis given to them; the presentation of narratives that can only lead to particular, desired conclusions and/or that are exclusively ethnonational, leaving no space for civic or minority cultures or perspectives to be heard; an exclusive focus on conflicts with deliberate



neglect of specific periods of peace and cooperation and/or successful and consensual cultural transfer; the dissemination of stereotypes and the implied immutability of existing (antagonistic) relations between nations or other groupings; the use of emotive discourses including hate speech and graphic or violent images, especially for the purpose of fomenting fear or a sense of collective victimhood or wrongedness; the construction of historical maps in such a way as to underline political messages (specific colouring strategies or the depiction of unhistorical borders); the use of language that forecloses debate and dilemma; the construction of historical myths of national or group superiority; and a deterministic presentation of history which generates an impression of inevitability and obscures agency and responsibility.<sup>49</sup>

Non-depiction may be as powerful a strategy as the most drastic forms of depiction. One strategy employed in a number of cases addressed in this book has been the refusal to confront controversy, a response of silence towards a recent traumatic past, or, in some instances, a moratorium on the teaching of history altogether with the aim of reducing or stifling tensions. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, a Bosniak history textbook issued in 2007 and subsequently withdrawn from use excluded the 1992–1995 war almost entirely, and in **Rwanda**, the teaching of history in schools was suspended after the genocide. Similarly, many textbooks on national history issued in today's **Chile** still avoid the traumatic period of the dictatorship.

While at first glance such strategies may resemble censorship or the repression of legitimate memory, closer consideration points to the need for caution. It is undisputed among prominent researchers that one of the tasks of school history is to facilitate mourning as an act necessary in order to overcome trauma. In the long term, a nation's readiness to write a history that does justice to the basic facts of past atrocities and allows for critical analysis seems to be indispensable to the development of mutual understanding with its former enemies. There has, however, been little solid research on models and time frames for such processes. The question of whether a certain amount of time must pass before recent collective trauma can be discussed in textbooks and understood by the children or grandchildren of victims and perpetrators, or whether immediate reflection is the more expedient path towards building peace and trust, calls for further empirical research. It seems clear that what we might call the pedagogisation of memory comes with a risk: the memory of those who learn of traumatic events only in the classroom can never compare to the memory of the generation that experienced the trauma. Temporal distance can be helpful for a better understanding of the past and for discussion of differing interpretations of it. Even in **Germany**, nowadays praised as an exemplar of best practice in addressing a horrific past, more than

one generation had to come of age before the issue of responsibility for the mass murder carried out by Germans during the Second World War could become a topic of public debate and school instruction. In societies where conflict around history is played out in the public arena, history teaching in schools can provide an opportunity for students to develop a critical approach to different sources of information and the multiplicity of narratives about the past with which they are confronted. Such an approach, however, has a chance of success only where history teaching and textbooks are based on the idea of enabling students to acquire critical thinking skills in their engagement with history. Another strategy observed which may prove particularly promising is that of the recognition of diversity or multiperspectivity. An example might be the Neighbouring Nations Clause issued in **Japan** in 1982, developed in response to protests from China and South Korea about the absence of discussion of Japanese war crimes in Japanese textbooks. It formally stipulates that textbook accounts of Japanese history cannot be one-sided. However, as we discuss during our categorisation of the case studies, multiperspectivity is neither infallible nor unassailable and may not always be the universal remedy on which many are now pinning their hopes. As ever in such cases, more research is required.

## **Categorising the Conflicts: Key Backdrops and Settings**

### **After War and Violence**

#### **The Second World War**

The key epochal date before 1989/1990 is 1945. Memories of the Second World War have been conflicting, conflicted or conflictual across countries, continents and political systems, arising around such aspects of the period as the Holocaust, the atrocities committed, the resistance movements, the civil wars, instances of collaboration with occupied forces, the relations of the populations of occupied territories with Nazi Germans—including collaboration—and refugee policies. In the countries of the former Eastern European bloc, where the end of the war coincided with the beginning of the communist era, societal interpretations of the Second World War period are inevitably interrelated with the evaluation of state socialism. This is strikingly the case in the states of former Yugoslavia; the master narrative developed by Tito

after the war predicated the country's legitimation and unity on the Resistance movement against the Nazis and their collaborators. The concomitant repression of the memory of the Yugoslav civil war that took place during the Second World War is considered to be one of the principal causes of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of the war in the 1990s.

In the case of **Croatia**, two conflicting narratives of the period existed, the one centred on the pro-communist, anti-fascist Partisans, the other on the Ustašas, the fascist, ultranationalist organisation active between 1929 and 1945. A first attempt, prior to the 1991–1995 war, to reconcile the two conflicting memories sought to create a national identity by replacing the formerly dominant Marxist ideology with ethnic nationalism. Writing on the conflict around the assessment of the role in the Second World War of the royalist guerrilla forces known as the Chetniks in **Serbia**, Marko Šuica underlines the predominantly political character of the relevant conflict, categorising it as an instance of the instrumentalisation of history by politics in order to serve dominant cultural structures and objectives. The author argues that the 'unofficial rehabilitation' of the Chetniks in post-communist Serbia by the new generation of history textbooks served as a 'manipulative tool for the recruitment of paramilitary units' for the wars with Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Elsewhere in post-communist Europe, the conflicts took on other, albeit related, points of emphasis. In **Poland**, as Joanna Wojdon underlines, the issue of the Second World War was and probably continues to be as conflictual as the legacy of communism. A Polish-German history textbook on this topic, as the first step in a broader bilateral history textbook project, gave rise to criticism in Poland regarding an alleged predominantly German perspective; points at issue included the use of the word 'expulsion' to describe the post-war resettlement of Germans from the former eastern provinces of the fallen German *Reich*. In **Slovakia**, where, as Slávka Otčenášová argues, history textbooks reflect the dominant political forces of the day, the conflict revolved less around the fear of renewed domination—this time of memory—at the hands of the erstwhile aggressor than around the dangers of revisionism coming hand in hand with resurgent nationalism. At the controversy's centre was the government-led distribution to all schools of a national history textbook alleged to glorify the pro-National Socialist Slovak state and the multilateral critical response.

An exemplar of a long-standing and ongoing conflict around history education with specific reference to the memory of the Second World War can also be found beyond Europe. In **Japan**, for instance, the victorious US occupying authorities sought to expunge militaristic and chauvinist references and

tendencies from history textbooks only to be met with the opposition of conservative circles who perceived this action as the imposition by foreign occupying forces of a 'masochistic' view of Japanese history upon succeeding generations. The renationalisation of history thus sought met in turn with resistance from civil society, which succeeded, at least in the interim, in restraining attempts to return to a chauvinistic version of the past. The international dimension of the conflict renders it a striking case. From 1980 onwards, China and South Korea, victims of Japanese aggression, urged Japan to recognise crimes committed by the Japanese army during the East Asia war period, the 1930s and 1940s. In the early 1990s, as a consequence of both this regional and broader international pressure, Japanese history textbooks began to include discussion of Japanese abuses, which conservatives sought to combat in 1996 by founding the revisionist 'Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform'. In this controversy, significant steps towards mutual understanding have been taken by historians and teachers of these countries, who in 2005 published an influential history textbook, translated into their three languages.<sup>50</sup>

When it comes to a conflict as far-reaching as the Second World War, neither a neutral stance held in the past nor an absence of conflict around the issue to date will necessarily insulate the history classroom from the reverberations, as three further case studies demonstrate. The neutrality of **Switzerland** has thus far formed the basis for the dominant narrative of this period in the country, and is simultaneously the guarantee for its relative success. Markus Furrer elucidates the debate over the questioning of this neutrality dogma that emerged after 1990, in which, as in other instances such as Japan, international experts joined in critiques of the existing narrative. The 2001 report by the independent Bergier commission, and a textbook based on its findings, whose translated title urged students to 'look and question', engendered a public clash between remembering and historicising. This unveiled a highly conflictual dichotomy between personal memories—and the worldviews in which they were invested—and accounts by historical sources. By contrast, calm appears to reign generally in **Norway**, whose consensus-oriented society, as Bente Aamotsbakken argues, had hitherto inhibited the open outbreak of conflict. Here, conflict—or potential conflict—emerges in an empty space, the absence from history textbooks of debate among academic historians over the German occupation of Norway, the deportation of Norwegian Jews to Germany and the role of the Norwegian police in this horrific chapter. The author argues that if 'historical nuances concerning the war in general are not taken care of within the frame of ordinary history books, it is not to be expected that they should be reflected upon in textbooks published for school use'.

A notable lack of controversy appears similarly in **Belgium**, in which conflicting Flemish Nationalist and Walloon counter-memories have gradually supplanted national memory, and in which history education seems to be sheltered from the influence of conflicting memories and the interests these memories carry. Tessa Lobbes and Kaat Wils contextualise and explain the absence of controversies in Belgian history education in terms of the privileging of freedom of education within the Belgian constitution with its strongly liberal character. The authors find that the relatively restricted place of national history in Belgian schools, alongside the considerable liberty of individual schools and teachers to select from curricular content, appears to have an important role in the protection of school history from undue influence by the conflicting memories existing in the public sphere. Although they point to the recent emergence of concerns around a perceived lack of knowledge of national history in Belgium, Lobbes and Wils predict any development of controversy in the future to be ‘a silent evolution rather than a noisy history war’. This appears particularly noteworthy in the light of many case studies in this volume which repeatedly bear witness to the impact of nationalism and its resurgence on conflicts around history education.

### **Interneceine Violence, Civil Conflict**

Mass violence, interneceine conflict and genocide committed within the context of civil wars and their aftermaths have become all too frequent features of history education conflict since the 1989/1990 turn. The contributions in this handbook highlight the role of the history taught in schools and diffused in public spaces in both the outbreak of these bloody phenomena and in the work of societal and emotional reconstruction. Survivors and former perpetrators must undertake the teaching of history in a profoundly uneasy alliance. The hostile narratives which served to legitimate atrocities committed in the course of interneceine violence are present in the trauma of the aftermath and confront history education with profound challenges which may harmonise or clash with the expectations held by new regimes towards reconciliation. Typical patterns of response on the part of post-violence governments include the imposition of silence or amnesia via a moratorium on the teaching of recent violent history or the construction of a new narrative which may represent a radical break from the previous and frequently still extant discourse. The educational uses of the violent past may vary according to the specific political party in power with its political agenda; often, historical content is tailored to these agendas.

Denise Bentrovato's contributions on Rwanda and Burundi retrace the interrelationships between history education and bloody internecine conflict. She explores the ways in which history education antecedent to the genocide in **Rwanda** prepared the ground for the civil war of 1990–1994 and the genocide of 1994 by effectively delivering historical justification for the crimes committed by the Hutu against the Tutsi. The long-ruling Tutsi minority was posited as essentially 'other', a foreign race collaborating with colonisers. The entry further examines the diametrically opposed post-genocide narrative of ancient unity destroyed by the colonial power and of the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front as a liberation movement confronting the dictatorial and murderous Hutu regime, 'a narrative which has institutionalised a belief in the innocence and victimhood of the Tutsi and in the collective guilt of the Hutu'. This new official narrative is not shared by many Rwandans, with alternative versions of 'the truth' continuing to circulate more or less clandestinely within the country and more freely abroad. In **Burundi**, competing Hutu and Tutsi narratives of victimisation have resulted in the emergence of two separate collective identities. As in Rwanda, conflicting narratives fuelled all violent political crises from 1965 to 1993 and played a constituent role in the civil war from 1993 to 2000. They remain in action, impeding reconciliation and the construction of a coexistent national consciousness. At the time of writing, an internationally backed attempt to write a reference work on the history of Burundi primarily for use by history teachers and in explicit service of the aims of reconciliation and identity-building had recently foundered.

**Northern Ireland** provides a notable contrast. The 'Troubles' that flared up in the late 1960s and continued substantially until the peace agreement of 1998 both highlighted and further precipitated deep divisions in society between 'loyalists' identifying as British and 'republicans' identifying as Irish. The degree to which Northern Ireland's history curriculum and textbooks are protected from the conflicts that continue tangibly in the public sphere is related, as Alan McCully argues, to the independence of the school curriculum from policy and from the selective and partisan uses of Irish history that politics, allowed to intervene untrammelled, might dictate.

## After Colonialism and Dictatorship

It is said that after winning the war comes winning the peace; after liberation comes the struggle to forge a new, autonomous consensus which, in the dominant discursive ideal, will be democratic in nature. In the aftermath of periods

of colonialism and dictatorship, the history of the difficult period preceding, and of its own antecedents in turn, calls for contextualisation, reinterpretation and approachability by ensuing generations so that the same turmoil may not befall that nation again. Nevertheless, responses to this situation seen repeatedly throughout history have included the attempted laying aside of conflict through mutual or imposed silence and the assertion of victim status by various groups who were party to the previous antagonism, implicitly placing the burden of criminal guilt at the feet of the opposing side. Conflicts around history education in post-colonial and post-dictatorship settings comprise a significant number of the case studies in this book and reveal shared difficulties, repeated patterns of controversy as well as various differences and nuances.

### **Post-colonial Settings**

In former colonies and metropolitan centres alike, the memory of colonialism continues to raise conflicts in historical culture. A general pattern witnessed in former colonies is the clash between historical accounts propagated by erstwhile colonisers and the historical perspectives adopted in the post-colonial context in the course of efforts to shore up the process of nation-building. The historical narratives attached to colonisation and decolonisation are held in tension, intertwined yet divergent, in a manner liable to spark conflict.

For the descendants of the colonialists and 'settlers', who had the power to exert cultural and political hegemony for decades or even centuries, the new challenge is integrating the act of colonisation into official memory in a manner that grants historical justice to indigenous and colonised populations. This challenge gives rise to heated controversies about the historical narratives taught in schools, including instances of invasion and oppression as well as crimes and atrocities committed against local populations. Where decolonisation involved war, questions arise as to the colonisers' attitudes towards resistance groups and civilians. Long-established narratives of 'civilising' or humanitarian missions die hard; the uncivilised nature of many of the colonialists' actions may be lost in the overwhelming public silence towards the atrocities committed in the name of the metropole. Overall, erstwhile colonisers face a task with implications for the national memory, the international standing and the social cohesion of the country in question. The instability of this process, that is, its susceptibility to political developments both domestic and international, complicates the path to its attainment. In a number of instances, the roots of conflicts around history education lie in the ambiva-



lence of the official narrative towards colonial legacies and in the threat to a progressive and enlightened national identity posed by the more difficult aspects of these legacies.

Marcus Otto's entry on **France** traces the long-maintained status in public discourse of the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962) and the deployment of the French army as 'measures to maintain order in Algeria'. In an illustration of the obstinacy of affirmative colonial narratives and their close intertwinement with the national identities of the former colonisers, the recognition in 1999 of this conflict as a war faced effective reversal in 2005 with the tabling of legislation requiring schools to teach the positive role of the French presence overseas.

Anna Clark reports that in **Australia**, between the 1960s and the 1988 bicentenary, an indigenous critique arose of the master narrative of Australian history. Opposition to this critique sought to defend the national story of the founding of the country; the adoption in curriculum documents of the term 'invasion' to characterise the British settlement was received as a serious threat to an Australian majority identity predicated on the idea of the 'Australian Achievement'. In the new millennium, conflict arose between conservative proponents of teaching a strong sense of national history and those concerned with communicating historical complexity, which should include, in the words of one history teachers' representative, 'teaching the celebrated with the uncelebrated'. Mark Sheehan outlines the socio-economic context of the controversy in **New Zealand** that sprang up around a narrative focusing on the Treaty of Waitangi as symbolic of the allegedly harmonious past relationship between Pākehā, that is, New Zealanders of European descent, and Māori. While conservative voices have attacked and called into question the teaching of the Treaty as a 'partnership between Māori and Pākehā', research by historians has cast increasing light on 'the extent of Pākehā racism and violence [towards Māori] in the process of colonisation'. The consequence has been the adjustment of the narrative of harmony and, latterly, a movement towards greater inclusion of Māori history, although bicultural approaches to New Zealand history, as Sheehan points out, may themselves be reductive in presuming 'a single "Māori" approach to history that could be accommodated by the curriculum' and not taking account of this history's complex tribal nature.

Previously colonised societies have felt first and foremost a need to nationalise their history in order to assert and consolidate their independence as a nation. Second, they are challenged to construct a narrative showing in a meaningful way the entanglements of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period, and in so doing—third—to eventually transcend narratives

of victimhood. These complex sets of factors inevitably encompass divided memories, which have been brought to the fore in the course of the associated conflicts. In certain cases, the end of colonialism prompted rearrangements in historical distributions of power in multiethnic and/or multireligious societies, which may have experienced violent ethnic conflicts and/or civil wars during or after decolonisation.

In the course of the understandable desire for a coherent historical narrative, nations emerging from decolonisation have in many instances felt the necessity of establishing a historical discourse pointing to the existence of a nation before colonisation. These countries had received from their colonisers an official past, taught in schools and communicated elsewhere, in which their pre-colonial period had fallen victim to either marginalisation or complete erasure. The replacement of such an absence with a nationalised past has been a commonly observed response. Those who had conducted national liberation wars were now the heads of the new states, enjoying the political power to determine the historical knowledge taught in schools. One of their aims was frequently to create a generally accepted version of official national (and nationalistic) history which replaced the myths of the colonisers with new myths.

Difficulties with anti-colonial narratives also emerged in **Senegal**, where, as Ibrahima Seck explains, the anti-/post-colonial historical narrative, having passed through the era of 'Africanisation' and subsequently that of 'Senegalisation', has remained controversial due to its representation of slavery as an atrocity imposed completely from without, 'overlook[ing] the indigenous systems of domination while also cloaking the internal mechanisms for producing captives for the Atlantic slave trade'. Discussing the myths surrounding the 'House of Slaves' at Gorée, Seck concludes that Senegal's school curricula tend to feature selective focal points and fall short of identifying the 'seeds of the endemic violence affecting [Africa] today like something fated to be'. Denise Bentreovato's entry on **Rwanda** explores the use of the colonial past in the contested, polarising interpretation of the recent violence, with the country's erstwhile colonisers blamed for introducing the ethnic divisions that ultimately ended in the genocide of 1994. Similarly, in post-colonial **Burundi**, the official narrative posits an ancient unity of the country and declares ethnicity as essentially a colonial invention. The case of **Zimbabwe** is characteristic of the power of the nationalistic turn in post-colonial states. Here, history education found itself pressed into the service of both Marxist ideology and, consistently, a nationalistic agenda latterly proclaiming itself as 'patriotic history'.

Conflicts around history in **India**, as outlined by Michael Gottlob, have principally played out between ‘secularists’ defending the common multicultural and multi-religious past of India, ‘communalists’ advocating specific versions of history for each distinct community and, among the latter, Hindu nationalists defending the ‘true’ Indian past as a Hindu past and attributing secularist theories to Western elements. India is a special case due to the significant influence exerted by interpretations of the past on the distribution of political power and the parties’ electoral fortunes. A further element of the conflict has revolved around suspected attitudes of secularist openness and critique of religious practices in educational materials in the context of an emphasis on ‘value education’. Another noteworthy feature of the Indian case is the spreading of a national conflict overseas, as members of the Indian diaspora in the United States called for the ‘correction’ of American textbook content on Indian history. In 2014, the return of Hindu nationalists to government initiated a new and ongoing cycle of conflict.

Analogies to the Indian case, where the post-colonial setting leaves open territories contested by various ethnic groupings each with distinct experiences and claims to the past, appear in **Malaysia**. Here, the challenge to the post-colonial rewriting of history relates to the inclusion of the country’s three main ethnic and religious groups, the Malay, which at independence represented barely half of the population, the Chinese, at that time amounting to one third, and the Indians, one tenth. The claim of Malay nationalists to a predominant position in the Malaysian national narrative constitutes a permanent source of controversies over the history taught in schools. Helen Ting Mu Hung identifies these conflicts as emerging from the unresolved political ambiguities around the still fragile process of nation-building. In **Sudan**, which gained independence in 1956, the ‘Arabisation’ process imposed on the historical narrative by the country’s northern elites has remained a source of conflict. Here, again, colonialism shoulders the blame for internal divisions; while consensus indeed reigns regarding awareness of the impact of Christian missionary activity, the span between the end of colonialism and Sudan’s eventual North-South split in 2011 has been influenced by the nationwide imposition of Arabic as the sole language of instruction and a history curriculum strongly based, in the name of the pursuit of national unity, on Arabic-Islamic history and culture. A concomitant issue has been the virtual silence in history textbooks on the issue of the North’s role in the slave trade. Julia Nohn concludes by referencing concerns that a ‘neo-missionary’ influence may predominate in the future writing of the history of the newly independent South. Religion-based conflicts are a similarly significant factor in **Lebanon**; here, one of the uses of the history taught in schools is for the per-

petuation of dominant religious identities over a unified Lebanese identity. Such efforts have been interspersed at various points in the past, detailed in the entry, with attempts at a national curriculum based on a 'Lebanese nation' with the aim of creating a unique and unified Lebanese identity. Various political forces, as Nemer Frayha explains, have determined whether the emphasis should be on the Lebanese or the Arab perspective in history curricula. The reconciliation agreement of 1989 reopened a period in which initiatives sought to formulate an agreed single narrative for all Lebanese people, inclusive of Christian and Islamic perspectives and to be adopted by both public and private schools. The author charts the objections to this standardisation of school history through the development of a sole narrative, as well as the eventual foundering of an attempt to write and issue a common history textbook. A similar project succeeded, by contrast, in **Pakistan**. In the view of M. Ayaz Naseem, the strong political and historical will in the country towards standardisation in the history classroom is related to the country's process of nation-building and its project of enveloping multiple cultures, ethnicities, languages and religions within the notion of a single nation. Objections from leading historians to this master narrative being taught in Pakistani schools initially remained unanswered by political decision-makers, educational authorities and textbook authors. While critiques have brought about a 'significant' change in educational materials, Naseem concludes that Pakistan remains the site of a 'well entrenched ... official historical discourse', a status quo reflected, in his view, in the 'relative lack' of public debate on history education. In this reading, the absence of 'history war' is far from equating to history peace.

The search for a distinctive national identity after long periods subject to external dominance is a recurring motif in conflicts around post-colonial history education. For a long period, the history taught in schools in **Taiwan** centred, in response to the traumatic memory of the previous colonisation by Japan, on a 'Greater China' perspective. In 1997, the appearance of a new history textbook based on a Taiwanese historical perspective, and with the purpose of helping forge a distinctive Taiwanese identity, brought an end to the historical narrative that had previously dominated the country's classrooms. One of the criticisms levelled at the book was its alleged glorification of Japanese colonial rule via its enumeration of achievements made during this period. This conflict is indicative of the struggles inherent to the emergence of a proprietary historical narrative in a nation previously subject to determination from without, as too is the tendency to perceive the long shadows of such determination in any attempt to abandon a polarising narrative.

The English-speaking **Caribbean** may at first glance appear to be an exemplary case of the early liberation of the history syllabus from the coloniser's perspective, looking back as it does on half a century of West Indian, as opposed to British and European, history. Nevertheless, our observation that old colonial narratives die hard appears to hold likewise here; concerns remain in the minds of some scholars that history teaching is still uncritically transmitting Eurocentric and neo-colonial perspectives to young people and that education policy fails to afford to history the central place in the formation of future generations that it merits. The 'fact of being a completely new people', John Hamer argues, has yet to unfold its proper influence on history education in the Caribbean.

### After Communism and State Socialism

In almost all cases of states emerging from communist rule after its widespread collapse in 1989/90, the history prescribed to be taught in schools, and the accompanying textbooks, were integral to the formation of a new identity emancipated from the communist theory of class struggle and engaged in an attempt to establish and uphold a 'true' national history. In many instances, nationalism replaced communism and historical materialism as a determining ideology. A distinct exception to this pattern is **Romania**, where, as Mirela-Luminița Murgescu reports, the dominant version of history taught at least during the later communist era was essentially a fusion of nationalism and communism. Here, the post-1989 challenge appeared, in the immediate aftermath of the caesura, to be the problem of how to remove the communist perspective without dismantling the national grand narrative. With a liberal wind blowing through the historical profession, this national narrative also found itself being called into question. A dilemma appeared between the nationalist and European perspective, with some historians questioning why Romania, like other more established democracies, should not consider itself to be allowed both.

For regions of the former Soviet Union which remained part of the Russian Federation but which had majority non-Russian populations, the liberalisation of public historical discourse offered ethnic and regional minorities the chance to identify and affirm their vision of history as the basis of a separate identity, and the opportunity to argue for its inclusion on the educational agenda. In many instances, ethnic and regional minorities first found themselves required to construct the narrative that was to carry this vision. Along with the establishment of their status during the Soviet period, the task was to

draw a coherent line from their ethnogenesis to the present and to settle approaches to other ethnic and/or regional minorities and regional states. Most of these processes are reflected in the case of **Russia**. Victor A. Shnirelman, after exploring the general Russian context and examining the post-communist transition from the teaching of history based on class struggle as the prime mover of evolution to the history of the Russian nation and its special cultural values, emphasises the dual nature of history education in Russia, which is aimed towards establishing loyalty both to the nation state and to the students' particular ethnic group. Shnirelman describes two distinct phases of change in history education in post-communist Russia. The first of these was the period from 1992, in which regional perspectives frequently prevailed over federal viewpoints through legislation passed in several republics in favour of their particular views on the past. The second phase commenced at the outset of the new millennium with the return to state control of the history textbooks taught in regional schools. Representations of history in federal educational materials find themselves in conflict with regional counter-narratives presenting a divergent evaluation or highlighting the suffering of their ancestors during the Tsarist period. The elimination in 2007 of the regional component of history education has effectively been tantamount to the imposition of a single national narrative in history education.

One instance of conflict between specific ethnically based narratives and the encompassing context of Russian history, set in a concentric circle around internal controversy relating to the character of that distinct narrative and identity, is explored by Marat Gibatdinov writing on **Tatarstan**. The liberalisation of the textbook system at regional level after the collapse of the Soviet Union brought the issue to the forefront of political life. In opposition to a 'Russian-centred' account of history which represents Tatars negatively and ignores their contribution to Russia's development, Tatars, backed by their 'independent history of statehood', argued for the restoration of their representation in Russian federal history textbooks and for the recognition of their distinct identity and history in both regional and federal educational media. Simultaneously, however, the nature of this distinct identity has been a matter of internal debate. Another instance of such concentric circles of conflict is manifest in Polina Verbytska's entry on **Ukraine**, where the transition to independence initiated a revival of national identity and consequently the task of constructing a new, coherent national collective memory for this diverse society. There was considerable opposition, in the name of the Ukrainian 'nation', to recommendations issued by a monitoring commission to the effect that history teaching should evince greater inclusion of minorities with a historical presence in Ukraine and guard against a predominance of military and politi-

cal history and tendencies towards victimisation. Nino Chikovani, meanwhile, analyses the relationship between the titular nation and ethnic minorities residing in **Georgia**, where societal conflict broke out into violence and where opponents derided the readings of history produced by the other parties to the conflict. The facts of long-standing coexistence and shared history gave way, in this discourse, to myths, stereotypes, preconceptions and prejudices that fed permanent hostility between populations living in juxtaposition and tended to fuel exclusionary perceptions of ethnic minorities among Georgians.

One defining factor of the case of **Moldova** is the tension between conflicting patterns of national identity. As Stefan Ihrig argues, the creation of a Moldovan nation was almost exclusively a Soviet project with the aim of weakening Romania. His entry further tracks the immediate impact of the conflict, post-Moldovan independence in 1991, between 'Romanianists' and 'Moldovanists' on the history taught in schools. In the former Soviet states of **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan**, early post-communist nation-building coincided with the armed conflict around the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, with these two factors then intersecting in history education. Sergey Rumyansev, writing on Azerbaijan, reports how the new dominant post-Soviet narrative created by historians and politicians—or historians turned politicians—which focused in particular on the bloody events of 1918–1920 (later termed a 'genocide') sought to set up the Armenians as the historical enemy of the Azerbaijani nation. He explains how the rhetoric of textbooks contributes to this, pointing to Azerbaijani victimhood at the hands of the Russians first and the Soviets later. The traditional Armenian narrative, as expounded in Philip Gamaghelyan's entry, denies Azerbaijanis the status of a distinct ethnic group and categorises them with the Turks, who in turn are held responsible for the suffering of the Armenian nation and to a degree for the Armenian genocide of 1915 in Ottoman Turkey. Armenian textbooks have been found to shift from a 'de-ideologisation' of scientific standards after the collapse of the USSR to a subsequent 're-ideologisation' towards a nation-centred narrative.

The violent break-up of Yugoslavia during the 1990s gave rise to a number of states, each with their own interpretations of history that conflicted on the one hand with the previously dominant Yugoslavian ideology and on the other with the narratives of their neighbours. The single historical narrative taught in the schools of communist Yugoslavia, which had centred on the allegedly united resistance of Yugoslavian peoples to the occupying forces and their collaborators during the Second World War, rapidly lost its former power and made room for the incipient construction of new, coherent narratives on a nation-by-nation basis. The second period of conflict that arose



during and continuing after the Yugoslavian wars (1991–1999) was dominated by contentions over the interpretation of these wars.

The fall of the Milošević regime in **Serbia**, and the subsequent advent of democratic change, initiated controversies around the persistence of a nationalistic version of history based on the lionisation of the Serbian nation, the construction of historical enemies and the cultivation of xenophobia. In today's Serbia, history teaching finds itself laden with political purposes, either employed as 'a primary tool for the protection of national homogeneity' or regarded as 'an essential component in the establishment of a European identity ... that do[es] not exclude the national dimension'. Snježana Koren traces the significant controversies in **Croatia**, at the heart of whose conflicts over history education lie the wars of 1939–1945 and 1991–1995. Koren outlines a situation in which, after the de-ideologisation of the immediate post-communist period, the ideology of Croatian statehood and national continuity took primacy and every Croatian state, including the pro-fascist Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War, was presented as a positive historical fact. The 1991–1995 war was a catalyst for the radicalisation of narratives. After the war, a desire among both Croats and Serbs for greater nuance in the discussion of the role of violent events in Croatian national identity eventually proved unfulfilled when in 2005 a textbook that addressed crimes committed by both Serbs and Croats came under attack from policymakers, journalists, war veterans' associations, and some historians for its alleged 'neutral terminology' and its avoidance of the term 'Homeland War'.

In severely war-torn **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, three constituent peoples, Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks, each interpreted the past through their specific lens and perpetuated incompatible and irreconcilable memories via an ethnically divided education system. Katarina Batarilo-Henschen's entry explores the resistance to international actors' attempts to direct history education in the country towards peaceful coexistence; some authors and schools struggled with changes to potentially biased material, and the mass media accused the international community of acting against historical truth and of promoting forgetting. Because they each attempt to run a separate education system, the country's constituent ethnic groups have not succeeded in creating an overarching political identity to place at the centre of history education, which means that multi-perspective interpretations of history tend to founder. The difficulties and differences regarding the representation of the recent war in history textbooks and the use of terms such as 'genocide' in education legislation have increased divergences in interpretation between the three separate educational systems. Batarilo-Henschen concludes that the treatment of the

recent war 'represent[s] one of the major contemporary challenges for education in the country, and one which will continue into the future'.

In some cases, the most contested issue of history education after the demise of communism has been the character of the Soviet period. Daina Bleiere, writing on **Latvia**, details the conflicts between ethnic Latvians and Russian-speaking Latvian citizens around the events of the Second World War and specifically the invasion of 1940, when Latvia lost its independence and became part of the Soviet Union. Bleire's case study demonstrates the close interrelationships between conflicts regarding interpretations of the past and controversial issues of the present; here, one key issue, with an inevitable impact on education, was the matter of whether Russian, from the Latvian perspective the language of the occupiers, should become an official language of Latvia. Interpretations of the communist regime and how to teach about it in schools also give rise to a common theme of conflict in history education in **Poland**. Controversy flared up with the distribution, free of charge, to secondary schools of a textbook published in 2011 by the 'openly anti-communist' Institute of National Remembrance. The shortcomings ascribed to the textbook included bias against state communism, a lack of multiperspectivity in the presentation of the past and aggressive iconoclasm. In **Bulgaria**, as Krassimira Daskalova details, the past has attained the status in public discourse of an inspirational response to the experience of present-day hardships. Conflictual areas in the path to a coherent national narrative after communism have included the Ottoman period.

The case of **Germany** differs in many respects from those of other nations with experience of state socialism in accordance with its specific context. Although the end of the Cold War and German reunification inevitably brought about major changes in history education in the new German *Länder*, nationalistic tendencies remained, for sound historical reasons, absent from education. Instead, it was depictions of the GDR and its citizens that became disputed in the new Federal Republic, as did questions of the suitability of comparisons between the socialist period of East German history and the National Socialist era. Critiques of particular interpretations and controversies about new textbooks remained essentially limited to academic and educational circles. Falk Pingel argues that key factors which successfully stood in the way of 'the outbreak of a potentially bitter controversy' were, first, the caution of textbook authors approaching this period, particularly with regard to the potential of comparison with the Nazi dictatorship, and, second, the federal structure of Germany's education system, which absorbs the potential controversies caused by differing interpretations as it accepts, and indeed expects, differences in content and emphasis from state to state.

While **China** has not experienced the abrupt and wholesale fall of communist rule, its transition over the last half-century from the Cultural Revolution to the market economy, and the continuation of change around the turn of the millennium, render its history education conflicts an instance of controversies bound up in the destabilisation of communist discursive hegemony. Biao Yang's analysis details the critique of the state monopoly on the production of history textbooks, which was increasingly appearing irrelevant and anachronistic and was denounced as such by history scholars and teachers who were advocating training for independent and critical thinking. In an exemplar of the law of unintended consequences, the liberalisation of the textbook market brought in its wake a multiplicity of narratives, giving rise to antagonism among academic historians due to the concomitant perceived threat to national patterns of interpretation. Secondary school history textbooks issued at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Shanghai, which rejected a chronological approach in favour of a thematic framework focusing on the history of civilisations, eventually fell victim to a successful campaign for their withdrawal from schools as they were deemed incompatible with Chinese societal tradition and divergent from Marxist historical materialism.

A noteworthy contrast to the fall of state socialism in many parts of the world appears in **Venezuela**, which relatively recently has witnessed its rise. Tulio Ramírez narrates the conflict initiated in 2006 due to the intention of the Chavez government to employ history and social studies education for the purpose of the 'political project of socialism in the twenty-first century'. It is an intent, Ramírez argues, evidently manifest in the new history curriculum for all educational levels, which depicts the new socialist society as a counter to the 'disorder of capitalism'. Taking the stance that the Chavez educational project, whose influence is ongoing, amounts to attempted indoctrination, Ramírez describes the largely successful resistance offered it by a 'brick wall' composed of diverse stakeholders and societal actors.

## **History Education Conflicts in Post-dictatorship Democracies**

The aftermath of periods of dictatorship frequently opens up battlefields of memory, history and consequently history education. This handbook contains a number of cases of societies during and after their transition from dictatorship to democracy, and their struggles to come to terms with this past. Such struggles frequently manifest in conflicts around history education as the need surfaces for young people to be able to interpret and categorise the

trauma. Interpretations may change in accordance with shifts in relationships among political, social and ideological forces. A key source of conflict in these instances relates to the tension between 'truth' and 'reconciliation', that is, between the provision of historical justice and recognition of the abuses suffered by the victims and the strategies for societal reconciliation which may involve, for instance, amnesty in return for testimony. A second issue which frequently arises concerns the interpretation of the former dictatorship's accession to power. Such regimes, during their lifetime, frequently institute their own narratives according to which the decisive coup d'état was necessary for the country's salvation from the previous regime. As with colonial myths of the civilising mission, these narratives have frequently outlived their origins and impeded changes in history education. Many post-dictatorship governments, occupying political spaces between left-wing political forces which dominated before the coup and right-wing groups which imposed or supported the military junta, tend to use a 'two devils' theory. This theory apportions relatively equal blame to the antagonists in the pre-dictatorship situation and allows them, inheriting the post-dictatorship setting, to mutually cancel out responsibility and guilt. The employment of such theories has attracted condemnatory responses from those who perceive it as equating perpetrators with victims or indeed with a merging of the two groups.

Gonzalo de Amézola traces these processes in **Argentina**, whose brutal dictatorial regime, in power from 1976 to 1983, was responsible for the 'disappearance' of 30,000 people, whose families frequently remain without closure. His analysis surveys the vacillating interpretations of the regime in history teaching: as a military dictatorship, the result of a 'craze', an authoritarian government among others in the latter half of the twentieth century, or as a regime of state terrorism. Key questions faced when teaching this chapter of Argentinian history to young people have included the relationship of wider society to the regime and its abuses—as illustrated in the introduction in current curricula of 'civilian-military dictatorship' to describe the regime—the depiction of resistance figures, and the conflictual nature, for those delivering education in the classroom, of teaching about a 'shameful past' in a setting usually concerned with glorifying a nation's history. Rodrigo Henríquez analyses the case of **Chile**, whose period of military dictatorship ended—in the year of upheaval that was 1990—with the succession to power of a transitional democratic regime under the ongoing substantial influence of its predecessor. A national Commission on Truth and Reconciliation left many events unexplored and did not call perpetrators to judicial account; this *modus operandi* influenced the approach and content of history education. Henríquez argues

that the textbooks issued during the period 1998–2009 reiterated a political narrative claiming that ‘the dictatorship built the foundations for economic growth, which then drove the development of the Chilean economy during the 1990s’. The perpetuation alongside this narrative of a ‘two devils’ theory blaming an all-round radicalisation for the collapse of democracy manifested in textbooks, for example, in their detailing of positions held by both the supporters of Allende and the defenders of Pinochet. This approach has provoked controversy among historians, but Henríquez’ assessment is that Chile is yet ‘tentatively opening up new space’ for a socially inclusive awareness of its history, one which is respectful of the trauma inflicted by the dictatorial regime.

Rafael Valls-Montes and Ramon Lopez-Facal examine and revise the case of **Spain**, in which the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship are the key issues of conflict. The Franco era bequeathed to school students a historical narrative characterised by bias and antagonism against the Second Spanish Republic and its supporters. It also depicted the Civil War as a struggle for the salvation or liberation of Spain from anti-nationalist, anti-Catholic and political forces manipulated by foreign influences. During the period of transition from dictatorship to democracy, the Francoist perspective was replaced by a representation of a mutual ‘sense of guilt’ and the exhortation that nothing of this kind should ever happen again. The authors attribute the new representations to the soft transition in which the members of Franco’s power apparatus remained in post. There was a tendency towards the promotion of amnesia during the period of transition and beyond. It is only very recently, the authors argue, that the dominant representation of responsibility shared equally by the two sides has been challenged by documentary sources, an approach ‘in line’ with historical research, and an incorporating of discussion on the traumatic violence and repression.

## **Around Conceptions of History and Education**

As the survey of cases detailed thus far illustrates, conceptions of what ‘history’ is or should be have been at the heart of a large number of societal conflicts around what takes place in a nation’s history classrooms. In a development beginning in the era of liberation and liberalisation that dawned at the end of the 1960s, the presentation to school students of nationally based historical paradigms has come under increasing pressure from specific critiques and new approaches. One of the key challenges has been the proliferation in the academic discipline of new themes including ‘history from below’, women’s history and the history of ethnic minorities, alongside the turn, whose origins

and impacts we have discussed above, from nationally based frameworks to a regional, transnational and/or global perspective. Methodologically, Western approaches to history in particular have questioned the predominance of traditional, propositional historical knowledge and have favoured the increasing introduction of procedural historical knowledge and disciplinary understanding; the pendulum has swung here from the notion of a 'great tradition' towards 'historical consciousness' and 'historical thinking'. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the specific situations of societies elsewhere, many of whom were emerging from colonialism and dictatorship, produced a different situation beyond the bounds of Western Europe. The debate, as Joanna Wojdon puts it in her entry on Poland, as to 'whether history, as taught in schools, should be a cornerstone of citizenship and/or national education or rather a school of critical thinking and other practical skills' is advancing to global prevalence, and its complex iterations bear the influence of the conflicts out of which these questions are frequently born.

We have previously mentioned that long-established narratives, particularly where they are seen to affirm a cherished self-image or a sense of coherence in a changing world, tend to die hard. The pendulum described above did not swing without resistance. In numerous states, innovative conceptions of 'history' in education appeared to some stakeholders as threats to the integrity of national identity. Where historical research or current methodology no longer supports the perpetuation of nationally centred affirmative narratives, their proponents may invoke specific experiences and collective memories in defence of them. Thus, changes in ideas around appropriate history education are closely bound up with shifts in the ground upon which nations construct their image of themselves, and attempts to reconstruct the one may be experienced as seismic shocks to the other. In the post-Cold War context, these groups of supporters of the eternal nation and its history, intertwined with the new nationalisms that have arisen in our era, may transcend traditional left/right political dividing lines, and religious institutions have been involved in a number of cases. These are conflicts frequently played out in the digital sphere, which once again points to the significance of the virtual space in the formation of an effectively single corporate actor.

Hercules (Iraklis) Millas follows the relevant processes in the case of **Greece**, where the post-1990 era has seen a resurgence of national populism. The account on which school history in Greece is based revolves around an ancient and eternal nation, with 'the Turk' taking the role of arch-enemy and the Greek Orthodox Church standing as a protective bulwark of Greek nationhood. It is an account to which large audiences assent and which has become a constituent part of Greek historical culture and Greek identity, notwithstanding his-

torical research pointing, for instance, to the existence of harmonious cooperation between the Orthodox Church and the Ottoman authorities. Recent attempts to historicise the content of the history taught in schools have given rise to bitter conflict. Millas traces a fierce controversy ignited in 2006 over a history textbook whose use in schools was claimed by the Greek Orthodox Church, followed by nationalistic circles, to put the nation at risk. Notably, the textbook prioritised historical thinking over nationalist memorialisation, and the ultimately successful opposition to it came from across the political spectrum, from the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party to the extreme left-wing groups which consider changes to national historical narratives to be acts of imperialism and forcible globalisation against national identity and culture. This line of argument likewise appears in **Bulgaria**, where, during the 1990s, some participants in the discourse deemed new approaches to interpreting the period of Ottoman domination to be violations of Bulgarian national identity dictated by foreign interests. Krassimira Daskalova's entry references heated controversies around attempts to replace historical notions such as 'Turkish yoke' with 'Ottoman domination' or, in some instances, the considerably more neutral 'Ottoman presence'. In **Greece**, a highly public and publicised conflict resulted in the withdrawal in 2007 of a controversial textbook after the electoral defeat of the then minister of education. The same textbook was at the heart of a conflict around the 'Cypriot question' in the **Republic of Cyprus**, whose education system follows the Greek syllabus and uses Greek textbooks. The addition to the curriculum of a supplementary course on Cypriot history was met with objections decrying it as a threat to the Hellenic character of the state. As in many instances in this book, the conflicts described by Eleftherios Klerides in this entry have entailed alleged denigration of the national collective memory on the part of new curricular and textbook content which, responding to factors such as the increasing internationalisation of history education and the intensification of bilateral initiatives to resolve Cyprus' division, has sought to turn away from ethnocentrism and towards multiperspectivity. A conflict erupting in 2004 saw a coalition which included the Church of Cyprus, some academics, educators and right-wing politicians levelling the allegation that criticism of bias in the depiction of Turkish Cypriots in textbooks represented an attack on Cyprus' Orthodox heritage and Greek values. In **Northern Cyprus**, by contrast, shifts in mentalities and political attitudes that occurred in the late 1990s initiated fundamental change to the history taught in Turkish schools. The entry by Hakan Karahasan and Mehves Beyidoglu Onen describes how, after the general election of 2003, the new government commissioned history textbooks which sought to promote the coexistence of Turkish and Greek Cypriots, cul-



tivate a sense of the Cypriot 'social space [being] a shared one', give a balanced presentation of conflicts between the two communities within an active learning environment and emphasise the importance of social history. Controversy inevitably broke out, with the textbooks being accused, during their use until the election of 2009 which brought a revision towards ethnocentrism, of seeking to 'divert' allegiances away from ethnically based group identity and essentially turn Turkish Cypriots into 'Cypriots' with no sense of their ethnic origins and values. Again, as this entry details, we observe the concomitancy between what we might call progressive approaches to history and similarly state-of-the-art approaches to education, and the resistance to both, which effectively perceives the two factors as intertwined in their tendency to destabilise national identity.

The conflict around the medieval Battle of Kosovo that erupted in **Serbia** bears similarities to the patterns we have traced in the cases discussed above. As in Greece, the Orthodox Church has taken the lead against the iconoclasm perceived to be besetting historical research. Tensions emerge between the account of history taught in schools, which draws substantially on research findings and sources, and that maintained by ecclesiastical and nationalist voices, which appears more powerful in popular historical culture.

The mechanisms of the conflict between the progressive opening up of the historical narrative and its defence in the name of a specific manifestation of a 'nation' are laid bare to a notable degree where a state endeavours to establish a historical narrative 'from scratch'. The history textbooks in use in **Palestine** until the turn of the millennium had been imported from Jordan and Egypt and their content and approach accorded correspondingly with Jordanian and Egyptian educational objectives and goals. Samira Alayan traces the long journey of the Palestinian authorities to producing their own full set of textbooks and taking responsibility for their content, a process supported by international institutions and completed for all stages of education in 2006. As elsewhere, religion played a significant role in the conflicts that arose around the new curricula and textbooks in their beginnings, with tensions between 'secular-national' perspectives and Islamic views. At a more fundamental level, questions have emerged as to the extent of Palestinian collective memory present or possible in the textbooks, which have been considered oriented more towards the 'peace process' than towards any project of identity-building. Alayan points to a causal factor being the extent to which 'the Palestinian curriculum has been designed to serve the needs of the government of the Palestinian Authority and its agenda, not the greater Palestinian narrative as a whole'. Beyond Palestine, critical responses to the textbooks raised contrasting concerns regarding incitement against Israel. The disjunction apparent

here between the internal and external perspective—both equally critical in their own way—points to the conflicting interests that beset attempts to produce a new historical narrative on or in politically sensitive settings.

Eyal Naveh, discussing the case of **Israel**, locates the source of this country's conflicts over history education in the inherent tension necessarily arising from the contradictory objectives of equipping citizens of an open and pluralistic democracy with historical awareness and the construction and inculcation of a hegemonic, collective and patriotic national identity. Traditionally, Israel's history curricula and textbooks have reproduced the Zionist narrative according to which the Israeli nation, after a long history of exile, founded its proper state in the face of ongoing hostility. The place of this narrative in the history curriculum remained essentially unshakable, and was assailed by limited instances of critique, until the late 1990s, when a new curriculum introduced objectives including critical thinking and an openness to the historical consciousness of the 'Other'. For the first time, the relationship of Israel with Palestinians was included in the curricular topics, and textbooks depicted a Palestinian perspective. Strong reactions to this alleged 'post-Zionism', and consequent media pressure, led eventually to the removal of all history after 1939 from the curriculum of all but high schools. Thus limited to the most advanced students, the major part of this content, with its revolutionary attempt to face the issue of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, then fell foul of pretextual adjustments of the curriculum to suit the number of hours allotted to history teaching at this level. Thus, the official inclusion of the conflict in education has gone hand in hand with its de facto omission. The media campaign to which textbook content including divergent perspectives fell victim in 2009 evidences further the joint failure of renewed notions of history and progressive perspectives on education to overcome deep-rooted societal and political reluctance to jeopardise master narratives, particularly where national identities are perceived as fragile or under external threat.

Johan Wassermann reviews and explicates the case of **South Africa**, which witnessed decades of the misuse of history to create a national identity on the basis of an unjust ideology. As elsewhere, the shift in the narrative after the end of apartheid in 1994 was intertwined with innovation of educational principles in the light of progressive and newly de-rigueur ways of doing history. The susceptibility of this historical-methodological renewal to backlash from political forces became apparent in 2007 when an intense conflict flared over a cartoon in an upper secondary history textbook. The violent expression of this backlash, which included the public burning of copies of the textbook, provided an apt demonstration of the continuing difficulty posed by the need to approach the past with the historical distance and unemotional clarity

required for the dispassionate use of sources as documents of a meta-discourse. The progressive intent of this style of education clashes here in a highly illustrative manner with the continued struggle around ownership of the historical narrative. As if in acknowledgement of, or submission to, this as yet seemingly intractable difficulty, the textbook's publisher, in the context of revisions, announced the replacement of the cartoon by a textual source.

Thorsteinn Helgason follows the relationship in **Iceland** between the dominant national narrative and the alternative accounts aiming to replace it. As he explains, the history taught in schools in the past had been based on a solid nationalistic account, with the seemingly necessary dose of hostility towards the national Other who in this case was mainly the Dane. The 1980s witnessed an initial, abortive attempt to transform the hitherto solidly nationalistic history taught in schools by integrating it into social studies. At the turn of the millennium, international developments and epistemological evolutions in education saw the national narrative come under pressure to open up towards an international dimension and to make room for active learning—once again, progression in conceptions of history goes hand in hand with progressive educational notions. Helgason describes how the pluralism characterising the thematically based new approach failed to win out over the linear account of national history based on 'a narrative of "common knowledge", which used to be a part of collective memory but is now lacking the national ethos'. Büşra Ersanlı's entry on **Turkey** similarly points to a deep-rooted tendency to revert to the (divisively) familiar, exacerbated in this case by the political context of general censorship and from a culture which refuses to acknowledge ethnocultural diversity. The move towards critical thinking, active learning and the integration of world history which began in 2003 has left the national master narrative essentially intact; in a startling contravention of both the letter and the spirit of multiperspectivity, even the pupils of Armenian primary schools in Turkey have been invited to submit compositions for a competition about 'how the Armenians massacred the Turks'. Other ethnic groups, including Kurds and Alevis, are effectively non-existent in Turkey's textbooks and curricula, and research has identified the continual mobilisation of the collective Turkish identity against that of others.

Where the political structures of a country mitigate against the formalisation of a national narrative, conflicts may take a different course. Gary B. Nash and Ross E. Dunn analyse the case of the **United States**, in which the federal structure of education is long established. The year 1994 saw the approval of the first national standards for school history, which had the dual aim of introducing students to the teaching of world history and of encouraging them to value the diversity of the American nation on the basis of the prin-

ciple of inclusiveness. Conservative politicians and media personalities protested the standards as unpatriotic, anti-American and anti-Western; one critic accused them, in a telling response to the threatened loss of a hegemonic power of definition, of setting out to 'promote the achievements and highlight the victimization of the country's preferred minorities, while ... degrad[ing] the achievements and highlight[ing] the flaws of the white males who ran the country for its first two centuries'.<sup>51</sup> The United States is a rare instance, in the context of the conflicts detailed in this book, of the failure of public condemnation of reforms, which they saw as anti-national, to alter the government's decision; the community of teachers and historians 'won' this conflict, successfully resisting the notion of 'nationalised' history education.

As in the United States, the introduction of world history in the context of new curricula in **Italy**, introduced by a centre-left government and intended as a counter to Eurocentric approaches, became subject to condemnation as detrimental to the development of an Italian and European collective identity. In contrast to the United States, however, the reforms foundered when, subsequent to the electoral victory of Berlusconi in 2001, a newly introduced history syllabus, replacing the previous curriculum, emphasised 'the values of Italian national identity in the context of Europe'. Luigi Cajani's entry thus demonstrates the correlation existing between changes in history education and the alternation of political parties in government.

**Canada** represents a case in which the maintenance and protection of specific identities carried over from a dual colonial past has placed high stakes on proposed changes of perspective in history education. In Quebec, a passionately conducted conflict erupted in and through responses in the media—initially in a French-medium newspaper—to a new history curriculum launched in 2000 which focused on Western civilisation. Christian Laville's chapter takes this conflict as an instance of a particular type revolving primarily around the resistance of defenders of a nationalist narrative to revisions in history education which attempt to broaden and denationalise the perspective. Laville's analysis identifies as a further feature of these conflicts the ignition and exacerbation of the controversy in media imposing their specific reading. Relatedly, the author observes the phenomenon—no doubt linked to the widening of the public frame of debate as discussed earlier in this introduction—of the assumption of expertise on the part of what Laville calls 'arm-chair pedagogues', non-expert stakeholders such as parents, and actors with no direct stake in the debate. Additionally, and crucially in the context of this section's focus, both those engaging in such critiques and, perhaps more worryingly, some historians tend to neglect or discount the educational aspects of the reformed material.

Conflicts over history education in relation to a national paradigm cannot necessarily be considered concluded once a shift towards a different model has taken effect. From the 1990s onwards, many countries experienced attempts to reverse such transformations. The **United Kingdom** is a noteworthy case. Terry Haydn retraces the journey undertaken by history teaching here from the 'Great Tradition', which rested on the twin bases of a narrative of Britain's development as a world power and a methodology of history as a 'received subject' teaching 'what happened' as plain fact, to the ending of this consensus and the emergence of a new paradigm of history centred around strategies of enquiry. Both models have traditionally continued to coexist in schools, a circumstance Haydn identifies as a key factor in the history education conflicts seen in the United Kingdom. Conservative politicians and historians advocating a return to the traditional national narrative of 'kings and queens', given momentum by the return to power of the Conservatives in 2010, have continued to call the compromise between these two models into question. Locating the conflict in a fundamental divergence between politics and education, the author concludes that 'There is now, more than ever, a stark contrast between the views of governing politicians and the views of history education professionals as to what school history is for, what its content should be, and what form it should take'. This said, a vocal faction among the United Kingdom's academic historians has resisted innovations such as the privileging of procedural over propositional knowledge and the recent emphasis on the development of historical knowledge grounded in the development of its understanding. Part of their argument has been the perceived threat to a coherent historical narrative drawing a 'long arc' and a sense of chronology. Similarly, a conflict in **Australia** surfacing in 2006 laid bare the tensions between what Anna Clark's entry calls 'national literacy', the acquisition by pupils of a sense of a coherent national narrative, and 'historical literacy' which seeks to promote historical thinking and flexibility around divergent perspectives.

The controversy in the **Netherlands** over the national historical canon points once again to the difficulties, seemingly entrenched and ongoing despite all attempts to overcome them, of directing attention beyond the traditional ethnocentric narrative taught in schools. Here, in the shape of the ten-era overview framework for Dutch history published in 2001, innovation in form appeared to meet conservatism in content, with non-European and gendered perspectives finding themselves marginalised. The ten-era framework was followed in 2006 by a proposed Dutch historical canon aiming to initiate a reconsideration of 'Dutch identity and its articulations in education'. Maria Grever describes the popularisation of 'canons' of all types unprec-

edently kick-started by this enthusiastically received contribution to the debate and regarded with concern by academic historians who criticised the top-down procedure by which it had come into being, expressed reservations towards the idea of a canon and highlighted a lack of transparent criteria for the selection of topics. Analogies are discernible in the case of **Sweden**, which experienced a not dissimilar wave of interest in the national past beginning in the 1990s. Björn Norlin and Daniel Lindmark attribute it to a problematic social context characterised by a lack of historical perspective for which the revival of national history appeared a potential remedy. In the early 1990s, the formerly predominant national narrative of great men and events found a new lease of life in the work of a journalist who began to publish on the history of Sweden, attracting considerable criticism from the world of historical scholarship. Again, such narratives, in spite of all apparent anachronism, have retaken their place in public historical discourse in Sweden and elsewhere; the pull of the coherent account of a nation at one with itself and marked by homogeneity of behaviour, attitudes and purpose is by no means restricted to states recently gaining self-determination or emerging from poverty or conflict.

While effectively all controversies around predominantly educational issues relating to the history classroom have a political dimension, there are some instances in which the educational aspect of the conflict took the foreground, while the debate at the conflict's heart remained primarily within the bounds of the educational and historical community. The awareness in **Northern Ireland** of the power that can be attached to an overtly political history education has led, as Alan McCully illuminates, to a history education intended to maintain distance from partisanship in either direction and remain free from political and ideological manipulations. The history curriculum is consequently structured in a way that avoids single interpretations of the conflict-laden issues of the past and seeks to prepare students to 'resist sectarianism'. In this regard, the history curriculum in Northern Ireland meets the recommendations of international actors in post-conflict education to anchor curricular content in multiperspectivity, and McCully assesses the results of this live case study as thus far 'encouraging'. This notwithstanding, he points to a problematic matter engendered by precisely this model approach: the potential for this permanent reference to both dominant positions or perspectives to perpetuate students' sense of 'two opposing and irreconcilable blocks'. A more nuanced depiction might, for instance, have the capacity to break through the monolithic impression of all individuals within one community being predestined to act in the same way. Moreover, McCully argues that young people 'exposed to enquiry-based history, as they become politicised ... tend to use knowledge selectively to support the dominant views of their

respective communities'; it remains the case that they struggle 'to move beyond the formative family or community narrative even when they value what they encounter in schools'. These observations place at least a degree of caveat on the currently unassailable status of multiperspectivity as a panacea in post-conflict situations.

Multiperspectivity has likewise come under fire in the different post-conflict setting of **Serbia**, with its much stronger political influence on the teaching of history. One group of historians takes the increasingly orthodox line that a multi-perspective and interactive approach to history education in tune with modern teaching theories and procedures is necessary, if not vital. An opposing faction perceives multiperspectivity as a threat to national identity. The conflict detailed in Marko Šuica's entry around alternative educational materials based on multiperspectivity went to the heart of many stakeholders' unease with the approach and its spotlighting of the question as to how many historical truths actually exist. In the **Czech Republic**, history itself, as an independent school subject, found itself called into question. Antonie Doležalová's entry examines, among many other conflictual areas around history education, the process of disentangling Czech history from the stereotypical content of the communist era. Driven by the twin motivators of progressive educational methodology and the Europeanisation of education, a proposal came into being to dissolve the previous boundaries of traditional curricular subjects and instead organise the curriculum into multi-subject fields of study, with history falling under 'man and society', effectively merging it with civic education. In reaction to this proposal, historians and history teachers have come together to warn of the threat to school history and to demand it retain its distinct place in the curriculum. In **Romania**, the initiatives taken in 2004–2005 to promote a shift 'from content to competencies' and lay aside chronological order in favour of a thematic approach towards significant aspects of the past faced the opposition of teachers and the public; their motivation was a perception of history as literal facts. The opposition between 'content' and 'skills' was likewise a bone of contention in the controversy around the **Netherlands**' 'canon'.

Focusing primarily on the treatment by textbooks of the relationship between **Norway** and the EU, Bente Aamotsbakken argues that a major factor in the lack of conflict in Norway around history education and educational materials may be the long existence of a system, only recently abandoned, of official certification for textbooks. Aamotsbakken observed that '[i]t seems to be a tradition that history textbooks are conservative and slow to change'; here we therefore perhaps find a variant of the stabilisation of educational historical narratives through formerly reigning structures.



## Concluding Observations

In bringing together 57 case studies on history education conflicts under an overarching analytical umbrella, this volume sheds new light on the current state of controversy surrounding history education worldwide. The map thus spread before us depicts a world in which Lucien Febvre's idea of replacing national histories with 'an apolitical approach to world history, which is by definition pacifist', remains substantially unfulfilled, and few societies have been able consistently and permanently to overcome the tendency noted by Febvre for history teaching and textbooks to 'glorify the individual spirit of a people ... [and] place it in opposition to neighbouring peoples'.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, in broad stretches of the world, a situation remains in which discourses around history give it a monolithic and immutable status, failing to do justice to its essentially processual nature and to the multiplicity of alternative paths and perspectives opened up by closer study.

Our intent and desire is that this comprehensive guide to a field as sensitive as it is crucial, in a world in which profound and passionate conflicts over difficult pasts are ongoing, will make a useful contribution to a better awareness and understanding not only of the uses and abuses of history education but also of its transformative capacity. In its dual function as a reference work and as a signpost to recent and current research on history education conflicts, it does not claim to offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of all history education conflicts, nor is it able or intended to provide in-depth analysis of all the nuances characterising particular cases. This notwithstanding, with its analytical and comparative approach, pointing to patterns of discourse and interaction occurring across individual instances and illuminating shared features and divergences within specific backdrops and settings, this book seeks to prepare a path to further comparative research on key controversies around history education internationally and, moving beyond the field of scholarship, to critical reflection on interpretations of the past and their treatment in the classroom and the wider public sphere. Coming full circle to the beginning of this introduction, and to the role our past plays in helping constitute our present being, our desire is that readers may use the book—as a broad yet detailed map tracing the geographies and geologies of our collective selves—to help them gain the lie of the land and identify both recurring and distinctive features as they negotiate the terrain and potential points of departure for further exploration.

## Notes

1. Cf. the description by Ernest Lavissee of the aims of history teaching in E. Lavissee, ed., 'L'enseignement de l'histoire à l'école primaire'. In *Questions d'enseignement national* (Paris: Librairie Classique Armand Colin, 1885), 209–210.
2. M. W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004); M. W. Apple and L. K. Christian-Smith, eds., *The Politics of the Textbook* (New York: Routledge, 1991); S. Lässig, 'Textbooks and Beyond: Educational Media in Context(s)', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 1 no. 1 (2009): 1–20; M. Carretero, *Constructing Patriotism. Teaching History and Memories in Global Worlds* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publ., 2011); K. A. Crawford and S. J. Foster, eds., *What Shall We Tell the Children? International Perspectives on School History Textbooks* (Greenwich, Conn.: Information Age Publ., 2006); I. Davies, ed., *Debates in History Teaching* (London: Routledge, 2011); M. Carretero, M. Asensio and M. Rodríguez-Moneo, eds., *History Education and the Construction of National Identities* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publ., 2011). Cf. also the relevant United Nations report of 2013. The Special Rapporteur has noted that in most, if not all, societies, there is a sense of the 'paramount importance of history writing and teaching [to] people's identities, sense of belonging and relationships with societal others and the State'. He also emphasises the existence of controversy, 'in particular in those societies that have seen international or internal conflicts; post-colonial societies; societies that have experienced slavery; and societies challenged by divisions based on ethnic, national or linguistic background, religion, belief or political ideology'. Report, United Nations A/68/296 (9 August 2013), 4.
3. O. E. Schüddekopf et al., *Historique de la révision des manuels d'histoire 1946–1965, L'enseignement de l'histoire et la révision des manuels d'histoire* (Strasbourg: Conseil de la Coopération Culturelle du Conseil de l'Europe, 1967), 11–47.
4. F. Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook in Textbook Research and Textbook Revision*, 2nd ed. (Paris/Braunschweig: UNESCO/Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 2010); L. Cajani, 'Introduction'. In *History Teaching, Identities, Citizenship*, ed. L. Cajani (Stoke on Trent, Sterling: Trentham Books, 2006), 1–12; E. Fuchs and Y. Tatsuya, eds., *Contextualizing School Textbook Revision*, special issue of *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 2/2 (2010); C. A. Schröder, *Die Schulbuchverbesserung durch internationale geistige Zusammenarbeit* (Braunschweig: Georg Westermann Verlag, 1961).
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6. J. Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation (The League Experience and the Beginning of UNESCO)* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1962); J.-J. Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée. La Société des Nations et la coopération intellectuelle (1919–1946)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999).
7. UNESCO, ed., *Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding* (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), 9–58.
8. F. Mole, 'Georges Lapierre, un instituteur dans le développement de l'internationalisme pédagogique (1923–1932)'. In *Globalisation des mondes de l'éducation. Circulations, connexions, réfractions XIXe-XXe siècles*, ed. J. Droux and R. Hofstetter (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2015), 53–74.
9. M. Cattaruzza and S. Zala, 'Negotiated history? Bilateral Historical Commissions in Twentieth-Century Europe'. In *Contemporary History on Trial. Europe since 1989 and the Role of the Expert Historian*, ed. H. Jones, K. Östberg and N. Randerad (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 123–143; F. Pingel, 'Can Truth be Negotiated? History Textbook Revision as a Means to Reconciliation', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617 (2008): 181–198.
10. Schröder, *Die Schulbuchverbesserung*, 69–71; Renoliet, *L'UNESCO oubliée*, 304–305.
11. A. Costes, ed., *L'enseignement de l'histoire contemporaine et les manuels d'histoire allemands. A propos d'une tentative d'accord franco-allemand* (Paris: Alfred Coste Éditeur, 1938); 'Probleme der deutsch-französischen Geschichtsschreibung'. In *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht* 1 (1951): 44–64; M. L. Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1914–1940* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 135–137.
12. C. Defrance and U. Pfeil, eds., *Verständigung und Versöhnung nach dem "Zivilisationsbruch"? Deutschland in Europa nach 1945* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2016).
13. UNESCO ed., *Records of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Third Session Beirut 1948, volume II: Resolutions* (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), 26.
14. L. Febvre, 'Rapport de M. Lucien Febvre devant le Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences humaines, Mai 1949/Report of Professor Lucien Febvre to the International Council for Philosophy and Social Sciences, May 1949', *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale—Journal of World History—Cuadernos de historia mundial* 1 (1954): 954–961, here 956.
15. *History of Mankind: Cultural and Scientific Development* (London: George Allen & Unwin/International Commission for a History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind, 1963–1969). As regards the creation of

- this work, see also G. Allardyce, 'Toward World History: American Historians and the Coming of the World History Course'. In *Journal of World History* 1/1 (1990): 23–76, here 26–40.
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  21. Council of Europe, ed., *Against Bias and Prejudice. The Council of Europe's Work on History Teaching and History Textbooks* (doc.CC-ED/HIST (95) 3 rev), (Strasbourg: Council for Cultural Co-operation, 1995).
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  23. 'Deutsch-Französische Historikertagung'. In *Deutsch-französische Vereinbarung über strittige Fragen europäischer Geschichte* (Hanover: Hahn, 1952).
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33. J. Le Goff and P. Nora, *Faire de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
34. W. Marsden, *The School Textbook. Geography, History and Social Studies* (Portland, OR: Woburn Press, 2001).
35. F. Fitzgerald, 'Changing the Paradigm: Perceptions of American History After World War II'. In *Perceptions of History: International Textbook Research on Britain, Germany and the United States*, ed. V. R. Berghahn and H. Schissler (Oxford/New York/Hamburg: Berg, 1987), 19.
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37. R. Stichweh, *Die Weltgesellschaft. Soziologische Analysen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000); B. Christophe and F. Macgilchrist, 'Shaping the global: Theory and Methods for Exploring the Production of Globalization with Educational Media'. In *Local, National and Transnational Identities in Textbooks and Educational Media*, ed. J. R. Rodríguez, M. Horsley and S. V. Knudsen (IARTEM, 2009), 101–112.
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41. E. Cole, ed., *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), explores nine relevant case studies. See also D. Bontrovato et al., eds., *History Can Bite. History Education in Divided and Postwar Societies*. Eckert. Die Schriftenreihe, Band 141. (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2016).
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43. On Southeastern Europe, see A. Dimou, ed., *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009). For the Asian context, M. Baildon, *Controversial History Education in Asian Contexts* (London: Routledge, 2014), explores a variety of case studies.
44. M. Blaive, C. Gerbel and T. Lindenberger, eds., *Clashes in European Memory: The Case of Communist Repression and the Holocaust* (Innsbruck/Vienna; Bozen: Studien Verlag, 2013) examines conflicts around history and memory in 11 countries.
45. M. Carretero, S. Berger and M. Grever, eds., *Palgrave Handbook of Research in Historical Culture and Education* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
46. The term 'history wars' found prominence in the context of history education in relation to the intense controversy in Australia over the interpretation of the history of [British colonisation](#). Cf. Macintyre and Clark's *The History Wars*. The term subsequently spread as a descriptor for intense conflict over history and/or history education. Cf. Taylor and Guyver, eds., *History Wars and the Classroom*. Cf. also an earlier use in relation to public history: E. Linenthal and T. Engelhardt, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 1996).
47. Cf. H. G. Betz and S. Immerfall, eds., *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).
48. Cf. the special issue of the history review *Vingtième Siècle*: 'Les populismes', *Vingtième Siècle, revue d'histoire* 56 (1997).

49. F. Shaheed, *Report of the Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights*, presented to the 68th session of the General Assembly, 9 August 2013 (A/68/296) (New York, 24 October 2013).
50. China-Japan-Korea Common History Textbook Tri-National Committee, *A History to Open the Future: Modern East Asian History and Regional Reconciliation* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2015). See also the English translation of the most recent trilateral history textbook in two volumes, which includes a chapter on the complex process of negotiating and producing such a work: E. Fuchs, T. Kasahara and S. Saaler, eds., *A New Modern History of East Asia*. Eckert. Expertise 7. (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2018).
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# 2

## Argentina

Gonzalo de Amézola

### Introduction

The dictatorship that ruled Argentina from 1976 until the end of 1983 traumatised the country to such a degree that society has not yet recovered. The most irreparable of the wounds left by the regime was the fate of the ‘disappeared’. Under the pretext of dealing with the guerrilla formations in existence at the time—the Peronist Montoneros and the Trotskyist People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP)—the military government planned and executed an illegal and bloody campaign of repression which sought its victims indiscriminately among all kinds of government opponents.

When the dictatorship left power, successive governments of the re-established democracy in Argentina faced calls from society for truth and justice regarding the 30,000 ‘disappeared’ people who had fallen victim to the regime’s violence. The significance of these events in public debate has been continuously growing over the last 30 years, yet this wound remains open to this day. The policies of memory practised by successive governments since the end of the dictatorship all differed from, and occasionally contradicted, one another. Academic history, which had initially left the issue in the hands of investigative journalism and the political sciences, dealt with the dictatorship hesitantly at first, before producing a proliferation of research which diversified and enriched its views on the period. Argentina’s tragic past slowly became a key issue in the education of democratic citizens which the country’s schools today seek to provide. These three arenas of the debate—politics of memory, academic history and teaching in schools—variously influence one

another and work in parallel, overlap and are interwoven; what remains constant is the status of the 1976–1983 dictatorship as a burning issue in Argentinian political debate.

## The Debate

In spite of the military regime's contention that, during its period in government, the acts of repression that it had carried out were the result of a non-conventional war in which there had only been 'mistakes and excesses', the Argentinian president during the country's period of transition, Raul Alfonsín, ordered the formation of a commission of dignitaries—the Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (CONADEP)<sup>1</sup>—in order to investigate the crimes of the dictatorship. The commission's final report, entitled *Nunca Más* (Never Again),<sup>2</sup> was a powerful explanatory account that proved that the dictatorship had implemented a systematic plan of violent coercion against its opponents, including the kidnapping, torture and murder of those they accused of being 'subversives'.

The country's new democratic age required an account of the past in order to move on; this account was found in the *Nunca Más* report, which exonerated society at large of any supporting relationship to the dictatorship, viewing it as an innocent spectator of a war between military men on one side and guerrillas on the other: in other words, a struggle of which society as a whole was unaware or towards which its stance was neutral. The report further considered the 'disappeared' as innocent victims, describing them by their age, gender and occupation, but not by their political activism. This method of proceeding also fulfilled the criterion set for the commission of avoiding making a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' 'disappeared' people and taking into account the persistent psychological action of the dictatorship in its vilification of those who had participated in politics.<sup>3</sup> In 1985, soon after the report's publication, the members of the military juntas were tried and found guilty, with the CONADEP report serving as a principal source of evidence for the prosecution. The report achieved a high degree of social consensus; years later, however, it was accused of promoting what was called the 'theory of the two demons'; this pejorative label failed to take into account the needs of the point in history at which it was compiled.

The government also looked to schools to help mitigate the authoritarian manner of government in the previous period and its influence on ways of being and interaction within society. The school subject 'Moral and Civic Formation' was eliminated from curricula, as it was a subject which presented

students with the explicit ideology of the dictatorship and was replaced by a subject intended to promote a more tolerant and pluralist culture. However, the country's new leadership did not immediately modify curricula in other subjects and did not undertake this task during its term of office.

Meanwhile, the armed forces showed their discontent with Argentina's new government and defended their repressive actions during the period in question. The concern engendered by this unrest caused the government to attempt to limit the scope of its policy of uncovering the dictatorship's crimes, in the shape of the *Ley de Punto Final* (Full Stop Law) of 1986; moreover, when, in 1987, serious instances of rebellion within the troops arose, the government limited responsibility for acts of state terror to the superior officers who had given the orders (Law of Due Obedience), an act which was clearly a consequence of the unrest within the military ranks, although this causal relationship was never officially admitted. These developments led the official government policy to lose credibility in general public opinion. In 1989, an economic crisis involving hyperinflation caused the fear of chaos in Argentinian society to come to a head and forced Alfonsín to hand over power prematurely to the candidate elected to succeed him.

The new president, Carlos Menem, embarked upon an economic policy that included the privatisation of state-owned companies; he also promulgated the 'theory of national reconciliation' within which he proposed that forgetting the tragedies of the nation's past under dictatorship was the only way of moving forward, and in 1989 and 1990 he pardoned the military and guerrilla chiefs sentenced by legal processes during the previous administration.

Menem's policies of modernisation for the Argentinian state included sweeping reforms to education: an 'educational transformation' which began with the passing of the Federal Law of Education in 1993. This legislation extended the duration of compulsory education to nine years, followed by optional continued education of a further three years.<sup>4</sup> There were also substantial changes to curricula at both levels. In the subject of history, the emphasis passed from the first half of the nineteenth century, which had traditionally been the period from which examples for patriotic education were chosen, to the historical processes of the twentieth century and even to recent events. The reason given for this change was that knowledge of the recent past would help young people to understand the times they were living in. This objective was gradually joined by another, whose importance successively increased: the idea that studying the tragic experience of the military dictatorship would be essential to the formation of the democratic citizens of the future.

Thus, despite the conciliation and oblivion policy of Carlos Menem's government, the new Common Basic Content (CBC) for social sciences, approved

in 1995, established for the entire country the study of the last dictatorship, which was euphemistically referred to as one of the 'authoritarian governments' of the second half of the twentieth century, without differentiating it from previous military administrations. The curriculum stipulated that all provinces should use this content as the basis of their individual curricula.<sup>5</sup>

Until the mid-1990s, studies devoted to the recent past were influenced by an emphasis on the healing nature of the democratic system which had begun in the 1980s and which indirectly encouraged a range of interpretations to explain the various presumed causes of Argentina's departure from democracy. In this search for the guilty, new studies appeared on key political participants in the events such as military men<sup>6</sup> and Peronists,<sup>7</sup> alongside the first works about the guerrillas.<sup>8</sup> In 1987, Richard Gillespie's book *Soldiers of Peron: Argentina's Montoneros* was published in Spanish. The negative social perception of the irregular armed organisations resulted from Argentinian society holding them responsible, through their terrorist actions, for the coup d'état in 1976. This led the publisher to add an introduction by Felix Luna that began 'What you are about to read in the following pages is the history of a craze; a craze that initially took control of the spirit of a small group of youngsters belonging to the upper middle classes and then infected the Argentinian social body'.<sup>9</sup>

In 1995, the topic of the human rights violations committed at the time re-entered the public arena due to the confession of Captain Adolfo Scilingo, who declared he had been involved in the flights in which abduction victims, after interrogation and torture, were drugged and thrown from aircraft into La Plata river to drown; he claimed that, like his comrades in arms, he had been acting on orders formally given by his superiors.<sup>10</sup> Soon afterwards, the commemorations of the twenty-year anniversary of the coup d'état enabled the beginning of a new cycle of memory, which was promoted in particular by a new group formed by the descendants of the 'disappeared' (HIJOS).<sup>11</sup> A significant change of perspective has since occurred as HIJOS and the campaigning organisation Madres de Plaza de Mayo<sup>12</sup> stopped referring to the 'disappeared' as victims and declared them to be activists who had been committed to a concrete political project, of which they declared themselves followers.

From that moment on, interest in the events of the 1970s grew rapidly, a phenomenon some referred to as the 'memory boom'. Two works emerged out of this re-evaluation of events which were to gain great importance and become bestsellers: one was a vindication of revolutionary Peronism<sup>13</sup> and the other a large-scale collective interview with activists of the 1970s.<sup>14</sup> A prevailing characteristic of the proliferation of academic studies on the period that followed these two works was that the studies were not interested in general

interpretations, rather being devoted to very specific aspects of the recent past—especially to the progress of the political rebellion, such as the popular uprising at the end of the 1960s,<sup>15</sup> the activity of the leftist unions,<sup>16</sup> the actions of the ‘new left’<sup>17</sup> or the thinking of the revolutionary Peronists,<sup>18</sup> among other elements.

This change in the climate of memory has brought its influence to bear on school curricula, with their topics more clearly defined than those in the CBC.

In the case of the Province of Buenos Aires, which represents around 40% of the country in terms of student and teacher numbers, the issue of the dictatorship was included as follows in the course content for the ninth year of compulsory schooling: Semi-democracy. Proscription. Military coups. Guerrilla groups. The last military dictatorship. The so-called Process of National Reorganisation. The violation of human rights. The issue of the Malvinas throughout history.<sup>19</sup>

In the polymodal education stage of schooling, Argentina’s recent past was included in the second-year curriculum:

The military coup of 1976. Consolidation of state terrorism and prohibition of political activity. Malvinas War: failure in the construction of political legitimacy. Return to democracy. Assertion of republican institutions and democratic political rule. Human rights policy. Conflictual relations with the military ... The role of justice in the consolidation of the republican democracy ... Contraction of industrial production and expansion of financial capital. Pressure of external debt, economic stagnation and hyperinflation ... Censorship and destruction of publications. Rebirth of cultural activity.<sup>20</sup>

The economic crisis of 2001–2002 temporarily pushed the issue of human rights from the agenda; the matter made an emphatic reappearance, however, when in 2003 Nestor Kirchner was elected to the country’s presidency, declaring his support for the advancement of human rights. The President made the culture of memory promulgated by HIJOS and Madres de Plaza de Mayo into official policy and established a new Supreme Court of Justice that abrogated the Full Stop Law and the Law of Due Obedience. This paved the way for criminal trials of those involved in human rights abuses in the 1970s to recommence; they continue to this day. These measures, together with others of a more symbolic nature—such as the transformation of the most emblematic centre of illegal detention under the dictatorship, the Navy School of Mechanics, into a museum of memory and the establishment of a public holiday on 24 March, the anniversary of the 1976 coup d’état, to commemorate the Day of Memory for Truth and Justice—gained for the government the

support of the human rights organisations, such as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo,<sup>21</sup> that had previously avoided being identified with those in political power. The new official policy presents some risks, as Lvovich and Bisquert state:

This vindication of the past of the revolutionary militant movement implies a highly selective treatment, if not mystification, of the movement's tradition. The trajectory of the Peronist Youth and other organisations was now being read as an antecedent of Kirchner's government, ignoring the fact that identification with liberal democracy did not constitute, at that time, part of the ideology of the revolutionary youth.<sup>22</sup>

This new climate may possibly have brought its influence to bear on schools in the province of Buenos Aires, where in 2004 a new curriculum for history at the polymodal stage was defined; it was centred on Latin American and Argentinian history, setting world history aside. In the second year of this stage of schooling, whose syllabus covered the period from 1930 up to and including the crisis of 2001, the topic of the dictatorship appeared under the following headings:

The military dictatorship in Argentina, 1976–1983. State terrorism: policy of detention [and] disappearances as a central method of social and state-political control. The “justification” of the illegal repression. Concentration and extermination camps. Daily life in the early years of the dictatorship: fear, insecurity, censorship, corruption and exile. Sport and politics: The football World Cup of 1978. The response of the international legal community to the regimes of state terrorism. Calls in Argentinian society for the safe return of the “disappeared”. The Beagle conflict with Chile. Malvinas war: from a national cause to an absurd war. The collapse of the military regime.<sup>23</sup>

The volume of writing about the period in historiography has increased in the first years of the new millennium and we have seen some changes of perspective. If a re-evaluation of the political militancy of the 1970s had prevailed since the mid-1990s, with an occasionally idealised view of its actions, at the beginning of the new century works appeared which proposed a critical perspective on the violent actions of the guerrillas.<sup>24</sup> An unexpected feature here is that these judgements did not emerge from sections of the academic community related to the military dictatorship, factions which had always called the actions of armed organisations into question, but from critical historians of the left and, in some cases, from former guerrillas. Although these works are not great in number, their impact was significant.

In this context, a new educational reform was carried out in 2006 with the passing of a Law of National Education which directed all education authorities throughout the country to reverse most of the modernising innovations which had been introduced to education in the 1990s. The reform strengthened the status of the recent past in history teaching; article 92 of the new law stipulates the following as compulsory content for all jurisdictions:

The exercise and construction of collective memory about the historical and political processes that broke the constitutional order and completed the rise to power of state terrorism; in order to produce in students reflection on and democratic feelings towards the defence of the rule of law and full identification with the principles of human rights.<sup>25</sup>

Progressing from this change, the curricula currently in force stipulate that the recent dictatorship must be studied in the final stage of secondary schooling, which has now been made compulsory. In the case of Buenos Aires province, the recent dictatorship is addressed as a topic in the fifth year of secondary schooling.<sup>26</sup> The principal innovations resulting from the reform are a reduction in the extent of periodisation—the dictatorship is included in a period spanning from 1955 to the present day—a change of terminology, with the regime being referred to as a ‘civilian-military dictatorship’ as the military forces had the support of civilian sectors and a lower level of prescriptiveness in the design of the individual topics.

Despite these frequent changes to curricula, curricular guidelines have over time consistently maintained an explanatory scheme that only partially permits any variations on interpretations of collective memory; it can be outlined as follows:

1. Repression: All guidelines make reference to kidnappings, clandestine detention centres, torture and ‘disappearances’. They also describe the policies of censorship, silencing and concealment which were in force. In all cases, the ‘disappeared’ are characterised by age, gender and occupation but not by their political activity or otherwise.
2. Economic policy: All curricular schemes point out the destruction of the existing industry, the social consequences of this process and the prevalence of finance-based activities over industrial production in the Argentinian economy, as well as corruption and its social effects.
3. Malvinas: All guidelines interpret the war only as an irresponsible exercise undertaken by the dictatorship in search of a way out of or a distraction from internal problems. In no case is there analysis of the popular support



initially enjoyed by the military in this conflict or of the support and justification for the conflict by the government since 2007.

4. Human rights organisations: No guidelines refer to the differences between organisations or to internal differences experienced by some of them, such as the case of Madres de Plaza de Mayo. The curricula provide data but only in exceptional instances do they refer to the importance of the political activities carried out by these organisations.

The CONADEP report into state terrorism is treated as a privileged source and is mentioned in all textbooks, with most referencing it explicitly. As Emilio Crenzel states, 'the *Never Again* report enshrined a new regime of memory regarding [Argentina's] past of political violence and disappearances, becoming the hegemonic standard of its interpretation and memory'.<sup>27</sup>

An issue that appeared in all guidelines is the inclusion of state terrorism and the omission of revolutionary violence. There is no mention of the strategies either of the armed organisations or of the insurrectionist leftist groups ('foquismo', social and political activism), or of the guerrilla activity of the period, such as guerrilla training, clandestinity and popular justice.

What has emerged from these years of education in Argentina condemning dictatorship and praising respect for human rights? When investigating and evaluating the results of this teaching, we find ourselves confronted with a lack of empirical data on what actually happens inside classrooms. However, the findings from recent research allow us to assert that Argentinian students' rejection of military governments and their ideas is significant and even stronger than that observed in Brazil and Uruguay. Moreover, the recent past is the area of history young people from these three countries are most interested in.<sup>28</sup> These findings, however, are no reason to rest on our laurels. Several issues should be taken into account when considering the impact of contemporary history education.

Firstly, schools have always recalled a country's glorious past and cited historical heroes as role models in order to shape children's personalities. The study of Argentina's recent military dictatorship radically inverts this model of history education: the dictators' ruthless and merciless actions are to be remembered so students may learn the lessons required to avoid repeating that shameful past. This profound change to the 'rules' of history education causes many teachers to feel highly conflicted; many of them resolve this conflict by omitting the teaching of these topics or trivialising it. Furthermore, teachers have neither engaged with these topics during their own schooling nor as part of their initial teacher training and most of them are too young to have personal experience of the tragic recent past. The knowledge contained in textbooks is usually the only means they have, apart from what circulates in the

media, of gaining the information they need to transmit to students. They are often acutely aware that this topic is a politically sensitive one and that any mistake or inaccuracy can be misinterpreted.

Additionally, we observe that whenever the recent past is referred to, the National Law of Education, and all official documents and proclamations based upon it, almost always refer to 'memory' and never to 'history', as if to suggest a less 'bureaucratic' way of talking about this painful period of the past, closer to people's experience and interest. We need to take into account here that memory is, more so than history, a construction always 'filtered' by the knowledge acquired after the event, by the reflection that follows it, or by other experiences that cast their light or shadow on the previous experience and modify memory. In this process of construction, Enzo Traverso identifies several 'vectors of memory' that do not have a hierarchical relationship with one another, but that coexist and are reciprocally transformed by their relationships. Firstly, people's personal memories make up a subjective memory that is not set in stone, but rather changes over time, altered in its course by the ongoing accumulation of experiences. To these individual experiences is added 'transmitted experience', a collective memory that perpetuates itself and is perpetuated, remaining relatively stable, in the 'social frames' that make up an inherited and shared culture. In addition to these representations of the past, there are those created by the media and the culture industry, the memory policies put into practice by states to adapt interpretations of the past to their present interests, and, finally, the legal interpretations of past events created in the contexts of law and justice.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps, in order to achieve something different, we should not think of *how* to teach, but rather of *why* schools should deal with the recent dictatorship. One of the main dangers in the development of critical memory is an overriding desire to teach without reflecting on what exactly is to be transmitted. 'Régine Robin calls this the "pedagogism of memory" and says 'It is here [that] the notions of the "duty of memory" and "duty of transmission", if they are not questioned, themselves become questionable'.<sup>30</sup> What the author means here is the transformations that the memory of that past has to undergo where those who recall it are no longer direct witnesses to that traumatic experience. If the aim of the 'educational will' in regard to these events is that contemporary generations must view the past in the same way as the generations directly affected by the trauma did, the result is an impoverished, reductive and unhistorical perspective. The memory that should be promoted in schools should not be repetitive in this sense, but it should encourage what Ricoeur, using Freud's terms, calls the 'elaboration of mourning', a necessary act for the overcoming of trauma.<sup>31</sup>

## Documentation

In 2004, the philosopher Oscar del Barco sent a letter to the journal *La intemperie*, sparking a controversy which was to continue until 2005, around the revolutionary violence of the dictatorship period. Del Barco's letter was in response to an interview given to the same publication by Héctor Jouvé, a member of the first Argentinian armed group to be established, the Guerrilla Army of the People (EGP), in which he gave an account of the execution in 1964 of two members of the group. Motivated by this account, del Barco defended the principle 'Thou shall not kill' as the ethical imperative of all societies throughout time, commenting:

This recognition leads me to argue for other consequences [of this imperative] that are no less serious: to recognise that all those, like me, who in any way supported or participated, directly or indirectly, in the movement Montoneros, in ERP, or in FAR or in any other armed organisation, are responsible for their actions. I insist that there is no 'ideal' which could justify a man's death, be it General Aramburu's, a militant's or a policeman's. The fundamental principle on which all communities are built is *Thou shall not kill*. You shall not kill any human being, because every human being is sacred ... Evil, as Levinas states, consists of excluding oneself from the consequences of reasoning, saying one thing and doing another, supporting the death of other people's children and only defending the principle of *Thou shall not kill* when the victims are our own children.<sup>32</sup>

The reaction to the letter was not long in coming, and the ensuing passionate controversy, involving, among others, Héctor Schmucler, Eduardo Grüner, Ricardo Forster, Alejandro Kaufman, Nicolás Casullo, Horacio González, Diego Tatián, León Rozitchner, Tomás Abraham and Christian Ferrer, gave rise to several articles in different publications which were later compiled in a book published in 2007.<sup>33</sup>

In *Política y/o violencia*,<sup>34</sup> Pilar Calveiro, a former Montonera, states that the armed movements of the 1970s have to be debated and proposes her own piece as one of the materials via which to engage with the issue.

[The armed militants] intended to build an alternative, and to a certain extent they succeeded, but they ended up reproducing [supposed] logic and authoritarian mechanisms [which they had] perfectly internalised [and] that they were not able to break. The discipline, violence and rigidity in which they grew up ended up winning the internal battle, in the context of an extraordinarily unequal fight. In short, they were a constituent part of the authoritarian conspiracy, but also of the subversive action, and disobedience to dictatorial authority, that struggled for a different Argentina.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

The trauma of the recent dictatorship will persist in Argentinian society for a long time to come, and societal representations of state terrorism will continue changing, as indeed they have done throughout the last 30 years. At present, the state has adopted the version of memory put forward by parts of the human rights organisations, while the proliferation of legal proceedings around the dictatorship indicates that the debate around the country's recent past will continue. A latent risk is that a growing political conflict in Argentinian society might extend to the issue of human rights, which should remain sacrosanct and beyond political antagonism. Recent events have become one of the areas in which Argentinian academic history has been most productive. Moreover, education could be viewed as the real battlefield in the struggle against authoritarianism, despite these arguments resulting from official memory policies.

## Notes

1. Comisión Nacional sobre la desaparición de Personas [National Commission on the Disappearance of People].
2. CONADEP, *Nunca Más* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1984).
3. Crenzel, E. *Historia política del Nunca Más* [Political History of the 'Nunca Más'] (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2008).
4. Compulsory schools were renamed Basic General Schools, while schools providing further secondary education were called Polymodal Education.
5. From 1992 onwards, schools were administrated by their respective provincial authorities; national regulations on these matters merely established the guidelines that the provinces had to follow in their syllabus.
6. R. A. Potash, *El ejército y la política en la Argentina: 1962–1973: De la caída de Frondizi a la restauración peronista* [The Army and Politics in Argentina: 1962–1973: From the Fall of Frondizi to Peronist Restoration], 2 vols (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1994); A. Rouquié, *Autoritarismos y democracia* [Authoritarianism and democracy] (Buenos Aires: Edicial, 1994); P. García, *El drama de la autonomía militar* [The Drama of Military Autonomy] (Madrid: Alianza, 1995); E. López, *Seguridad nacional y sedición militar* [National Security and Military Sedition] (Buenos Aires: Legasa, 1987).
7. H. Maceyra, *Las presidencias peronistas: Cámpora/Perón/Isabel* [The Peronist Presidencies: Campora/Peron/Isabel] (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983); G. Di Tella, *Perón—Perón, 1973–1976* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1985); S. Amaral and M. Ben Poltkin, eds., *Perón: del exilio al poder* [Perón: From Exile to Power] (Buenos Aires: Cántaro, 1993); T. Halperín Donghi, *La larga*

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8. P. Giussani, *Montoneros: La soberbia armada* [Montoneros: The Armed Arrogance] (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana/Planeta, 1984); M. E. Andersen, *Dossier secreto (El mito de la 'guerra sucia' en Argentina)* [Dossier Secret (The Myth of the 'Dirty War' in Argentina)] (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1993).
  9. R. Gillespie, *Soldados de Perón: Los Montoneros* [Soldiers of Péron: The Montoneros], 2nd edn. (Buenos Aires: Grijalbo, 1997), 7.
  10. Scilingo's statement was published in a book: H. Verbitsky, *El vuelo* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1995).
  11. Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia, contra el Olvido y el Silencio (Children [Sons and Daughters] for Identity and Justice against Oblivion and Silence).
  12. Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.
  13. M. Bonasso, *El presidente que no fue. Los archivos ocultos del peronismo* [The President who Was Not: The Hidden Files of Peronism] (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1997).
  14. E. Anguita and M. Caparrós, *La Voluntad: Una historia de la militancia revolucionaria en la Argentina* [The Will: A History of Revolutionary Militancy in Argentina] (Buenos Aires: Norma, 1997).
  15. One example from a vast bibliography is: J. P. Brennan, *El Cordobazo* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1996).
  16. For example: P. Pozzi and A. Schneider, *Los setentistas: Izquierda y clase obrera: 1969–1976* [The Setentistas: Left and Working Class: 1969–1976] (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2000).
  17. For example: A. Pucciarelli, ed., *La primacía de la política. Lanusse, Perón y la Nueva Izquierda en tiempos del GAN* [The Primacy of Politics: Lanusse, Péron and the New Left in times of GAN] (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1999).
  18. For example: C. Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda* [Peronism and Leftist Culture] (Buenos Aires: Temas, 2001).
  19. Dirección General de Cultura y Educación, *Provincia de Buenos Aires: Diseño Curricular. Educación Inicial: Escuela General Básica* [Province of Buenos Aires: Curriculum Design: Early Education: General Basic School] Tomo II. (La Plata, 1999), 102.
  20. Dirección de Cultura y Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, *Educación Polimodal. Contenidos y expectativas de logro* ['Polymodal' Education: Content and Achievement Expectations] (La Plata, 1999), 52.
  21. Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.
  22. D. Lvovich and J. Bisquert, *La cambiante memoria de la dictadura* [The Changing Memory of the Dictatorship] (Los Polvorines: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento/Biblioteca Nacional, 2008), 83.
  23. Dirección General de Cultura y Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, *Programa de Definición del Diseño Curricular del Nivel Polimodal* [Definition Program of 'Polymodal' Education Curricular Design] (La Plata, 2003).

24. For example: H. Vezzetti, *Pasado y presente. Guerra, dictadura y sociedad en la Argentina* [Past and Present: War, Dictatorship and Society in Argentina] (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2002); P. Calveiro, *Política y/o violencia: Una aproximación a la guerrilla de los años 70* [Policy and/or Violence: An Approach to the Guerrillas of the 70s] (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2005); A. Longoni, *Traiciones: La figura del traidor en los relatos acerca de los sobrevivientes de la repression* [Betrayals: The Figure of the Traitor in the Stories About the Survivors of Repression] (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2007); M. M. Ollier, *De la revolución a la democracia. Cambios privados, públicos y políticos de la izquierda argentina* [From Revolution to Democracy: Private, Public and Political Changes in Argentina's Left] (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2009); H. Vezzetti, *Sobre la violencia revolucionaria: Memorias y olvidos* [About Revolutionary Violence: Memory and Forgetting] (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2009).
25. Cf. Ley de Educación Nacional: Law No. 26.206, Art. 92, accessed 21 April 2017, [www.me.gov.ar](http://www.me.gov.ar).
26. In the sixth year of primary school, the military governments of the twentieth century are also included in the syllabus.
27. Crenzel, *Historia Política del Nunca Más*.
28. Cf. L. F. Cerri and G. de Amézola, 'El Estudio Empírico de la Conciencia Histórica en Jóvenes de Brasil, Argentina y Uruguay [The Empirical Study of Historical Consciousness in Youth of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay]', *Didáctica de las Ciencias Experimentales y Sociales* 24 (2010), 3–23.
29. Cf. E. Traverso, *La historia como campo de batalla* [History as a Battlefield] (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2012), particularly 286–287.
30. R. Robin, *La memoria saturada* [Memory Saturated] (Buenos Aires: Waldhuter, 2004), 367.
31. P. Ricoeur, *La memoria, la historia, el olvido* [Memory, History, Forgetting] (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004).
32. Letter from Oscar del Barco, *El Interpretador*, 2005, accessed 21 April 2017, <https://laempresadevivir.wordpress.com/2010/05/07/otras-respuestas-a-la-carta-de-oscar-del-barco>.
33. P.R. Belzagui, H. Juvé and O. del Barco, *No Matar: sobre la responsabilidad* [Do Not Kill: On Responsibility] (Córdoba: Editorial El Cíclope/La intemperie/Editorial de la UNC, 2007).
34. Calveiro, *Política y/o violencia*.
35. *Ibid.*, 76.

## Further Reading

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# 3

## Armenia

Philip Gamaghelyan

### Introduction

Armenia has been engaged in an ethnically framed conflict with Azerbaijan, involving the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh since the late 1980s, and both sides have continuously used competing historical narratives to justify their own positions. These narratives, promoted by the state-run educational systems, present their own respective identities as indigenous and peaceful, while the other is portrayed as an inhumane aggressor, an arch-enemy that aims to destroy the state's population and cultural heritage. Over time, such representations have led both sides to form deeply ingrained negative images of each other, contributing to mutual dehumanisation and a perception of the conflict as ethnic, permanent and inevitable.

At present, not only history education but also humanities education, the media, museums, monuments and commemorations all serve to institutionalise the memory of violence perpetrated against each side.<sup>1</sup> The popular Armenian narrative often refuses to acknowledge Azerbaijanis as a distinct ethnic group and associates the Turkic-speaking Azerbaijanis with the Turks. Ancestors of present-day Turks and Azerbaijanis are described as having played a devastating role in Armenian history, invading the region with other Turkic tribes between the tenth and twelfth centuries, and as being responsible for innumerable massacres and the colonisation of several indigenous peoples, including the Armenians. This historic persecution culminated in the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in Ottoman Turkey, in which the entire

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Transliteration: BGN/PCGN 1981 System

Armenian population of Anatolia was destroyed.<sup>2</sup> In the Armenian narrative, therefore, the Turkic-speaking Azerbaijanis are considered part of the 'genocidal' Turkish nation, responsible for massacres, 'ethnic cleansings' and the destruction of Armenian culture. As a consequence, Armenians fear discrimination, 'ethnic cleansing' or a possible genocide of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, should Nagorno-Karabakh become part of Azerbaijan. The nationalistic public rhetoric of the Azerbaijani authorities, continuous cease-fire violations and repeated threats of a new war by the Azerbaijani leadership lend further support to these perceptions.

Nagorno-Karabakh is of particular importance in Armenian collective memory. According to some Armenian historians, Nagorno-Karabakh always remained autonomous or independent, even when the rest of Armenia was under the rule of one empire or another.<sup>3</sup> Armenians in other regions were assimilated, but in Nagorno-Karabakh, they preserved their identity. This notion has become a constituent component of Armenian collective memory in the last two decades, contributing to the perception of Nagorno-Karabakh as the last Armenian stronghold, the surrender of which would result not only in the physical loss of territory but also in the loss of a big part of Armenian identity.<sup>4</sup>

Critical analysis carried out by a younger generation of Armenian historians and sociologists is gradually leading them to challenge the exclusivist narratives embedded in this nationalist historiography,<sup>5</sup> but so far, the challenge has been marginal and had almost no influence on the discourse surrounding the conflict.

## Historical Background and Context

In 1988, a few years prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the regional parliament of the predominantly Armenian-populated Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) voted to petition the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow to transfer NKAO from the jurisdiction of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) to that of the Armenian SSR. During the next three years, the territorial dispute escalated and, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, descended into open war. By the time a Russian-mediated ceasefire in 1994 put an end to open hostilities, the war had taken the lives of over 25,000 people.<sup>6</sup> Acts of 'ethnic cleansing' by both sides left hundreds of thousands displaced, including virtually the entire Azerbaijani population of Armenia, the former NKAO and the seven adjacent districts, as well as the entire Armenian population of Azerbaijan.<sup>7</sup>

In the early- to mid-1990s, Russia, the United States and France assumed joint chairmanship of a mediating group that became known as the 'Minsk Group' and proceeded to lead negotiations under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Between 2008 and 2011, the Russian president, Dmitry Medvedev, convened nine trilateral meetings with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, where he pushed for the resolution of the conflict and personally invested considerable political capital, albeit with no apparent results. Between 2012 and 2014, meetings between the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents became rarer, with no political solution appearing to be in sight. The tensions along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and the line of contact in Nagorno-Karabakh escalated, leading to an increased number of military and civilian casualties and culminating in April 2016 in what the Armenians call the 'four-day war', which claimed hundreds of lives.

As mentioned earlier, history has played a prominent role in this conflict from the beginning. During the era of the Soviet Union, historians from each ethnic republic developed a historical narrative of their respective 'nation'. The narrative invariably started with an ethnogenesis rooted in prehistoric times, before describing the development of ethnic consciousness and then moving along a historical path that culminated in communism as the ultimate form of human organisation. According to De Waal, ethno-national identity was seen by the masterminds of this plan as merely a transitional phase between a backward culture of diverse ethno-religious and linguistic groups and the advanced state of socialism. Yet, as De Waal also notes, the national identities persisted and the transnational socialist future never materialised.<sup>8</sup>

The Soviet-generated historical narratives did not transform or simply fade in the post-Soviet era; rather, they formed the basis of the collective memory of the newly independent societies. Stripped of the uniting umbrella of communist internationalism, they mutated into exclusivist, nationalist and often outright racist narratives, leading to 'history wars' with each group certain of its own self-righteousness, historical superiority and long-established presence in the given territory, countering the allegedly innate negative features of the other. According to Rauf Garagozov, Armenian and Azerbaijani versions of history contribute to the formation of negative attitudes within the two societies towards one another through the emergence of a victim identity. In his view, the conflict 'exists not only as a geopolitical reality, but also as a mental and social-psychological one', and as a consequence, he believes the problem's resolution requires a transformation in 'mentality' and 'social attitudes'.<sup>9</sup>

## The Debate

The education debate in Armenia in the first few years after independence centred primarily on the question of whether history should be objective or not. While a number of professional and amateur revisionist historians advocated a narrative that would serve Armenia's national interests, the first Armenian government chose a different path and tried to remove ideology from history teaching. This absence of state-imposed ideological guidelines coupled with the professionalism of the historians writing the Armenian textbooks led some reviewers to conclude that the textbooks remained relatively unaffected by 'pseudo-scientific and radical-nationalist approaches', and that they rejected 'dilettantism and revisionism'.<sup>10</sup>

Yet the state retained a monopoly over the production and content of textbooks, while also requiring the removal of ideology from the historical narrative. This paradoxical situation where the state did not provide any ideological guidelines while retaining its control apparently confused the historians who were educated in Soviet academia and were used to writing history that fitted a particular ideological framework; they saw the absence of ideological guidelines as a problem, not an opportunity. Vladimir Barkhudaryan, an Armenian historian and the editor of many of the current history textbooks, is cited in an interview saying that 'the lack of ideological guidelines was one of the main challenges that the authors of the first textbook had to face'.<sup>11</sup>

This period when the government did not try to impose a particular ideology did not last long and was certainly a lost opportunity. Armenian politics took a sharp nationalist turn with the election of the second Armenian president, Robert Kocharyan, as did history education. The current 'subject plans' and official guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education require textbooks to focus on the history of Armenian statehood, Armenian culture and the struggle of the Armenian people against foreign oppressors, while teachers are seen as representatives of state ideology<sup>12</sup> (more detailed discussion of the current 'subject plan' is presented in the 'Documentation' section that follows).

The new textbooks were written against the backdrop of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the influence of which can be seen in their portrayal of the struggle against oppressors. The story of Armenian culture and in particular Armenian statehood is similarly presented in the context of Armenian opposition to various others, reinforcing the ethnic framing of the current conflict.

The conflict is, in essence, presented in the textbooks in the context of a centuries-long struggle against foreign occupation generally and occupation

by the Ottoman or Persian Empires specifically. The Azerbaijanis (or ‘Caucasus Tatars’, as they are referred to at times in the textbook, on the basis of early twentieth-century Russian sources) are absent from the early stages of the narrative and do not appear in any significant role until the early twentieth century. This serves to reinforce the commonly held Armenian stereotype that Azerbaijani identity is a recent and artificial creation, and therefore Azerbaijan cannot have legitimate historical claims upon any territory.

Once Azerbaijanis appear in the narrative, they are presented almost exclusively in a negative light, as the enemy.<sup>13</sup> Scholars, however, differ in their assessments of whether or not the textbooks serve to reinforce the anti-Azerbaijani stereotypes. Zolian and Zakarian argue that despite presenting Azerbaijanis as the enemy, the authors avoid, to a certain degree, the trap of reproducing negative stereotypes.<sup>14</sup> Others, the present text included, argue that even if they are subtle, the textbooks do reinforce and reproduce many of the key negative stereotypes against Azerbaijanis, particularly those that portray them as aggressive and cruel.<sup>15</sup>

In the early 1990s, the question under debate was whether or not history *should* be objective. Yet the question of whether or not history *can* be objective was never seriously addressed. This should not come as a surprise, considering that the background of every historian involved at that time was in the Soviet school of historiography. Their approach was both ideological and positivist, which may appear to be an oxymoron but was, nevertheless, a common global oxymoron in the latter half of the twentieth century. It is also relevant to note that in the later years of Soviet rule, nationalism emerged as the main ideological challenge to communism in Armenia; the dissidents espousing nationalism were the intellectual vanguard of the movement for Armenia’s independence from the Soviet Union, as well as of the ‘Karabakh movement’. Consequently, the initial post-Soviet debate on history was between the first, arguably more liberal Armenian government<sup>16</sup> attempting to write ‘objective’ history stripped of ideology, and the nationalist intellectuals and revisionist historians who saw the role of history as serving national interests.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, historiography and its primarily nationalist reinterpretations that had been suppressed under the communist regime had become a popular topic of academic and non-academic literature from the late 1980s onwards. Popular topics of discussion included the history of Nagorno-Karabakh and its Armenian roots, the romanticised history of the first Armenian republic of 1918–1920 and the history of Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani conflicts.<sup>18</sup>

The turn towards a ‘nationalisation’ of history in the late 1990s, which followed the election of Armenia’s second president, Robert Kocharyan, faced

little opposition and was generally welcomed. What criticism did emerge remained muted for almost a decade and took the form of analysis rather than a direct challenge.<sup>19</sup>

A more explicit challenge to nationalised and positivist historiography emerged in the early 2000s as more Western academics and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) started looking into the history and historiography of Armenia, and as more Armenian academics studied in Europe and the United States. Still presenting most of their arguments in the form of analysis, authors started critically assessing the existing conventions in Armenian historiography. A multi-year 'Myths and Conflicts' project coordinated by International Alert recently brought together many academics who had been critical of the existing historiography. The European Association of History Educators started a long-term project aimed at training history educators to bring critical thinking to classrooms. Projects examining oral history and memory started appearing, all of which constituted an implicit challenge to the idea of a state-controlled political narrative being the only legitimate history.<sup>20</sup> The Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation initiated the project 'History Education in the Context of Conflicts in the South Caucasus', which brought together dozens of historians from all corners of the South Caucasus, including Armenia. They developed a joint critique of existing approaches and produced the methodological manual 'Challenges and Prospects of History Education and Textbook Development in the South Caucasus', offering alternative approaches.

These latest trends have only had a limited impact so far. They are, however, encouraging.

## Documentation

The first independent Armenian government, well aware that the previous textbooks had served a certain ideology, aimed to write 'objective history'. Yet ironically, the same government never considered relinquishing its monopoly or control over history education, which could have been one sensible way of freeing it from ideology.

In the early 1990s, the reform of history education was publicly debated on the pages of a Ministry of Education publication called *Dprutyun*. According to an article published in *Dprutyun* in 1991, the time dedicated to history education was increased from one hour a week to two hours, which the author found to be a more appropriate amount of time to cover 'more than 5000 years of history'.<sup>21</sup> The author went on to say that by 1991, the subject of history

was included in tests students were required to take in order to graduate from secondary school.

An article from 1993 discussed the urgent need to create new history textbooks. Citing the absence of 'nationally appropriate content' in the old textbooks, the author referred to the creation of eight research groups led by 'well-known scientists', which had been given the task of producing new textbooks in a number of fields, including history.<sup>22</sup> The article reported that a history textbook for the fifth and sixth grades had already been completed.

The eight research groups tasked with producing new concepts for textbooks and teaching plans for many subjects, including history, by the Institute of Pedagogical Research (part of the Ministry of Education) in 1993, are also discussed by Matosyan. Citing his interview with Barkhudaryan, Matosyan writes that these research groups were explicitly asked to develop textbooks that were 'objective'. In the interview, Barkhudaryan talks about the first president of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, being personally involved in the process. Ter-Petrosyan reviewed the draft of the textbook, shared feedback and gave his approval.<sup>23</sup>

Over time, the Soviet-era communist ideology has been replaced by a nationalist ideology that aims to sustain the Armenian population's mobilisation against external enemies. The story of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict covered in the ninth-grade textbook on Armenian History<sup>24</sup> is particularly illuminating. The narrative places the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the context of a centuries-long struggle by Armenians against foreign occupation, with the aim of preserving Armenian freedoms and ensuring their own survival. The book depicts Armenians as trying to protect their land, while Azerbaijanis are trying to conquer it and cleanse it of Armenians through violent means and discriminatory policies. The central narrative of the textbook portrays Armenians as peaceful and Azerbaijanis as aggressive.<sup>25</sup> Any violent behaviour by Armenians is justified as being in the interest of self-defence and the struggle for freedom, explained as an entirely necessary reaction to external pressure. The Armenian fighters are described as *azatamartik* (freedom fighters)<sup>26</sup> and *qajordi* (heroes).<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the Azerbaijanis are consistently described with negative epithets such as *hrosakakhumb* (bands) and *zav'ichner* (invaders) who commit *vayragut'yun* (vandalism) and *br'nagaght* (ethnic cleansing).<sup>28</sup>

Zolian and Zakaryan place their study of the image of self and other in contemporary Armenian history textbooks in the context of the transition from 'imperial' to 'national' historical narratives. They discuss the debates over the last two decades between professional historians and those they describe as 'amateur historians'. They criticise the revisionist approaches of the



latter group, who had a certain degree of influence over the development of historical discourse. The authors discuss the absence of any factual basis for some interpretations of history, which claim, among other things, that Russians originated from the Ararat Valley in Armenia, that Kiev was built by Armenians, and that Stalin was a Turkish agent. Zolian and Zakaryan point out, however, that such non-scientific interpretations have only a limited audience and have not influenced the education system. Analysing history textbooks for the fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth grades, printed between 2000 and 2007, they argue that these textbooks generally remain true to 'scientific discourse'.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, Matosyan finds that Armenian history textbooks underwent a gradual 'nationalisation': while the focus in the early 1990s was on the 'de-ideologisation' of Soviet history, later textbooks were 're-ideologised' following other processes in the country and subsequently formed a 'nation-centred' narrative. Moreover, continues Matosyan, while the state did not provide explicit ideological guidelines for textbook authors in the 1990s, this was no longer the case by 2004.<sup>30</sup>

The Ministry of Education and Science of Armenia currently has explicit ideological guidelines. The 'Subject Standards and Subject Syllabi' are developed by the Center for Educational Programs of the Ministry of Education and Science and approved by an order of the Minister of Education and Science; the latest of these on 'Armenian History' was approved in 2008 for grades 10–12 and in 2012 for grades 6–9 (Center for Educational Programs 2008) (Center for Educational Programs 2012).<sup>31</sup> The document states that 'history is central in forming the national ethno-consciousness of Armenians ... allowing the advancement of the national agenda'. History is further described as an infinite source of developing patriotism, a selfless (self-sacrificing) spirit and ethno-national self-dignity in the young.<sup>32</sup>

The directive also contains a seven-page section called 'The Mandatory Core Content for the Subject "Armenian History"', which describes what content should be included in the history textbooks.<sup>33</sup> This is followed by a much longer list of historical events and their particular ideological interpretations, which students are to memorise and be tested on.<sup>34</sup> The list concludes by stating how many teaching hours the textbooks should assign to each particular event or period.<sup>35</sup> These sections chronologically detail specific topics to be covered in the textbooks, starting from the genesis of the Armenian people, which is linked to the genesis of humankind, continuing through ancient times and the Middle Ages, and concluding with contemporary history. The last period centres on the struggle for liberation between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries and during the Soviet era, as well as subsequent

post-Soviet developments. The directive targets both authors of history textbooks and history teachers, providing strict guidelines for each section of a textbook as well as for each hour of history education. In other words, every step and every hour of history education remains closely regulated and monitored by the state.

## Conclusion

The ideological focus of twenty-first-century Armenian history education has shifted from communism and internationalism to an ethnically centred narrative, and the textbooks have changed accordingly. The centralised mode of textbook production has been replicated from the Soviet era, keeping history education under strict state control. Armenian textbooks in the late Soviet period all stated on their title page that they were approved by the Ministry of Education of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic; the current textbooks, similarly, start with the sentence, 'Approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia'.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, as we have seen in the discussion earlier, the Ministry of Education has very specific directives regarding which topics should be covered and in which order, how much time teachers should spend on each topic, and what students are expected to learn.

Teaching methods, not surprisingly, have also been preserved. The students are required to memorise the text; they are then tested on their memorisation and the extent to which they have accepted the proposed ideological interpretation. Critical discussions of the narrative are not encouraged. Official directives establishing tight control over historians and teachers alike complete the picture.

## Notes

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3. Ibid.
4. P. Gamaghelyan, 'Rethinking the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Identity, Politics, Scholarship', *International Negotiation* 15, no. 1 (2010): 33–56.
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  8. *Ibid.*, 80.
  9. R. Garagozov, ‘Collective Memory in Ethnopolitical Conflicts: The Case of Nagorno-Karabakh’, *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 5, no. 41 (2006): 145–155.
  10. Zolian and Zakaryan, ‘The Image of Self and Other’, 16.
  11. Matosyan, ‘Inventing Traditions’, 58.
  12. *Ibid.*, 59.
  13. Zolian and Zakaryan, ‘The Image of Self and Other’, 27.
  14. *Ibid.*, 27.
  15. Gamaghelyan and Rumyansev, ‘Armenia and Azerbaijan’, 175–179.
  16. G. J. Libaridian, *The Challenge of Statehood: Armenian Political Thinking Since Independence* (Human Rights & Democracy) (Watertown, Mass: Blue Crane Books, 1999).
  17. For a discussion of the revisionist challenge to official history in Armenia in the 1990s, see Zolian and Zakaryan, ‘The Image of Self and Other’, 15–16.
  18. (In Russian) A. Iskanderyan and B. Arutyunyan, ‘Armeniâ: “karabahizaciâ” nacional’noj istorii [Armenia: the ‘Karabakhization’ of National History]’ in Aymermacher, K, and G. Bordyugov, *Nacional’nye istorii v sovetskom i post-sovetskikh gosudarstvakh* [National Histories in Soviet and Post-Soviet States] (Frederich Nauman Foundation: Moscow, 2003), 145–159 (here 151).
  19. See, for example, Iskanderyan and Arutyunyan, ‘Armeniâ: “karabahizaciâ” nacional’noj istorii [Armenia: the ‘Karabakhization’ of National History]’.
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  21. ‘Interview with L. Shahinyan, the chair of the Armenian History department of the Yerevan Institute of the Pedagogy’, *Dprutyun* 8 (1991).

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26. Barkhudaryan *Hayoc patmut'yun: 9-rd dasarani dasaqiq* [Armenian History: 9th grade], 156.
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## Further Reading

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# 4

## Australia

Anna Clark

### Introduction

Australian history education has been a topic of significant contest and controversy in recent years, generating heated debate over both content and methodology. Until the late 1980s, this was largely a professional discussion conducted by teachers, curriculum designers and academics, and it focused on questions of delivery: Should history be taught as a discrete discipline or within an integrated approach such as social studies? To what extent should history curricula in Australia be mandated? And how do we stop declining enrolments in the subject?

In recent years, however, these professional pedagogical concerns have been increasingly complicated by a public and political debate over the national narrative. School history has been a critical area of these ‘history wars’, generating an often ferocious and polarised discussion over the subject. Consequently, pedagogical questions of how to teach history in schools have been joined by a very public contest over *what* to teach.

### Context and Background

History teachers, academics and curriculum officials have long engaged in passionate debates about the subject in Australia. The move to reposition history as a stand-alone discipline in recent years has generated significant discussion—just as the push to integrate the subject into social studies did a generation previously. Teachers have also been pressured to prove the ‘rele-

vance' of history compared with popular subjects such as psychology and business studies. This professional historical discourse has engaged with questions of historical practice, relevance and pedagogy and has, for the most part, been conducted in history teaching journals and at conferences and curriculum development meetings around the country.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, a very public and anxious debate over Australia's past has been mounting. In the 1960s and 1970s, shifting historical interpretations challenged traditional narratives of Australia and its colonial history in particular. The British settlement was increasingly critiqued from Indigenous perspectives, and the social histories of women, migrants and workers also challenged the nation-building narratives of conventional Australian history. But this inclusion did not go unopposed. Some felt it was too progressive; that this retelling of the national story had come at the expense of the 'Australian Achievement'.<sup>2</sup>

By 1988, the year of Australia's bicentenary, these two narratives—of the Australian Achievement and its revisionist critique—were dominating public debate about the past. Politicians took sides too. The conservative side of politics tended to reject revisionist histories for being too critical and too apologetic. The Labor Party pushed for reconciliation with Indigenous people and an official apology for the forced removal and institutionalisation of Indigenous children (the Stolen Generations) during the twentieth century. This debate was prominent in the media and in politics, and it was fought over museum exhibits, national commemorations *and* history syllabuses. In particular, the use of the word 'invasion' in curriculum documents and history texts to describe British colonisation was a potent catalyst for historical debate.<sup>3</sup>

Increasingly, these parallel debates—of history methods, on the one hand, and the history wars, on the other hand—intersected. Public contest over content became infused with concern over pedagogy. Likewise, professional discussion about the discipline became inseparable from the public debates over the past that were prominent in the media and in politics.

These historical discourses of methodology and content came to a head in the most recent push to develop a national curriculum. On the eve of Australia Day in 2006, the conservative Prime Minister John Howard gave a speech that outlined his desire for a greater understanding and appreciation of Australian history and culture. Howard's speech responded to growing public anxiety about national knowledge among young people, as well as questions of social cohesion following worrying race riots in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla the previous month. The prime minister called for a 'root and branch renewal' of the subject in schools, and his plea became a catalyst for a consuming public debate over Australian history education.<sup>4</sup>



Howard's speech was taken up by a number of conservative public commentators and politicians concerned about the state of the subject in schools. For many of these opinion makers, history had become too progressive and too politically correct. National knowledge had declined among young people; the history curriculum had become fragmented across Australia's states and territories. Consequently, they worried, national identity and belonging were themselves under threat. As the educationist Kevin Donnelly asked: 'Was John Howard correct this week? Has the teaching of history fallen victim to a politically correct, New Age approach to curriculum, and are students receiving a fragmented understanding of the past? The evidence suggests "yes"'.<sup>5</sup> In another article for *The Australian*, Janet Albrechtsen was just as unequivocal: 'there is much work to be done in undoing the progressive curriculum foisted on Australian schoolchildren'.<sup>6</sup>

Many teachers and historians were more wary: while agreeing with the prime minister's call for renewal of the subject, they insisted any new approach should not be at the expense of the subject's complexity or its potential to foster critical thinking. Speaking on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's '7.30 Report', the historian Stuart Macintyre acknowledged the need for a stronger national history curriculum, so long as that was not at the expense of critical engagement in the classroom: 'I think we would all agree that we need to do more to restore history, but we need to make sure that that is open to diverse viewpoints and that it is not simply an exercise in indoctrination'.<sup>7</sup> Annabel Astbury, the professional services manager at the History Teachers' Association of Victoria, hoped that history's complexity would not be overlooked during the summit. 'It is only through teaching the celebrated with the uncelebrated that the values of tolerance, empathy and compassion emerge', she insisted. 'A history class free from question and repudiation therefore does not augur well in producing "good citizens"'.<sup>8</sup>

In these two responses, the parallel concerns of content and method are apparent. And the debate about the national curriculum shows how those political and pedagogical interests in history education came together in the Australian context. On the one hand, there was a largely conservative call for what could be called *national literacy*, where all Australians know their nation's history, understand its values and display national pride appropriately. On the other was the professional debate, calling for a very different sort of 'literacy' from the emphasis on national knowledge heard in the anxious public debates about the state of history education in Australia. Here was a call for 'historical literacy': a view of the subject that acknowledges the importance of knowing the nation's story, as well as learning historical skills, reconciling different perspectives and developing students' own judgements and ideas about the past.<sup>9</sup>

These two distinct discourses have continued to shape the public debate over Australian history teaching. A few months after Howard's Australia Day speech, the then federal Minister for Education, Julie Bishop, announced a national history summit, comprising eminent historians and public commentators from around the country, to develop a new approach to teaching the nation's past. 'The time has come for a renaissance in the teaching of Australian history in our schools', she insisted. 'By the time students finish their secondary schooling, they must have a thorough understanding of their nation's past'.<sup>10</sup>

The summit was a microcosm for the wider debate: it highlighted the politicised contest over national memory as well as the professional concerns of historical integrity and teachability—whatever the government produced would be worthless if it could not be taught well. After a series of drafts and reviews, the Howard Government went to the 2007 election with a proposed national curriculum and a determination to 'restore a proper narrative and a proper understanding of Australian history'.<sup>11</sup> Despite losing office, John Howard's desire for a national curriculum that included history was endorsed by the incoming Labor government. And, following its election in 2007, successive Labor prime ministers supported the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) to develop a national history curriculum.

Those Labor governments did not escape criticism over history teaching, however. Concern came from a number of conservative politicians who argued that the curriculum draft was too progressive in its focus on Indigenous, environmental and Asian perspectives. And soon after the Labor Party lost power in 2013, the newly elected Education Minister, Christopher Pyne, announced a review of the national curriculum to be led by educationists Ken Wiltshire and Kevin Donnelly, which was released in 2014.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, teachers continued to express concern that the national curriculum was too content heavy and that its pedagogical approach might turn students off the subject. And so the parallel debates continue.<sup>13</sup>

The Australian history wars have been fought over museum exhibits, history texts and national commemorations, and reveal just how politically fractured collective national memory can be. School history is no exception; as a critical site of the history wars, it demonstrates the politicisation of curriculum development, the tense deliberations over content—in particular Indigenous history—and the conflicting beliefs over what young Australians should know about their nation's past. But this is not simply a contest over the national narrative, for the school history wars have been compounded by passionate pedagogical debates over the state of the subject and the practice of

history teaching. These twin concerns of content and method continue to drive discussion over history education in Australia.

## Documentation

The politics of public memory have been fiercely debated in Australia, and a number of important works catalogue this heated contest over the past. Keith Windschuttle's claims that academic bias, rather than colonial violence, contributed to the number of Indigenous victims on Australia's frontier sparked the most recent round of the history wars.<sup>14</sup> Robert Manne's edited collection *Whitewash: On Keith Windschuttle's Fabrication of Aboriginal History*<sup>15</sup> and Bain Attwood's *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*<sup>16</sup> responded critically to Windschuttle's assertions. *The History Wars* by Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark also examined these debates and attracted significant public discussion.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton's recent study of history in contemporary Australia provides an overview of these debates in curricula, museums, heritage and public commemorations.<sup>18</sup>

The methodological concerns of Australian history teaching are also well documented.<sup>19</sup> In 1998, the historian Alan Ryan published an article in the *Bulletin* of the Australian Historical Association titled 'Developing a Strategy to "Save" History', which lamented the decline of the subject in Australian schools.<sup>20</sup> Ryan's concern was confirmed by research conducted in the 1990s, such as the survey results published in the Civics Expert Group's report *Whereas the people ... civics and citizenship education*,<sup>21</sup> which revealed worryingly low levels of national historical knowledge among Australian schoolchildren. While many agreed with Ryan that something drastic had to be done, others defended the subject in schools. In the following two issues of the *Bulletin*, teachers, historians and educationists responded to Ryan's original article, and they provided a lively professional forum about the status of history teaching in Australia that is worth revisiting.<sup>22</sup>

So there has been a real struggle—both political and pedagogical—over the way Australian history should be taught in schools. Alan Barcan's lengthy piece, 'History in Decay', was published in *Quadrant* magazine in 1999,<sup>23</sup> and insisted that a retreat from traditional history was irrevocably damaging the subject in schools.<sup>24</sup> More recently, Kevin Donnelly's work has also galvanised conservative opinion against progressive forms of history education. His books, *Why Our Schools are Failing* and *Dumbing Down*,<sup>25</sup> as well as many newspaper columns, argue for a return to traditional, content-oriented curricula and teaching practices. In response, Anna Clark's qualitative study,

*History's Children: History Wars in the Classroom*, shows that while students and teachers *do* think Australian history is important, they also insist that it can be critically engaging.<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusion

Schools have been a critical site of the history wars in Australia, generating significant debate over the representation of the 'Australian story' in its syllabuses. Around the country, contest over national memory signals an ongoing anxiety about Australia's national narrative. Then there's the question of *how* it should be told, for history teaching is also an explicitly pedagogical concern: How should history be taught in schools? How do students learn it best? And how can we bring the nation's past into the classroom? These parallel professional and public debates have come together with the national curriculum in recent years as Australians have debated how their national story should be taught in schools.

## Notes

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# 5

## Azerbaijan

Sergey Rumyansev

### Introduction

Azerbaijan's withdrawal from the Soviet Union was accompanied by a territorial armed conflict with neighbouring Armenia. Although an agreement was reached on a halt to military action in May 1994, the conflict has still not been finally resolved. In recent years, talk of a possible resumption of the armed confrontation has increased. This seemingly endless conflict has included ideological controversies fuelled by historians and journalists as well as politicians. The principal arguments put forward by Azerbaijan in response to statements by Armenian politicians and intellectuals could be summarised as follows:

- The Nagorno-Karabakh region, over which Azerbaijan and Armenia are competing for control and which in law is part of the internationally recognised territory of Azerbaijan, is an integral part of the 'historical motherland' of Azerbaijanis;
- Nagorno-Karabakh is a region where much original Azerbaijani national culture (music, poetry) took shape;
- Not only Nagorno-Karabakh, but significant areas of the present-day Republic of Armenia are part of the 'historical territory' of Azerbaijanis;
- Armenians are 'an ethnic group from outside', unlike the 'indigenous Azerbaijani ethnic group', and do not have 'historical rights' to the territories under dispute;



- The official position holds that, if the Armenians 'refuse to vacate' the Azerbaijani territories (i.e. the internationally recognised part of the Republic of Azerbaijan which is now under the control of Armenia's military forces), renewed war will be inevitable.

## Historical Background and Context

The thus far unresolved Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabakh has meant that educational texts in Azerbaijan frequently feature the central discursive image (myth) of the 'historical enemy'. Along with Armenians, this image also encompasses Russians and Iranians (Persians). The conflict has also had a decisive impact on the interpretation of all previous clashes between Azerbaijanis and Armenians which took place in the early twentieth century (1905 and 1918–1920) and on the interpretation of the policies of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union in the region.

The Karabakh conflict is an exemplar of a controversy around the political principle of nationalism which, according to Ernest Gellner, holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.<sup>1</sup> The conflict had started to take shape by 1987, when 'the Armenians for the first time openly raised the highly controversial Karabakh problem again. The first petition about this, signed by hundreds of thousands of Armenians, was sent to M. S. Gorbachev in August 1987'.<sup>2</sup> The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO), mostly populated by Armenians (Armenian enclave), was part of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). On 20 February 1988, the Council of People's Deputies of the NKAO adopted a resolution which formulated the idea of secession from the Azerbaijani SSR and subsequent incorporation into the Armenian SSR.<sup>3</sup> In the course of the fast-growing confrontation, deportations of Azerbaijanis from Armenia and of Armenians from Azerbaijan followed, accompanied by pogroms, including those that took place in Sumqayit (February 1988) and Baku (January 1990). After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the conflict grew into a full-scale war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Military action led to the full occupation by Armenian troops of five districts outside the NKAO and the partial occupation of a further two. Thus the refugees already in Azerbaijan were joined by hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people. It was only in May 1994 that a ceasefire was agreed in Bishkek. However, a peace treaty to end the conflict is yet to be signed. It should be noted that this conflict was one of the bloodiest of those that broke out in the Southern Caucasus during the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

We might regard the major feature of the conflict in the period after 1994 to be its transition from an acute into a permanent state, caused by the reluctance of the main parties in the conflict to agree to mutual concessions and compromises and also by the rapid spread of revanchist sentiment in both Azerbaijan and Armenia. Despite statements by the presidents of the two countries expressing the will to reach a peaceful settlement, the constant growth of military budgets and increased attention to developing the armed forces in both republics amid a multitude of unresolved economic and social problems could be interpreted as actual preparation for another war. The situation in the field of historical research on the issue may be interpreted analogously, as might that in the teaching of national history in Azerbaijan, considering the fact that the discursive image of the 'enemy' occupies a key role in the country's historical narrative and public political debates.

## The Debate

One might also assert that the leaders of the country and well-known political figures at different levels have played a significant role in enhancing the status of Azerbaijani national history as a component part of the ideology that services not only the Karabakh conflict but also the policy of 'nationalising nationalism', that is, the spread of nationalism as a whole in post-Soviet Azerbaijan. For example, of the leading nationalists who created and led the People's Front of Azerbaijan Party (PFAP) in 1988 and who at different times held prominent posts in government, very many were historians or orientalist philologists who were instrumental in shaping the ideological background against which the re-interpretation of history was carried out. Thus, for instance, the second Azerbaijani president, Abulfaz Elçibay (1992–1993), was an Arabic philologist who promoted the need to develop a new version of history in the context of ideas of pan-Turkism and 'the image of the historical enemy'. The former secretary of the Communist Party of the Azerbaijani SSR, Heydar Aliyev, who in the post-Soviet era returned to power, this time as president (1993–2003), was a historian.

Ilham Aliyev, the incumbent president and the son of Heydar Aliyev, holds a doctorate in history. There is also a large number of historians among prominent representatives of the present-day opposition. For example, Etibar Mammadov, the former leader of the Milli İstiqlal Party of Azerbaijan, who came second in the 1998 presidential election, holds a degree in history, as does İsa Qambar, the permanent leader of the most well-known and influential opposition party of Azerbaijani nationalists, Musavat (Azeri: Equality), who

studied under Abulfaz Elcibay and, according to the official tally of votes, came second in the 2003 presidential election. This list is far from exhaustive.

The current political regime holds almost complete control over access to the version of Azerbaijan's history being propagated in the post-Soviet era. There is only one set of textbooks approved by the country's education ministry for use in secondary schools. Only specialists that are, publicly at least, loyal to the political regime are authorised to prepare textbooks, including those for universities. School teachers are not involved in the preparation of these textbooks. Almost all compilers of textbooks are doctorate holders and professors of the research institutes of the Academy of Sciences at Baku State University or the Pedagogical University.

The history curricula of neither secondary schools nor universities appear to have at their core the formation of independent thought, nor do they encourage students and pupils to hold discussions or potentially entertain doubts.<sup>5</sup> This means that not only are there no alternative textbooks for secondary schools in Azerbaijan, but textbooks developed in the post-Soviet period do not offer any alternative material. The authors construct a single version of national history, in the context of which all events receive only the official interpretation, which is considered to be the only true one. The authority of this 'master narrative' is endorsed by professionals—professors, academics and educationalists. The compilers of the new narrative frequently hold titles and offices beyond their academic ones. Thus, for example, Professor Yaqub Mahmudlu, one of the leaders of a group of historians who are implementing a project to reconstruct national history and create new textbooks for schools, is not only the director of the History Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan (NASA) but also a member of parliament.

The mass media also promote this recently constructed historical master narrative to the greatest degree possible. Almost all the most popular Azerbaijani newspapers (*Zerkalo*, *Ekho*, *Musavat*, *Azadliq*, etc.) have a section dedicated to the history of the country and the nation. A number of documentaries dedicated to different conflicts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which became topical in the context of the latest Karabakh conflict, have been made since the start of the post-Soviet period. The year 2009 was marked by the completion of a new large-scale project which was supported by the ruling political regime: the making of a feature film entitled *Cavad Khan*, revolving around events which took place in early 1804, when the Khan of Ganja heroically died while defending what is now the second largest city in the present-day Azerbaijani Republic, and which carries his name. The film was based on a work written by Sabir Rustamxanli, a pan-Turkist writer

and poet and holder of a doctorate in philology, who also wrote the film's script. Rustamxanli heads a right-wing, nationalist populist party called the Civil Solidarity Party, and has held a seat in the Azerbaijani parliament continuously since 1990. In the first decade of the new millennium, he also became a co-chairman of the World Azerbaijanis' Congress (WAC). His view is that the film depicts a national hero who tried to resist the seizure and division of Azerbaijan by the Russian Empire. The film, which was approximately two years in the making, featured up to 10,000 military servicemen, 130 actors, and used computer graphics for the first time in Azerbaijani cinematography: it was possibly the largest project in the history of film-making in Azerbaijan.

It was Cavad Khan of Ganja, a vassal of the Persian shah, who in the post-Soviet historical narrative and textbooks became the central figure of resistance to the Russian Empire and to Armenians who supported its policies (and who are frequently described as a 'fifth column'). The authors of this historical narrative often place the origins of the current conflict in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the territory of present-day Azerbaijan was incorporated into the Russian Empire. Despite its resistance, Ganja was seized by storm, and Cavad Khan, who, according to the official narrative, fought heroically, was killed. The authors of the history textbook approved for use in Azerbaijani schools believe that this is how Ganja, which is currently viewed as the cultural and historical capital of Azerbaijan, lost its independence. These developments were followed by the conquest of all of present-day Azerbaijan.

This account of the events, and those similar to it, date the origins of the current Karabakh conflict to at least the beginning of the nineteenth century, if not further back still. As a result, Armenian-Azerbaijani enmity acquires features of a conflict that has lasted through the centuries and the current conflict is constructed as inevitable. The central component of this narrative is that the 'historical enemy'—the Armenians—achieve 'success' with invariable support from the Russians.

The Karabakh conflict has also seen narratives about the borders of 'historical territories' being revised. During the lifetime of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijani historians laid claim to part of the territory of present-day Iran<sup>6</sup>; and now, a substantial portion of present-day Armenia generally finds itself referred to as 'West Azerbaijan'. Proponents of the post-Soviet version of history insist that the territory of present-day Armenia is an important part of the area of original habitation, and represents thousands of years of ethnogenesis, of Azerbaijanis.

The historical narratives give a special place to the events that took place during the period of the ADR (Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, 1918–1920). The tragic events which took place in Baku in March 1918 have acquired a particular topicality. During the struggle for power over Azerbaijan's capital at that time, the main participants in which were *musavatists* (Turkic nationalists) and Bolsheviks who acted in an alliance with Armenian nationalists (Dashnaks), pogroms and massacres of Turks/Muslims took place and several thousands of people were killed.<sup>7</sup> The official version of these events was reflected in a decree by President Heydar Aliyev dated 26 March 1998, which declared 31 March to be a national day of remembrance for the genocide of Azerbaijanis. The textbook for the first year of history studies in Azerbaijani secondary schools uses a conversation between 10 and 15 Azerbaijanis upon which to base its account of the March 1918 events. One of them exclaims:

How can you tolerate Armenian detachments moving around the city and doing what they want? The Armenian government disarms you in your own land and prepares to annihilate all the people. What can you call this? ... This is genocide. If the government is consciously annihilating the people who live in their own territory, this is called genocide. They want to exterminate our people.<sup>8</sup>

This issue re-emerges in the textbook for the 11th school year, which has a whole section about these events, entitled 'Genocide of Azerbaijanis in March 1918'. While the concrete narrative abounds with new details, the account, on the whole, is a reproduction of the same discursive image of the 'enemy' as has appeared in previous textbooks.

The textbook's account is supplemented with the full text of the 'Decree of the President of the Azerbaijani Republic "On the genocide of Azerbaijanis"'.<sup>9</sup> The decree, representing the official discourse on the issue, is reproduced in the overwhelming majority of historical texts dedicated to the interpretation of the events of the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation. This attempt at positioning the Azerbaijani people solely as victims reappears now in the description of the events of the current Karabakh conflict:

The events in the town of Khojaly in 1992 have now also received the status of genocide in Azerbaijan, continuing the fault line of the over 200-year-old antipathy towards the 'historical enemy', with its invariable image as cruel and insidious, and applying it to the current conflict. In the context of many other events which have occurred during the current conflict, both March 1918 and the Khojaly massacre form part of the trajectory of enmity within which the continuous victimhood of the Azerbaijani people is constructed. At the same time,

the discourse of enmity is constructed not only by reference to the facts of wars and confrontations, but also through a constant use of rhetorical clichés; those found in textbooks include ‘insidious foreigners’, ‘traitors’, ‘they swallowed blood’, ‘fresh massacre’ and ‘the lost sweetness of freedom’.

## Documentation

Heydar Aliyev, who returned to power in the post-Soviet era, this time as president (1993–2003), was a historian by education. From the moment of his death in 2003, a cult arose around his person, declaring him a ‘nationwide leader’ and founder of an independent Azerbaijan. In this context, Heydar Aliyev has also been positioned as an author of the modern national ideology ‘Azerbaijanism’ (*azərbaycançılıq*). It is his words that accompany, as an epigraph, history textbooks for secondary schools and stress the special significance of this precise ideology:

When receiving national education in school, every representative of the young generation in independent Azerbaijan must study well the history of his people, nation, from ancient times to the present day. If he does not study it, he cannot become a true citizen. If he does not study it, he will not be able to value his nation. If he does not study it, he will not be able to take proper pride in his belonging to his nation.<sup>10</sup>

The Administration of the President of Azerbaijan is a state service, officers of which are actively involved in the construction and propagation of the current national ideology, in which the ‘historical’ confrontation with Armenia plays a key role, as illustrated by this comment by the head of the public and political affairs section of the Azerbaijani Republic’s Presidential Administration:

After the development of a fictional Armenian idea of history which stated that Armenians are an ‘ancient indigenous people’ in the Caucasus, mass destruction of Azerbaijani, Muslim and other monuments in Armenia started. As a matter of fact, Azerbaijani medieval architecture bears graphic witness to the lies of Armenian ideologists and nationalists and the claim of Azerbaijanis on these lands. The destruction of Azerbaijani architecture in Armenia that began in Soviet times was completed after the USSR collapsed and Armenia gained independence. No Azeri or other monuments reminiscent of their ancient history and culture have now been left standing in the Republic of Armenia or in its capital, Yerevan.<sup>11</sup>

28 May is a post-Soviet era national holiday called 'Republic Day' which is devoted to Azerbaijani independence. On that date in 2012, the president of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, decorated prominent historians for, among other things, their contribution to the war of information with Armenia. The historian's representative responded:

Following your call, instructions and recommendations, Azerbaijani historians are currently waging information warfare against the Armenian aggressors. All of us, including the historians being presented with awards today, are your soldiers. Following your call, we have engaged in open combat with those who falsify our history. In all of your speeches you highly praise our labour, our struggle.<sup>12</sup>

The following three quotations are representative of the content of modern Azerbaijani history textbooks. According to official discourse, it is widely accepted that the conflict between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the twentieth century was particularly violent between 1918 and 1920 and that this violence resurged between 1991 and 1994.

[T]he brutal Russian soldiers killed all of the unarmed population of Ganca. Also killed were Ganca people who hid in mosques. In one of the city's mosques there were about 500 people. The Armenians told the Russian soldiers that there were Lezgis among these. The word 'Lezgi', which infuriates Russians, sentenced to death the people who were in the mosque. All of them were killed.<sup>13</sup>

As a result of the March [1918] genocide, over 12,000 people were killed in Baku alone. The atrocities committed by the Bolshevik–Dashnak units spread beyond Baku, too. [The Dashnak groups] continued to exterminate Azerbaijanis in the Kubinskiy, Salyanskiy and Lenkoranskiy *uyezds* [districts]. From 3 to 16 April, the Dashnak groups led by S. Lalayan and T. Amirov committed bloody deeds against the civilian population of Samaxi ... In Baku province, the genocide of Muslims (Azerbaijanis) continued until mid-1918. During this period, over 20,000 Azerbaijanis were killed.<sup>14</sup>

At 21:00 hours on 25 February [1992], Armenian armed groups together with the Russian 366th mechanised regiment ... attacked [the town of] Khojaly ... A total of 613 people were killed in the Khojaly massacre, 487 were injured, 1275 were taken captive, six whole families were killed and the town was set on fire. Many women, children and elderly people who managed to leave the town on that snowy frosty night were intercepted and killed by the Armenian fascists. The cruel enemy even mutilated the corpses.<sup>15</sup>

The last quotation shows the attitude towards the conflict of one of the most famous and popular political opposition leaders in Azerbaijan, Ali Karmlı, the chairman of the opposition PFAP. Ali Karmlı said in his speech on the commemoration day of the Khojaly massacre:



Those who committed these acts must be punished. The liberation of Karabakh would be the greatest punishment for them.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan plays a key role in the dominant historical narrative in Azerbaijan and the conflict between *imagined communities* of Azerbaijanis and Armenians is described as ‘historical’. Thus the recent Karabakh conflict becomes the ‘logical’ continuation of centuries-old Armenian-Azerbaijani discord; the official historical narrative essentialises the conflict, acting as a significant factor in its constant reproduction and extension.

The fight against the ‘Armenian fascists’ who, in this narrative, are invariably supported by Moscow, is also described as the most important component part of Azerbaijan’s struggle for independence. The occupation of part of the territory of the Azerbaijani Republic as recognised by the international community is one reason for the dominant position of an official discourse which, I believe, can be called a discourse of ‘incomplete sovereignty’. In this official discourse, Azerbaijan is a successful and independent state on the one hand; on the other hand, however, it can only become completely and truly independent once it has regained control over all of its ‘historical’ territory. At the same time, the ‘incomplete sovereignty’ discourse constructed by historians goes beyond simply describing the Karabakh conflict. The country’s ‘historical territory’ is considered to be bounded by borders far wider than the current ones. The reason for the loss of most of the ‘historical lands’ is identified in the colonising policy of the Russian Empire (which created Armenia) and that of the Persian Empire and its successor Iran, which controls Iranian (Southern) Azerbaijan. It does not seem very likely in the current situation that these territories will be incorporated into the Azerbaijani Republic at any point in the foreseeable future. Thus the theory being constructed by historians of the need for a full restoration of independence within ‘fair borders’ implies that the discursive image of the enemy which divided ‘our historical motherland’ may have a long history.

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# 6

## Belgium

Tessa Lobbes and Kaat Wils

### Introduction

The lingering political problems of Belgium as a nation-state in decline, being overruled by competing sub-national ambitions, might lead one to expect the country to be the battlefield par excellence of a fierce history war. Conflicting historical narratives do indeed play a significant role in political debate and public culture. Patriotic collective memory, which has been supported by the nation-state since its foundation in 1830, has gradually been supplanted by conflicting Flemish Nationalist and Walloon counter-memories.<sup>1</sup> However, these ‘memory wars’ have not fundamentally affected history education. In this chapter, we contextualise and explain the absence of controversies in Belgian history education. The state does not traditionally have a strong presence in matters of education in Belgium, where freedom of education has always been one of the cornerstones of the ultra-liberal character of its constitution, and the autonomy of the different school systems (of which Catholic schools are the largest in terms of pupil numbers) has always been strong.<sup>2</sup> The current international public debates on the aims and characteristics of history education do, however, resonate in Belgium as well. Those debates partly continue the major evolutions in the field of the previous decades and partly react against them.

## Historical Context and Background: The Waning of a National Perspective

The position of national history was a major subject of debate in the immediate post-war decades. National history had never occupied more than one-third of the Belgian secondary school history curriculum, either in the public education system or in the 'free', mainly Catholic, network of schools, but after the Second World War, its position as an autonomous 'sub-subject' was questioned. Stimulated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) project of history textbook revision aimed at international understanding, a group of particularly left-wing state-school history inspectors managed in 1949 to make official the structural integration of Belgian and 'universal history' (which at that time was primarily seen as European history). Inspired by their own war experiences and by the first attempts during the interwar years to anchor peace in education, they promoted history education as an instrument of peace and democracy. They met with fierce resistance from some academic historians and from within the conservative press, where their meetings with German historians were represented as unpatriotic acts. In Catholic schools, national history would preserve a separate position until the 1970s, even though there too, a process of internationalisation of the history curriculum was taking place.<sup>3</sup>

The position of national history was further undermined by the growing importance of sub-national identities. Since 1830, history textbooks had existed in the different national languages, but until the 1950s these were often translations of the same standard texts. In the Dutch textbooks from the late nineteenth century, cautious references could be found to the 'justifiable' complaints of the Flemish Movement about the pro-French language policy of the government, but these had never obscured the Belgian nationalist tenor of the larger narrative. From the 1930s, a more outspoken pro-Flemish and anti-French position was found in a few textbooks, but these remained exceptions. It was also in this period that resentment grew on the Walloon side with respect to the strong focus on the historical county of Flanders, which was thought to be detrimental to the historic role of the southern regions of the country.<sup>4</sup> From the 1960s on, the country's two largest language communities made different choices concerning education, a process which was legitimised in 1989 with the formal transfer of power in the matter of education to the three Belgian 'communities', the Dutch and French communities and the very small German community. In other words, 'Belgian' history education no longer existed.<sup>5</sup>

In the same period, between 1965 and 1990, the position of history education itself came under attack. According to critics, history lessons were antiquated and of little social or civic use. The newly introduced subject of 'societal education' was expected to provide a better understanding of contemporary society and its problems. In order to defend the position of their school subject, history inspectors stressed the importance of current questions such as human rights, social justice, emancipation and democracy, a plea which again, more indirectly, stimulated a global rather than a national or regional approach.

History as a school subject has regained a more prominent and stable position since 1990. Final objectives, set by the regional governments, delineate the minimum targets which history education should achieve. Within each language community, the main school systems maintain their separate syllabi but need to achieve identical attainment targets. In defining the final objectives, a deliberate choice has been made by the Flemish and the French communities not to present an extensive enumeration of knowledge that must be acquired. The objectives are primarily aimed at critical thinking skills and attitudes and offer criteria for the selection of subject matter, which, in the case of the Flemish and the French public school networks and the Catholic school network, includes a brief outline of general themes and concepts to be covered. As there is no system of central examinations, the freedom to select subject material is real, even though textbooks (which are commercial products, neither subsidised nor controlled by the government) in fact play an important canonising role.<sup>6</sup>

## The Debate: A Transnational Frame of Reference

National and sub-national perspectives are only marginally present in the formulation of the final objectives and syllabi. On the Flemish side, a general clause stating that pupils have to gain knowledge of Flemish culture and its history was added to the final objectives of the first and second years (but not to the others) at the explicit request of the Parliament.<sup>7</sup> In Flemish public schools, the study of the Flemish Movement and the 'emancipation of the Flemish Community in the context of the Belgian state' are part of the syllabus for the final year, but these topics only take up a few hours of the whole course. In the very open syllabus of Catholic education in Flanders, no selection of subject matter is presented, nor is the theme of national identity put forward in any other way. Pupils are expected to gain an insight into the inter-relations between local, regional, national and global problems, but teachers

are left free to give their own interpretation.<sup>8</sup> In the most recent generation of Flemish history textbooks, the national perspective is also only marginally present. A number of national key moments, such as the Belgian Revolution or the Second World War, are discussed, but mostly as part of a larger European or global subject matter. An implicitly teleological reading of the 'emancipation' of Flanders is present in some of them, even though the space allocated to this topic is very small.

In the Francophone syllabi and final objectives, the basic frame of reference is also European. In the final objectives set out by the Ministry of Education for the French community, Belgium is only explicitly mentioned in the subject description for the twentieth century, and this is in connection with the themes of 'supranationality', federalism and regional identities. In contrast with Flanders, the syllabi of both the public and the Catholic school systems refer to the 'patrimonial function' of history education, much as is the case in France. History education is said to participate in a 'legitimate search for identity' and a consciousness-raising about its own 'roots'. The syllabi do not, however, define what emphasis this identity should be given, even though the main interpretation of *patrimoine* is a regional rather than a national one. In the curricula of Catholic schools, the need to 'integrate the history of our regions' is added as a general guideline for each year. In the most recent Francophone textbooks, the heritage function of history education is given some emphasis, which brings regional history modestly to the fore. Where possible, the choice is made to familiarise pupils with documents, objects, sites and works of art from their own region, by which primarily Wallonia is meant.<sup>9</sup>

In short, there is no strong focus on either national or sub-national history in history education on either side of the linguistic boundary. In recent empirical research, historians have investigated the way in which young Flemish adults construct narratives about their national past. An analysis of essays by first-year undergraduate students on Belgian national history showed that no ingrained nationally oriented master narrative was present and that many of the students critically assessed existing (sub)national 'myths' about the national past. This research equally demonstrates that some students are not inclined to consider, for example, the persecution of Jews as a fundamental part of Belgian history. These observations can all be related to the relative lack of national history in the Flemish history curricula, and in the transnational framework.<sup>10</sup> More comparative research on young adults' consumption of history education and in-depth analysis of textbooks from both language communities would enrich our understanding. It would probably show that the diverging sub-national memories have left traces in the interpretation of national history without dominating the main narrative, which is



transnational in nature. Teachers in both linguistic communities have substantial freedom to select specific content to teach, and they inevitably contribute towards some form of identity construction. In public debates on national memory, history education is sometimes referred to, but the issue is hardly ever a subject of debate in its own right, and pronouncements on the matter do not easily transcend the individuality of the respective authors. Two main themes do, however, rise to the surface when considering public references to history education during the past ten years: the importance of national history, and war memories.<sup>11</sup>

## Individual Attempts to Re-evaluate National History

Pleas in favour of strengthening national history stem mostly—although not exclusively—from Francophone intellectuals or politicians. In the context of fierce political opposition between both parts of the country and the growing strength of Flemish nationalist political discourse in the North, these intellectuals refer to the dangers of a Flemish nationalist interpretation of the past in which Belgium is nothing more than an artificial creation of international diplomacy dating from 1830 and hence has no reason to continue to exist in the long term. To support their claims that there is a grave lack of knowledge among the Belgian population of the basic facts concerning the nation's past, they refer to highly publicised incidents such as the 'Marseillaise incident' of July 2007. On this national holiday, the Flemish Christian Democrat Yves Leterme, who was in charge of forming a new federal government (over which he would soon preside), appeared unable to explain which precise historical event was commemorated on the national holiday and moreover confused the Belgian and the French national anthems. When the focus turns to the question of history education, similar complaints are usually accompanied by outspoken dissatisfaction at the fact that the final objectives of both linguistic communities appear to be competence-oriented rather than knowledge-based.

In 2008, the liberal politician and member of the federal Senate Alain Destexhe translated this concern into a proposition in the Senate, modelled on the Dutch national canon project, to entrust a committee of academic historians with the task of defining 50 key moments of the national past. The resulting texts on each of the key moments would be conceived as didactical tools to be disseminated in schools, but equally 'among the citizens' and abroad. Destexhe substantiated his initiative in the following way:

Facing the storm of lies and the nationalistic assault, it is useful, although some of us will be irritated by it, to recall our long-standing common history. This act of remembrance has an even more powerful significance, as the recent political crisis revealed the widespread misunderstanding of our shared history. Also distinguished politicians both of the northern and the southern part of the country testified to this misjudgement. Can you imagine a Frenchman ignoring the meaning of the 14th of July or an American unaware of the significance of the 4th of July? We in Belgium would not be astonished by a similar lack of knowledge, since national history is scarcely taught in our schools. The meaning of the 21st of July does not even appear in the most frequently used history textbooks in the Francophone schools.<sup>12</sup>

The proposition was not taken up by the Senate and so never became more than an individual project. A year later, Destexhe did indeed publish his own version of Belgian history in 50 key moments,<sup>13</sup> starting with the prehistoric caves of Spy, giving special attention to the fifteenth century, when the country was 'unified' under Burgundian rule, and ending by explaining the history of the national symbols.

## War Memories

A year earlier, in March 2007, Destexhe had urged both linguistic communities to take initiatives in the field of education on the Second World War. This appeal was occasioned by the publication of a historical research report which had been undertaken at the request of the federal government concerning the responsibility of the Belgian government in the deportation of Jews—responsibility which was judged to have been considerable. In making his appeal, Destexhe was echoing the reaction of Belgium's liberal Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, who had also responded to the report by stating that its results had to be disseminated in school textbooks.<sup>14</sup> For Verhofstadt and several other liberal and socialist politicians, this attitude was part of broader efforts to stimulate Holocaust education. In Flanders especially, where public opinion had never really come to terms with a past of large-scale Flemish collaboration with the German occupiers and where the growing success of the extreme right seemed to suggest undesirable historical continuities, liberal and socialist politicians were eager to stimulate initiatives such as the foundation of a Holocaust museum (which opened in 2012 in the Flemish town of Mechelen). In 2008, Patrick Dewael, who was then the Belgian liberal

Minister of the Interior, wrote an open letter to the Flemish socialist Minister of Education Frank Vandenbroucke, in which he stated:

I am writing to express my concern about the intolerance among young people towards those with different viewpoints in general and about the increase in expressions of anti-Semitism in particular ... In my view, more of a focus is still needed on the mechanisms that led to that appalling drama [the Holocaust], so that our young people can draw the necessary lessons from them ... I believe it would be appropriate to draw up an inventory of the initiatives that have already been taken in connection with remembrance education and to consider what other initiatives we can take in this area.<sup>15</sup>

These government initiatives did not originate within a context of a real history war between the two language communities about the representation of Flemish and Walloon collaboration in history textbooks. Nor did they function as a trigger in that direction. In the single recent case where a history textbook depiction of the collaboration was questioned, the criticism came from Flemish Jewish opinion makers. In 2009, the Jewish journal *Joods Actueel* rejected the way in which a Flemish history textbook historicised public memories and representations of the Holocaust and connected them to the political history of the state of Israel and the broader conflict in the Middle East. In other words, the criticism did not emanate from a concern for a historically correct (Belgian) national narrative, but was exclusively focused on the themes of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, Holocaust representations and the politics of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Within the French and the Flemish communities, different forms of 'remembrance education' concerning the Holocaust and other genocides were soon stimulated. On the Flemish side, these initiatives have recently been made official; in 2010, remembrance education became an official part of the cross-curricular final objectives of secondary education. These final objectives constitute a set of minimum school targets that do not belong to specific subjects and which aim at preparing youngsters to participate actively in society and to develop their personality. Remembrance education is defined in this context as 'a means of instructively looking back to the own [sic] past and that of societies elsewhere in Europe or the world, in order to learn where society should go from here'. Translated into a specific final objective, it is formulated as a way to 'learn from historic and present-day examples of intolerance, racism and xenophobia'.<sup>17</sup> Some history teachers and academic historians are sceptical about what they regard as an over-subsidised educational hype that not only disregards their specific expertise by making all teachers competent

in the field of remembrance education but is also in danger of running counter to the very core of their discipline. In any case, these cross-curricular final objectives mount pressure on history teachers to deal with the past from a memorial rather than from a critical historical perspective.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

It remains to be seen whether these themes will continue to monopolise the (rather stagnant) debate on history education or whether they will be supplanted by themes such as the need to introduce interculturality in a more structured fashion. Some cautious appeals have recently been made in the latter direction. Here as well, the transnational character of the syllabi, combined with the tradition of substantial freedom in content selection for teachers and schools, point towards a silent evolution rather than a noisy history war.

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# 7

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Katarina Batarilo-Henschen

### Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BaH) has been characterised, in the years since the war of 1992–1995, by national division which has pervaded its entire society; institutions such as the police and schools, as well as national symbols, have been divided along ethnic lines, with separate services for each of the country's three main ethnic groups. This division is similarly manifest in teaching in schools and is most visible in what the education system terms 'national subjects', such as language and literature and geography and history, that is, subjects whose educational purpose is, at least partially, viewed as being to transmit social and political consciousness. To counter this division, the international community has intervened in the education sector in an unprecedented way. Its interventionist measures, however, have been marked by an emerging conflict between the need to promote local initiative and capacity building and the need to provide guidance from above.<sup>1</sup> History textbook revision in particular exemplifies the difficulties and conflicts that have been inherent in these measures, making them the target of substantial public criticism. It also indicates the continued intensity of the problem of identity in Bosnian-Herzegovinian history education.

### Historical Background

The debate in BaH, which centres on issues of identity and ethnic segregation, emerged within the context of the war which took place from 1992 to 1995 over the sovereignty of the country and its dissolution from the Socialist

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Socialist Yugoslavia had been dominated by a unitary narrative of resistance which had covered up national differences and nationalism within the Yugoslav federation but lost much of its momentum when Tito died in 1980.

Within both Bosnia and Herzegovina and wider Yugoslavia, Croats and Serbs were defined by their respective nationalities; this national identity is built around shared linguistic and religious heritage as well as historical reference to peoples that belonged to the titular nations of the first Yugoslavian state (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). By contrast, it took until 1974 for the Muslim population to receive official recognition as an independent national group; this recognition took place in the new constitution of Socialist Yugoslavia, with this group of people referred to in exclusively religious terms as 'Muslim'.<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the 1980s, all Yugoslavian republics, and Bosnia and Herzegovina was no exception, witnessed the intensification of nationalist discourse; people's loyalty towards their individual national identity became greater than their loyalty towards communist ideology. The economic crisis that followed the death of Tito proved a strong boost to the revival of nationalism in Yugoslavia. The communist elite found itself confronted with the challenge of either regaining legitimacy by adopting a nationalist agenda or facing the loss of power in the first free Yugoslavia-wide elections, which took place in 1990.<sup>3</sup>

After declaring its independence in March 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina was plunged into a brutal war which lasted from 1992 until 1995 and was characterised by the euphemistically termed atrocity of 'ethnic cleansing', directed not only against people but also against sociocultural systems, against identities, against collective memories and lifeworlds.<sup>4</sup> Historical research considers one of the main causes of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of the war in the 1990s to be the repression of the memory of the Yugoslav civil war that took place during the Second World War under Tito and changes in public discourse on the past.<sup>5</sup>

The Dayton Peace Agreement of 14 December 1995 marked the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and established the two entities of which the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. Whereas Republika Srpska is centrally organised, the Bosniak<sup>6</sup>-Croat Federation comprises ten cantons, which in turn each encompass several municipalities. This organisational structure also has implications for education: while the education system in Republika Srpska is centralised under the control of a single minister and guided by a pedagogical institute located in Banja Luka, the Dayton Agreement delegated

responsibility for education in the Federation to the ten cantons, each endowed with its own ministry of education. Thus, after 1995, the unified and highly centralised pre-war system gave way to three independent education systems and school curricula, driven by the desire to create distinct groups of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, each of them being taught different languages, histories and national ethics.<sup>7</sup>

## The Debate (with Documentation)

Among the biggest obstacles to the building of a sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the two education issues of ethnic segregation among students and the teaching of stereotypes about the other national groups. Conflict around identity manifests itself particularly strongly in history education.

History education became a battlefield of interpretations: the different master narratives of the three nations forming Bosnia and Herzegovina are based on interpretations and evaluations that, although they frequently refer to the same historical periods and events, are not only in conflict with one another but are also mutually exclusive and resistant to any attempt to forge a synthesis of historical narratives or formulate a shared history based on common experience, and give rise to incompatible and irreconcilable historical memories.<sup>8</sup> The history textbooks of the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina clearly reflect their three divergent perspectives on history.

During the war, textbooks for the Croat and Serb Bosnian populations were imported from neighbouring Serbia and Croatia; these were either only minimally adapted to the Bosnian context or reflected solely the Serbian or Croatian context from which they had been taken, often ignoring the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina was an independent political unit. From 1993 onwards, the Bosniaks developed new textbooks within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Since 1998, the international community<sup>9</sup> has striven to coordinate the range of topics and interpretations dealt with in the country's history education and to remove from teaching materials passages which might appear to discriminate against one of the country's three constituent peoples or one of the minorities. Such intervention has gone through various stages. It started with the simple obliteration of objectionable material by blacking out sections in the textbooks (1999). Passages which could not be blacked out in time

were marked with a stamp stating: 'The following passage contains material of which the truth has not been established, or that may be offensive or misleading; the material is currently under review'.

The first formal recommendations on textbook revision, which were issued within the framework of the 'Sarajevo Declaration' in 1998, were not thoroughly implemented. Textbook authors refused to modify their books and a campaign was launched against the textbook revision process taking place in Sarajevo. Press reports accused the international community of wanting to suppress the truth and cause the victims to sink into oblivion, which, it was feared, would inevitably provoke new crimes. The headline carried by the newspaper *Večernje Novine* of 31 October 1998 read: 'Do we want to teach our children how to lie? Textbooks for a new genocide'.<sup>10</sup>

In July 1999, all ministers of education signed an 'Agreement on the Removal of Objectionable Material from Textbooks to be used in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1999–2000 School Year'. The international community played a significant role in formulating this agreement: an international team of experts had been tasked with identifying the objectionable material, the World Bank covered parts of the cost of the procedure, and 'verifiers' from international organisations working in Bosnia and Herzegovina monitored the process. By the end of the school year, many schools had still to undertake the removal procedure, partly for reasons of time. In some schools there had been misunderstandings as to what to black out and what to stamp with the caveat. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) staff reported being aware of a school where the unaltered versions of pages had been exhibited on a bulletin board so that pupils could read them there.<sup>11</sup>

Educational measures that took place within the initial phase of international education intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as the blacking out of passages in textbooks, had been accompanied by public criticism and mistrust which hindered the reform process to an extent.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the international community established a new textbook revision commission which decided to ban the import of textbooks, to remove from existing textbooks passages formulated in a potentially offensive manner, or those which went against the tenets of the Dayton Agreement, and to neutralise the language used in textbooks. An example of the neutralisation of terminology is the stipulation that the 1992–1995 period should be referred to in future textbooks not as the 'civil war' or the 'aggression' but as the 'recent war'.

The initial, controversial, stages of the implementation of these recommendations had little effect and did not lead to overall textbook revision. Indeed, the changing or erasure of single words and concepts led to dilemmas for

teachers, as this affected central aspects of their teaching, and they were not supplied with new interpretations to replace the now undesirable words and concepts. Another problem was that the commission failed to reach agreement on some concepts intended to transmit an attitude of neutrality; one example was the representation of the conversion of Bosnian populations to Islam during the era of the Ottoman Empire. The use of the term 'Islamisation', as called for by Croat and Serb reviewers, expressed their view of the process having been a forced one amounting to violent oppression of the culture and religion of Christians under the Ottoman Empire. The Bosniaks, conversely, interpret the conversion to Islam 'as a long and slow process of acculturation leading to [Islam's] successful acceptance'.<sup>13</sup>

After these controversial initial stages of the work carried out by the first textbook revision commission, a further commission began its task not by testing authors' manuscripts for ethnic and political 'purity' but by aiming to develop principles according to which history and geography textbooks would represent Bosnia and Herzegovina in its entirety. With the support of the international community, the new textbook commission developed 'Guidelines for the Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina',<sup>14</sup> which all ministers of education ratified in 2007.

Overall, external intervention into education in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been characterised by different phases, each with its own specific issues. In the years immediately after the war, the international community's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina focused on the reconstruction of school buildings and infrastructure, while quality and content issues of education were neglected. During and after the war, an ethnically divided education system had been established by means of the import and development of new curricula and textbooks for each national group. At the time of initial external intervention into the education system after the war, which involved emergency measures such as the blacking out of passages in textbooks, the situation was deadlocked. This left the international community with the sole option of entering into an official and protracted process of revising existing curricula and textbooks.<sup>15</sup>

After periods of non-intervention (between 1995 and 2000) and of forced intervention (between 2000 and 2002), the international community took a more cooperative approach from 2002 onwards. One of the processes and products of institutional cooperation is the development of the 'Guidelines for the Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks' referred to above. The 'Guidelines' require the implementation of European standards in history textbook writing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, some concepts and

didactic strategies encompassed in the 'Guidelines', such as multiperspectivity, gave rise to confusion and resistance not only on the part of Bosnian textbook authors and education authorities, but surprisingly also on the part of some representatives of the international community.

The aim of the multiperspective and comparative approach is to introduce to students the idea that perceptions of history can be divergent and diverse. While some Bosnian-Herzegovinian teachers and authors, at least the older ones who were educated in the former Yugoslav system, appear to believe that there is only one historical truth that needs to be taught to students and that this truth must not be dissolved into multiperspectivity, some representatives of the international community doubt whether Bosnia and Herzegovina is mature enough for the coexistence of two or more different interpretations of history. For instance, a motion signed by 17 deputies of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe expresses scepticism of the idea that multiperspectivity is an appropriate approach for Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the following terms:

Considering that ...

- vi. Multiperspectivity may hinder post-conflict reconciliation efforts in post-conflict countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina if this approach is mistaken for the right to equate responsibility of individual groups in the country's recent conflict (that is, a given perspective may hold that someone is a war criminal while another may hold that the same person is a national hero).<sup>16</sup>

Controversy surrounding Bosnian and Herzegovinian history textbooks not only involves their methodology, but also their content, with two major issues continuing to arouse dispute. As discussed above, one of the key problems of Bosnian and Herzegovinian history textbooks is the problem of identity or of a 'sense of belonging', or otherwise, to the nation, which has been experienced by all the ethnic communities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The problematic use of 'Bosnia and Herzegovina as a main reference point' in textbooks has been identified as the principal obstacle to the harmonisation of the country's three separate education systems. 'National history' has been understood by the Croats as the history of the Croatian people and 'their' nation-state Croatia and by the Serbs as the history of the Serbian people and Serbia, while parts of the Bosniak population in Bosnia and Herzegovina eliminate non-Muslim parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina's history from mainstream historical narratives. A second controversial aspect of textbook policy in Bosnia and

Herzegovina is the inclusion or omission of the most recent wars in the territories of former Yugoslavia. These two major issues will be explored below in more detail.

The accentuation of the nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a principal reference point in daily school instruction—much more so than in history textbooks—has been the major objective for the working groups elaborating the Guidelines for the Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks, whose mandate was ‘to ensure that students have a basic understanding of the history and geography of all three constituent peoples, and of national minorities, that BaH is used as the main reference point, [and] that neighbouring countries are presented in a balanced manner’.<sup>17</sup>

Ethnic divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina are, in relation both to textbooks and to other arenas, mainly grounded on the insistence of dominant sections of all three constituent nations upon the primacy of ethnic affiliations above those to the state, and the parallel rejection of the idea of a civic affiliation to the state Bosnia and Herzegovina among the Serbian and Croatian communities within Bosnia and Herzegovina. A closer look into the textbooks reveals the very different ways in which textbook authors and textbook approval committees have dealt with these complex and contested issues.

The interpretations of national history differ tremendously between Serbian, Croatian and Bosniak textbooks from Bosnia and Herzegovina, a fact which the analysis by Karge and Batarilo (2009) of the new generation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian textbooks approved for the school year 2007/2008 demonstrates at length.<sup>18</sup>

Croatian books in Bosnia and Herzegovina declare unambiguously that ‘national history’ is not to be equated with the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but rather with that of Croatia and the Croats. Croatian books exhibit a form of ‘possessive behaviour’, as Karge and Batarilo formulate it, towards the Bosnian and Herzegovinian past and present. Not only do sub-chapters on Bosnian and Herzegovinian history deal principally with Croatian history on Bosnian and Herzegovinian territory, but they also constantly reference the history of Croatia. One example is the history textbook written by Matković et al. for year eight pupils. It has been composed from a purely Croatian perspective and is aimed at Croat pupils, a detail stated explicitly in its introduction: ‘In each unit the focus is on [students developing a] better understanding of the Croatian people ... A separate unit deals with events that marked the new era of the history of the Croatian people when Croatia and BaH finally separated’.<sup>19</sup>

History textbooks approved<sup>20</sup> for the 2007/2008 school year in the Republika Srpska demonstrate, in contrast to previous textbooks, a consider-



able increase in references to local and Bosnian and Herzegovinian history within the context of South Slavic and national history. Nevertheless, the main focus of national history in all textbooks used in the Republic is clearly Serbian national history. Headings which formerly referred to 'Serbian' or 'Yugoslav' history have relatively frequently been changed to read 'South Slavic' or 'Balkan history', which might be viewed as evidence of an attempt to disentangle older, Yugoslav-Serbian perspectives from regional, and Bosnian and Herzegovinian, viewpoints on national history.

Bosniak textbooks exhibit, almost as a matter of course, a clear focus on Bosnian and Herzegovinian history, as they cannot refer to a 'national fatherland' abroad. But do their presentations of Bosnian and Herzegovinian history cover the histories of all the constitutive peoples (and minorities) of the country, or do they focus predominantly on just one aspect of the country's history, namely on that of the Bosniak community within Bosnia and Herzegovina? It appears that the textbooks used by the Bosniak community have not developed homogenously. By the 2007/2008 academic year, as a result of a continuous process of textbook revision, textbooks were oscillating between the various and contested concepts of what constitutes Bosniak identity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, Bosniak history textbooks can be characterised as involving a parallel existence of two different approaches to historical truth and interpretation: while some textbooks remain with the traditional definition of historical interpretation ('there is only one truth'),<sup>21</sup> other textbooks, generally written by new teams of younger authors, have begun to develop an approach to the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina which we might describe as a 'triple-truth' concept; at the very least, they attempt to reflect upon the contested character of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>22</sup> A good example of this might be the contradictory presentations of the *Crkva Bosanska* (the Bosnian Church) in two Bosniak textbooks for year seven pupils published in 2007. The book by Hadžija Hadžiabdić and Edis Dervišagić states on page 103: 'The Bosnian Church emerged under the influence of Bogomilian teaching ... The followers of the Bosnian Church called themselves Christians. They were also called Patarens and Bogumils'.<sup>23</sup> By contrast, the textbook written by Arifa Isaković points to the contested character of the Church:

Academia holds two opposing views of the character of the Bosnian Church: firstly, that it belonged to a dualistic movement that spread across a large area of Asia Minor, across the Balkans and Italy up to the south of France and central Europe; secondly, that it was not a dualist sect, but rather a Christian institution that had split from Rome and maintained traditional customs and ways of life.<sup>24</sup>

A second example of issues concerning history textbooks that resulted in public debate is the matter of the inclusion or omission of the contested topic of the war in Bosnia–Herzegovina. While Serbian and Croatian textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina have consistently discussed the wars that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia, Bosniak history textbooks published between 2003 and 2011 refrained from dealing with the subject. The war has only been included in all history textbooks throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina since the 2012/2013 academic year.<sup>25</sup>

As is to be expected, this period is subject to divergent interpretations. From a Serbian perspective, the war involved the secession of a republic from the Yugoslavian federation of states. While Serb politicians and historians interpret the events as a civil war between different domestic groups which could not come to an agreement about the future of the state, in Bosniak eyes, the war was said to have been triggered by a Serbian attack upon their territory, intended to put an end to the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The position of the Bosnian Croats was similar to that of the Bosniaks, but more difficult to defend, because the Croats of Herzegovina had first joined the Bosniaks in their attempt to preserve the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina by fighting the Serbs, but later opted for independence or to join Croatia and therefore laid the foundations for conflict between all opposing sides.<sup>26</sup>

The divergent interpretations and imbalanced representation of the war in textbooks from all three population groups demonstrate plainly that textbooks are, in this regard, a poor and one-sided support to teachers. Appropriate additional teaching materials and learning approaches could help teachers to tackle the difficult topic of the war.

The importance of public discussion of the war might also be demonstrated by the case of a Bosniak history textbook published in 2007 which caused a sensation in the media and the public sphere due to its omission of the war, the effects of which are still evident in students' daily lives, in society, and, implicitly, even in the book's own narrative.

The Bosniak textbook, written by Hadžiabdić et al.,<sup>27</sup> only covers history to the beginning of 1992, thus avoiding the war; the book's final chapter concludes with the international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the war is present both in the introduction to the book and in a subordinate clause in the last chapter<sup>28</sup>: at the end of the book, the chapter 'Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent and sovereign state', includes the following passage:

The former president of the SDS, Radovan Karadžić, presently indicted for war crimes by the Hague Tribunal, openly threatened the Muslim political leaders

and people, saying that if Bosnia and Herzegovina were to become an independent state war would break out and the Muslim people would disappear from the region.<sup>29</sup>

This sentence expressly identifies Radovan Karadžić as an alleged war criminal. Thus the textbook includes at least small indications of the painful history of the war in its narrative. As the period in which the war took place was not included in the syllabus in most of the cantons of the Federation until the 2012/2013 school year, the authors of the book were under no obligation to address the war and chose not to enter into a detailed and multi-sourced discussion.

The book created a public scandal in Bosnia and Herzegovina in September 2007. War veteran unions from the Tuzla canton, who had initiated the public debate, criticised the book for not dealing with the war period correctly: 'Regarding how the textbook should deal with the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the horrible offences and the genocide that were committed, [we would consider] mentioning in this context Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić as the main organisers of [these] crimes and genocide [as well as mentioning] historically objective facts' (open letter by the 'Unija Veterana' of the Tuzla canton, 6 September 2007). Following a heated debate in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian media, the book was finally withdrawn from use in schools during the 2007/2008 academic year.<sup>30</sup>

The root of the problem is to be found in the history curricula that define history as it is taught in schools, which state that history textbooks, and thus history teaching in the classroom, must finish with the recognition of the sovereign state of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Community in April 1992 and Bosnia and Herzegovina's admittance to the United Nations in May 1992. The veterans were therefore seeking to have topics included in history teaching that were not included in the stipulated curriculum. The 2007 media and public debate on the above-mentioned textbook opened up a discussion on one of the most pressing questions around the history of the country—the question as to whether the war of 1992–1995 should be taught in schools and if so, how.

Although fundamentally a positive step, it is important to approach the teaching of the recent violence<sup>31</sup> with the utmost caution. A decade on from the events in Tuzla, the problems in the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina have still not been resolved and a recent case in a canton of Sarajevo demonstrates that the situation has, in fact, deteriorated. The following amendment was made during the approval process for new legislation on primary and secondary education in the Sarajevo canton and resulted in the

discussion becoming a political issue: “The Minister shall ensure that the content and thematic units devoted to researching genocide committed in BaH between 1992–1995 and the siege of Sarajevo, as found in the judgments of competent courts, become integral and obligatory elements of the curriculum”.<sup>32</sup>

The new legislation is problematic because it anchors the examination of the recent violence in education law rather than in the history curricula, automatically lending the subject political charge. Further problems are created by the use of provocative and complex terms such as ‘genocide’ to refer to the entire conflict. Other cantons are expected to reject the legislation, thus deepening the controversy over war.

## Conclusion

The debate surrounding textbooks continues. The origins of the discussion can be traced back to the period of the war itself, when individual ethnic and nationalist narratives emerged. It then entered a phase of fierce public controversy during which the international community attempted to develop neutral formulations for the explanation of events that would be acceptable to all sides. Once international involvement in education in Bosnia and Herzegovina reduces or ceases, it is possible that Bosnian-Herzegovinian institutions may revoke the compromises made under its influence.

Fundamental discrepancies between the concepts of nation and citizenship as focal reference points for political identity are the main obstacles to curricula and textbooks being unified across all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Issues around the teaching of history and other subjects that involve elements of national cultures present a serious challenge to the development of a common Bosnian and Herzegovinian identity among the youth of the country and the emergence of a pluralistic society.<sup>33</sup> The different ways in which the war period is dealt with in today’s Bosnian and Herzegovinian classrooms represent one of the major contemporary challenges for education in the country, and one which will continue into the future.

The question of how to appropriately address the recent violence as a subject in the classroom is challenging, as is the search for suitable topics and source material. Textbook authors in many South-East European states are confronted with this demanding task. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, an already difficult undertaking is compounded by official (education) policies and an ethnically segregated society. The added complication of the country’s textbooks teaching differing understandings of ‘national history’ to each ethnic

group make it clear that there is a long way to go before any sense of a shared Bosnian and Herzegovinian history will be within sight.

## Notes

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2. Ibid., 262.
3. F. Bieber, 'Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon: Historical Lessons of Two Multireligious States', *Third World Quarterly* 21 (2000) 2, 269–282, here 276.
4. J.-M. Čalić, *Die Geschichte Jugoslawiens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Beck, 2010).
5. H. Karge, *Steinerne Erinnerung—versteinerte Erinnerung? Kriegsgedenken in Jugoslawien (1947–1970)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).
6. The term 'Bosniak' has become the term used for Bosnian Muslims in the ethnic sense only since the 1990s.
7. K. Batarilo and V. Lenhart, 'Das Bildungssystem in Bosnien-Herzegowina [The Education System of Bosnia and Herzegovina]'. In *Bildungssysteme Europas*, 3 vols, ed. H. Döbert et al. (Baldmannsweiler: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren, 2009).
8. A. Dimou, 'Introduction'. In *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. A. Dimou (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2009), 18–19.
9. According to Falk Pingel, the term 'international community' refers to all international organisations that cooperate permanently with national and local organs to promote education reform. In 2003, these organisations comprised the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Office of the High Representative (OHR), United Nations Children's (originally International Children's Emergency) Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the World Bank. F. Pingel, 'Begegnungen mit dem Kulturkampf—Notizen von der internationalen Bildungsintervention in Bosnien und Herzegowina'. In *Beyond the Balkans. Towards an Inclusive History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. S. Rutar (Münster u. a.: Lit Verlag, 2012) 425–452.
10. F. Pingel, 'From Ownership to Intervention—or Vice-Versa?', 271.
11. A. Low-Beer, 'Politics, School Textbooks and Cultural Identity: The Struggle in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 23 (2001), 215–223, here 220–221.

12. F. Pingel, 'Education and Turnaround. Strategies of Assistance: Chances and Risks'. In *Education in Fragile Contexts: Government Practices and Challenges*, ed. H. Weiland, K. Priwitzer and J. Philipps (Freiburg: Arnold-Bergstraesser-Inst., 2011), 65–82, here 36.
13. F. Pingel, 'From Ownership to Intervention—or Vice-Versa?', 274.
14. Commission for the Development of Guidelines for Conceptualizing New History Textbooks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Guidelines for the Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Sarajevo, 2006).
15. F. Pingel, 'Begegnungen mit dem Kulturkampf', 364.
16. Platvoet et al., 'A study of history teaching in Bosnia and Herzegovina', Motion for a recommendation, Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe, Doc. 11338, 28 June 2007, accessed 22 May 2017, <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc07/EDOC11338.pdf>. The motion has not been discussed in the Assembly.
17. H. Karge and K. Batarilo, 'Norms and Practices of History Textbook Policy and Production in Bosnia and Herzegovina'. In *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. A. Dimou (Göttingen: V&R uni-press, 2009), 325.
18. Ibid., 328–329.
19. Cf.: H. Matković et al., *Povijest 8. Udžbenik za VIII razred osnovne škole*. [Textbook for the eighth year of schooling], (*treće izdanje*) (Mostar: Školska naklada, 2006), 7.
20. For a long time, Bosnia and Herzegovina had no regulations on textbook production and approval, or those that were in force were from the Yugoslav era. This led to issues such as overly tight deadlines for the submission of manuscripts, authors of one book often being reviewers for another in the approval process and problems in the selection of textbooks. From 2006 onwards, new laws and regulations for textbook production and approval were developed, which tried to regulate and improve the situation but which also had a degree of negative impact on textbook policy. By and large, processes of textbook production and approval differ clearly between the three education systems within Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the RS, the education system and textbook policy are organised centrally and only one new textbook is approved per subject and class level. In the cantons with a Croat majority, the list of (Croatian) textbooks available must pass an expert commission from the Pedagogical Institute and a commission from the cantonal ministry of education; here, textbooks remain in use for very long periods, partly because the market for Croatian textbooks is very small. The Federation, meanwhile, has recently seen the formation of a coordinating board of ministers of education and science, headed by the Federal Ministry of Education. At the end of 2011, the board passed new legislation on textbook production and approval which encompasses new regulations, one of them stipulating

that the approval process must be carried out by a team of reviewers consisting of five experts from the university and school education system. The board also decided to approve just one textbook per subject and year group, which might be regarded as a step back; with just one textbook available to them, teachers will no longer have the opportunity to choose the book most suited to their way of teaching. This restriction also makes the system more vulnerable to corruption.

21. E. Imamović, *Historija za V razred osnovne škole*. [Textbook for the fifth year of schooling] (Sarajevo: Svjetlost Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2003), 4–5.
22. H. Karge and K. Batarilo, 'Norms and Practices'.
23. H. Hadžiabdić and E. Dervišagić, *Historija, Udžbenik za VII razred osnovne škole* (Tuzla: Bosanska Knjiga, 2007), 103.
24. A. Isaković, *Historija-Povijest za VII razred osnovne škole* (Sarajevo: Bosanska Riječ, 2007), 134.
25. The curricula and textbooks of the cantons with a Bosniak majority within the Federation of BaH included the 1992–1995 war in their year nine history textbook from the school year 2012/2013 onward. See: M. Čehajić & I. Šabotić, *Historija—Udžbenik za deveti razred devetogodišnje osnovne škole* [Textbook for the ninth year of 9-year primary school] (Tuzla, 2012).
26. F. Pingel, 'From Ownership to Intervention—or Vice-Versa?', 262.
27. H. Hadžiabdić, et al., *Historija. Istorija. Povijest 8, Udžbenik za VIII razred osnovne škole* [History 8. Textbook for the eighth year of schooling] (Tuzla: Bosanska Knjiga, 2007).
28. H. Karge and K. Batarilo, 'Norms and Practices', 337.
29. H. Hadžiabdić, et al., *Historija*.
30. Georg Eckert Institute Press Release, 'Comment on Recent Public Discussion with Regard to History Textbooks in Tuzla Canton, BaH', 2011, accessed 22 May 2016, <http://www.gei.de/index.php?id=598#c1960>.
31. See A. de Baets, 'Post-conflict History Education Moratoria: A Balance', *World Studies in Education* 16 (2015) 1, 5–30, here 18.
32. See Art. 24 para 14 of the Draft Law on Primary Education and Art. 36 para 5 of the Draft Law on Secondary Education.
33. C. Magill, *Education and Fragility in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Paris: IIEP Research paper, 2010), 39, accessed 22 May 2017, [http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Info\\_Services\\_Publications/pdf/2010/Bosnia-Herzegovina.pdf](http://www.iiep.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Info_Services_Publications/pdf/2010/Bosnia-Herzegovina.pdf).

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# 8

## Bulgaria

Krassimira Daskalova

### Introduction

*Seldom does history seem so urgently relevant or important as in moments of sudden political transition from one state form to another.*

Richard J. Evans<sup>1</sup>

Since modern Bulgaria was established as a nation state in 1878, there have been several major controversies around the writing of its modern history. The issues include Stefan Stambolov's dictatorship<sup>2</sup>; the rule of the Bulgarian Agrarian National Union under Alexander Stamboliiski<sup>3</sup>; the problem of fascism (and the anti-fascist resistance); the so-called Macedonian question; and the character of the political regime from 1944 to 1989.<sup>4</sup> These debates spanned various phases within two distinct periods, that of state socialism after the Second World War and the period of post-communist transition following 1989. They were accompanied by the almost Sisyphean task of rewriting Bulgarian history, both the academic narrative and the narrative presented in school textbooks. The course of the process of revision was dependent on the political situation of the day and the strength, power, and social position of the major participants in the discussions. Since 1989, a re-evaluation of the 'Old Regime' (state socialism) and the pre-communist era has been underway.<sup>5</sup> Professional historiography dealing with recent history is inevitably part of, and helps shape, the nation's politics of memory, even where it claims to be objective, value-free, and based on pure fact. History textbooks have remained products of this monolithic and state-controlled politics of memory. Educational authorities have begun to stress that apart from serving national interests, the role of history education should be to

equip 'tomorrow's citizens' and schools have started to be seen not only as important sites for the construction of national memory but also as places for the formulation and articulation of national heritage and the personal and collective identities of future generations of European citizens.<sup>6</sup> Because history has always served the purpose of constructing Bulgarian identity, attempts to change this model and embrace one which calls for Bulgarians to affirm 'our' Europeanness have led to accusations of an unpatriotic attitude and have been seen as an encroachment on or indeed a violation of 'our Bulgarianness'.<sup>7</sup>

## Context and Historical Background

Prior to 1989, there were ideological and structural differences in education among the countries of the CESEE<sup>8</sup> region; in Bulgaria there was only one standardised history textbook for each stage of schooling. Since the fall of communism, school textbooks have been rewritten in many of the former socialist countries to free them of the ideological distortions of the communist epoch and to adjust the historical narrative to current political events. In the post-communist period, in tune with the democratisation of society and societal pluralism, the textbook market was liberalised, and history teachers were permitted to freely choose between several textbooks, written by teams of teachers and academic historians and officially approved by the Ministry of Science and Education. The process of reformulating the history narrative went hand-in-hand with discussions concerning the re-evaluation of the education system, of school curricula, and of the content of textbooks.<sup>9</sup> Several collective undertakings by specialists from various European countries should be mentioned in this context, most of them dealing with history textbooks. The first is the initiative launched by the Council of Europe and entitled *Chernomorska initsiativa* (Black Sea Initiative), involving the following countries from the Black Sea region: Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey, and Ukraine.<sup>10</sup> One of this project's principal objectives was to move emphasis from presenting the 'traditional' conflicts among these neighbouring states to highlighting the cultural, economic, social, and intellectual connections between them and their societies throughout their shared history. In the second half of the 1990s, another major undertaking was the 'Southeast European Joint History Project' (JHP), an initiative of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, based in Thessaloniki, Greece.<sup>11</sup> The main conclusion of the research and workshops organised by the JHP appears to be that, without exception, all educational systems in Southeastern Europe are ethnocentric; more precisely, they favour

the dominant national group in the nation in question. The participants in the project point out striking similarities between the textbooks of their respective nations, especially in the way their neighbours, the 'Other', are presented. They were in agreement that a key purpose of the project, and the six workshops that were part of it, was to be combating stereotypes, prejudices and old clichés in history textbooks from the region, with some participants viewing the project's remit in terms of democracy and human rights. Another project, sponsored by the Koerber Stiftung, was dedicated to rewriting Eastern European history by developing new historical fields and topics. Yet another, sponsored by the British Council, resulted in the establishment of national helpdesks for intercultural learning materials in several European countries.<sup>12</sup>

## The Debates

In Bulgaria, there are two distinct periods demonstrating major shifts in terms of history teaching and education: the first took place between 1989 and 1996 and the second commenced in 1997 and continues to this day. While the first of these periods was more dynamic and witnessed a large number of changes in the educational realm, the second has introduced a more balanced and reflective attitude towards the past among the public. In this chapter, I attempt to present some of the major controversies that took place after 1989 over the 'rewriting' of history textbooks and the reform of history education in general. These controversies include debates over the legacy of state socialism/communism and whether it should feature in teaching and textbooks in schools; a debate over what kind of history should be taught in schools (political and/or social and cultural); the periodisation of Bulgarian history and discussion of what amount of time should be devoted to the study of different periods within the national curricula (the Middle Ages, the Ottoman past and the so-called National Revival, the 'bourgeois' period, and the communist era); and, in the context of the changes associated with Bulgarian accession to the European Union, what do students need to know about our common European past and what should Europe know about Bulgaria?

The controversies over the past were discussed in both academic and popular media, in publications ranging from *Istoricheski pregled* (Historical Review), the country's oldest history journal, which has been appearing since 1944, and several new journals run since the early 1990s by professional historians, such as *Istoria* (History), *Minalo* (Past), and *Istorichesko budeshite* (Historical Future) as well as in various daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, on

TV shows, and in everyday public discourse. In the early 1990s, specialists in the methodology of history teaching from the oldest and most prestigious Bulgarian university, St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia, which trains history teachers, began to call for changes in history education. They emphasised the urgent need to change curricula and history textbooks, a process which would rely on the intellectual potential of both teachers and academics and on the structure and resources of the state education system. Evaluating the legacy of state socialism, post-1989 publications argued that while the communist regime worked hard to achieve its ideological political goals through formal education, this education was not entirely devoid of models for a more pluralistic mode of thinking.<sup>13</sup> After 1989, the emerging tendency of freely discussing different points of view, of defending one's arguments, began gradually to dominate the educational landscape in the country.

In 1992, in response to the new needs of education during the post-communist transition and in tune with the ideological shift taking place at the time, Bulgaria's Ministry of Education forbade the use of the existing history textbooks because, as one historian put it, they were packed with ideology and politics but they 'did not contain history'.<sup>14</sup> The two-volume 'Notes' which replaced the history textbooks for a brief period invited students to take a fresh look at the Medieval and Ottoman periods in volume 1 and at the history of modern Bulgaria (1878–1944) in volume 2. What distinguished the 'Notes' from the version of history present in the previous history textbooks was, according to one opinion, their 'academism'; that is to say that they were freed from the ideological distortions of the 'old regime'.<sup>15</sup> Because of the strong anti-communist sentiments of the time, however, these 'Notes' did not include any information about 'recent history', that is, state socialism.

While acknowledging the ideological character of history before 1989, visible in the communist attitude towards the 'bourgeoisie' and towards political parties and elites before 1944, to name but a few issues,<sup>16</sup> some left-leaning academic historians sympathetic to state socialism began to point to what they viewed as the new ideological 'falsifications' characteristic of the period of post-communist transition and the creation of what they considered new historical myths.<sup>17</sup> The 'presentism' of the contemporary idea of historicity<sup>18</sup> became increasingly clear within the academic and public arenas; indeed, the country's entire symbolic space was subject to scrutiny and many streets, squares and towns were renamed to bring them in tune with the new measures and values of the history being shaped by the transitional processes.

Several international meetings and initiatives helped the process of educational democratisation to gather pace. Among the most visible was the second

symposium on education organised in Sofia in 1994 by the Council of Europe, which emphasised the role of history, as a subject in schools and as an academic field, in combating various forms of intolerance. This forum, attended by university professors, experts and history teachers, was another indicator of the social function of history and restated the need to seize the potential of historical knowledge to sensitise future generations to the values of democracy and respect for others.<sup>19</sup>

In the first half of the 1990s, two educational innovations were interpreted in various quarters as being violations of Bulgarian national identity and dictated by foreign interests.<sup>20</sup> The first related to an increase in the time and space devoted to the Ottoman past in school curricula and a more balanced way of teaching this topic. This development, which underlined, for example, the mutual tolerance between Muslims and Christians in everyday life based on their experiences of living together within the Ottoman Empire, was viewed in some circles as an encroachment upon national memory and an attempt to distort Bulgarian national identity. Heated debates on the attempt to replace historical notions such as 'Turkish yoke' with 'Ottoman domination' or even 'Ottoman presence', and to free history education of stereotypical ways of depicting Bulgarians' perennial 'Other', Ottoman Turks and the Ottoman Empire in general, featured in print and electronic media for many months. There was also a discussion around the teaching of the period of state socialism (1944–1989). During the 1990s, historians dealing with the recent past continuously debated the issue of whether it was necessary to teach the history of Bulgaria under state socialism.<sup>21</sup> The impassioned debates on this subject that were conducted in the media covered a spectrum ranging from full denial of the negative aspects of the state socialist regime to apologia and were supported by data, referred to as 'pure facts', detailing the developments in the economy and in education, social benefits, and so forth under state socialism. As one historian put it, these debates could be defined as 'social *pandemia*' which reignite with the marking of every important date in Bulgarian history and engage representatives of all political authorities, media, and ultimately the whole society.<sup>22</sup> The political character of these 'history wars' is undeniable, as is the desire of those involved to instrumentalise the past for political ends. As pointed out by one historian, the impassioned and inflamed nature of this debate within Bulgarian society is to a considerable extent due to the deep chaos in which the country finds itself and a perceived lack of prospects. In such conditions, the past becomes a value in itself: people look to it as inspiration to survive present-day hardships. Some saw this as the central motive of the protests by some older history teachers in the 1990s against the changes in history teaching. These teachers appear to have taken it

as a civic duty to defend the interpretations they themselves had learned and to resist what they viewed as 'deliberate falsifications'. Teachers of the younger generation, however, not only accepted changes, but also endorsed democratic values in their teaching. When trying to understand the response of the majority of Bulgarian teachers to the changes in history teaching in the mid-1990s, one should keep in mind that these changes came on top of hardships experienced in economic and professional spheres as well as in everyday life. In conditions where the population felt impoverished, the rise of extreme nationalism and xenophobia should not come as a surprise.<sup>23</sup>

In the early 1990s, a group of historians highlighted the necessity of overcoming the old paradigm of teaching only political history and called for the inclusion of various aspects of life in the past, including cultural history, the history of everyday life, and religious history.<sup>24</sup> The newest fields in Bulgarian historiography, such as women's history and gender history, historical anthropology, oral history, and history of the book and reading made claims for incorporation into history textbooks and teaching.<sup>25</sup> The outcome of the ensuing attempts to include women's history and gender history in particular in school education and textbooks provides another indication of how Bulgarian mainstream history is currently functioning. Due to the lack of politically powerful historians working in the field of women's/gender history or examining 'male domination' (Pierre Bourdieu), it still tends to neglect the past experience and representations of half of the human population.<sup>26</sup> Some historians appealed for a balanced and comparative way of representing relations between nations, insisting that cultural cooperation was as prevalent as confrontation in both the medieval and modern histories of Bulgaria and its Balkan neighbours.<sup>27</sup> In this context one should mention the work of the Balkan commission of historians, which included Bulgarian participants, with the objective of creating a balanced presentation of the region's most heated confrontations in history textbooks and of reviving a spirit of mutual respect between cultures and appreciation of the Balkan 'other'.<sup>28</sup>

A further major concern addressed by conferences on history teaching and arising in scholarly discussions in the 1990s was the issue of the training of history teachers and their ability to educate their students in respect for others and democratic values. In order to prepare teachers for the new pluralistic context after 1989, and to be able to complete the intended reforms within the field of history education, the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science commissioned a new journal, the previously mentioned *Istoria* (History).<sup>29</sup> This periodical published various articles that highlighted the position of teachers on the 'battlefields' of the 'history wars' in post-communist Bulgaria. Such publications considered the major problem to be not with his-



tory itself but with the way it is represented and popularised in popular culture and the media.

## Documentation: The Debate (A History War)

Much has been written on these issues by historians and by political and social stakeholders, but no particular text stands out prominently in the Bulgarian debate. As elsewhere, national 'sites of memory' have been created in Bulgaria, either real places at the locations of important events from national history or symbolic sites where a nation stores its memory, so to speak. The construction of collective memories about certain 'lieux de mémoire'/'sites of memory' (Pierre Nora) is promoted by contemporary mass media and the institutions of the nation state. I outline below the major controversies and highly emotional debates over one site of Bulgarian national memory: the small town of Batak—the 'altar of the nation' and a place of central symbolic importance in official Bulgarian collective memory due to its suffering during the April 1876 uprising against Ottoman rule, when almost half its inhabitants were massacred by Ottoman irregular troops.<sup>30</sup>

In 2007, Martina Baleva, a Bulgarian citizen and a PhD student at the Free University of Berlin, and her supervisor, Prof. Ulf Brunnbauer, developed a project whose central events were to be an exhibition and a conference on the 'myth of Batak' with the aim of showing how the Batak massacre has been reconstructed in art and other representations.<sup>31</sup> Batak is a site of Bulgarian national memory; hence any attempt to question its status is considered by nationalists as a violation against the whole nation.<sup>32</sup> Among the most important participants in this controversy were Bulgaria's president at the time, Georgi Parvanov; his Vice-President Angel Marin; Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev; the Director of the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Georgi Markov; and the Director of the National History Museum Bozhidar Dimitrov, who had a high media profile as an authority on all issues in Bulgarian history. It should be noted that, although the president and the prime minister, both of them historians, emphasised that the 'Batak case' should not be used to create tensions between present-day Bulgarians and the country's Turkish and Muslim minority, their actions played into the hands of the extreme nationalists. In 2007, Parvanov travelled to Batak in order to give, on 17 April—the anniversary of the April 1876 uprising in the village—'an open history lesson' in the local school to show how history should be taught and understood. Neither the media nor the main political players at the time listened to the explanations of Ulf Brunnbauer, Martina Baleva, or a

great number of Bulgarian historians, who attempted to detail the scholarly objectives of the project. Indeed, the project's aims were essentially irrelevant to the discussion; what mattered to the self-declared Bulgarian 'patriots' and the radical nationalists among the politicians, especially those belonging to the parties Ataka or VMRO, was the opportunity to exploit the past in the present situation. They sought, in the context of the huge political influence of the *Dvizhenie za prava i svobodi* (DPS) (the party of the Turkish minority), to inspire fear of the growth of Turkish influence and power in the country by issuing predictions of an impending new 'Turkish yoke'.

One interesting piece of research, conducted in 2004 by a team of historians affiliated to the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, among them professional Bulgarian and foreign scholars working on Bulgarian history, emphasised the political aspects of contemporary historiography in the country. Although historians interviewed for this research agreed that the quality of both academic historiography and history textbooks had improved in the preceding years, they still expressed the view that the work of historians is very much influenced by the political struggles of the day.<sup>33</sup> In the new situation after 2007, with the accession to the European Union of some eastern European states—among them Bulgaria—new questions related to history teaching and history textbooks emerged: How do (Western) European textbooks present the history of our common (European) past? Do we—people belonging to the old East and West of Europe—know enough about one another? What are the differences between, and the features shared by, the recent pasts of the former socialist states, which are now part of the European Union? How might history textbooks contribute to Europe's future, helping to build a more tolerant and harmonious multicultural Europe? Within this context, the question of how to write and teach the history of the recent, that is, state socialist past has resurfaced. Several innovative monographs and collective works have been published in recent years, most of them issued by the *Institut za blizkoto minalo* (Institute for the Recent Past), an academic non-governmental organisation established in 2005 by professors belonging to the St. Kliment Ohridski University in Sofia, the oldest institution for the production of historical knowledge in Bulgaria. While comparing the publications of the Institute for the Recent Past and of the old Institute of History of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, one academic historian rightly points out that the difference between the publications issued by these two institutions is that the former pays particular attention to social history, which had hitherto been heavily neglected, and introduces new approaches such as oral history. It also tries to 'connect theory and empiricism, and the history of concepts with positivist history'.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the 'publications of the latter institution', produced by historians

using more 'traditional' approaches, demonstrate greater suspicion towards the implementation of theoretical models and interpretations.<sup>35</sup> These two examples demonstrate once again that the 'war for the recent past' initiated within political debate after the political change in 1989 and immediately taken up, albeit in a more muted form, by historical research encompasses not only the implementation of different methods of research but additionally the values of historians and the 'presentism' of contemporary history. Further, no less important, questions of history writing revolve around the extent to which teachers' school education and professional training reflect innovations in academic history, the way in which 'history wars' are taught to students, and the degree to which this may influence the identity politics of future generations of citizens.

## Conclusion

The whole period of the Bulgarian transition post-1989 was brimming with attempts to rewrite both individual and collective histories. As one historian has argued, there is perhaps no single period of national history on which there is a consensus among historians and within the public sphere: from the date of the foundation of the medieval Bulgarian state and Ottoman rule to the character of the period of national revival during the nineteenth century, the April 1876 uprising, 'Bulgarian Liberation' in 1878, the period of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom (1878–1944) and the era until 1989.<sup>36</sup>

The official discourse developed in academic historiography, and especially in history textbooks, can be seen as a hidden programme for civic and multicultural education. Rewriting Bulgarian history textbooks means transferring the symbolic 'civil war' over the interpretations of the (multicultural) past from academia and the media into school curricula. During the transition, people working on history textbooks began considering how to turn them into tools for democracy and for the civic education of future generations of Europeans through the inclusion of the perspectives of various groups and minorities; they regard a national self-image as a construction of various fluid and non-fixed identities. Debates on history during the last 20 years have emphasised the need for schoolchildren to come to understand that there is no 'History with a capital H', but there are many conflicting histories; history education in general and history textbooks in particular should therefore present a range of images of the past following the developments of contemporary historical scholarship.<sup>37</sup> Yet there is still a long way to go: not only in terms of resolving internal symbolic struggles about the past, but, in the context of the

now enlarged European Union, in terms of presenting a balanced picture of the European past and highlighting the contribution of each and every one of the European nations to the diversity and cultural complexity of contemporary Europe.

## Notes

1. R. J. Evans, 'Introduction. Redesigning the Past: History in Political Transitions', *Journal of Contemporary History* 38 (2010) 1, 5–12.
2. Bulgarian prime minister from 1887 until his assassination in 1894, a symbol of independent national policies, known as 'the Bulgarian Bismarck'.
3. The Bulgarian Agrarian National Union ruled the country between 1919 and 1923.
4. On all these issues and further matters, see R. Daskalov, *Debates over the Past: The Modern Bulgarian History from Stambolov to Zhivkov* (Budapest and New York: CEU Press, 2011).
5. On these matters, see M. Todorova, 'Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Bulgaria', *American Historical Review* 94 (1992) 4, 1105–1117; D. Koleva and I. Elenkov, 'Did "the Change" Happen? Post-socialist Historiography in Bulgaria'. In *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. U. Brunnbauer (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 94–127; A. Zaprianova, B. Zlatanov and I. Marcheva, 'Istoriographiata mezhdu priemstvenost i promiana [Historiography between Continuity and Change]', *Istoricheski Pregled* 1–2 (2005), 3–97; R. Daskalov, *Debates over the Past*, especially 318–367.
6. G. Boyadjiev, 'Sporni vuprosi na grazhdanskoto obrazovanie pri obuchenieto po istoria [Issues of Civic Education in History Teaching]', *Istoria* 1–2 (2003), 110–116, 117–119.
7. See on this T. Georgieva, 'Identichnost I identichnosti v obrazovaniето po istoria [Identity and Identities in History Education]', *Istoria* 6 (1993), 10–16.
8. Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe.
9. D. Deyanov, ed., *Prenapisvaniata na novata bulgarska istoria v uchebnitsite za gimnaziite* [Rewriting the New Bulgarian History in Secondary School Textbooks] (Sofia: MNP, 1995).
10. M. Radeva, 'Novoto pokolenie' uchebnitsi po istoria prez 90-te godini i tsennostite na Evropeiskia Suyz [The New Generation of History Textbooks in the 1990s and European Values]', *Istoricheski pregled* 3–4 (2003), 198–213.
11. Several conferences were held as part of this project and their proceedings were published. In Japan, well-known Japanese specialists in Balkan history have also published works on the history textbooks of Southeastern European

- countries. See C. Koulouri, ed., *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe* (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy & Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001); C. Koulouri, ed., *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education* (Thessaloniki: Center for Democracy & Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2002); N. Shiba, ed., *In Search of a Common Regional History: The Balkans and East Asia in History Textbooks* (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo, 2005).
12. On the idea of helpdesks, see L. Sercu, *National Helpdesks for Intercultural Learning Materials. A Guideline* (Utrecht: Parel, 1999).
  13. M. Radeva, 'Metodologicheskoto nasledstvo v obuchenieto po istoria: breme ili opora za normalizatsiata na obuchenieto [Methodological Heritage in History Education: A Burden or a Support in the 'Normalisation' of Education]', *Istoria* 1 (1992), 21–34; M. Radeva, 'Prehodi I preustroistvo v istoricheskoto obrazovanie. Transformatsiata prez 90-te godini [Transitions and Reforms in History Education. Transformations in the 1990s]', *Minalo* 2–3 (1998), 36–43.
  14. S. Budinov, 'Svituk "Zapiski po istoria na Bulgaria": edna vpechatliavashta kniga ['Notes on Bulgarian History': An Impressive Book]', *Istoria* 3–4 (1992), 116–123. On stereotypes in Bulgarian history textbooks, see M. Isov, 'Obrazut na Osmanskata imperia/Turtsia v uchebnitsite po istoria prez 80-te godini na XX v [The Image of the Ottoman Empire/Turkey in History Textbooks from the 1980s]', *Minalo* 1 (2005), 68–73.
  15. S. Budinov, 'Svituk "Zapiski po istoria na Bulgaria"', 118.
  16. I. Baeva, 'Za istoriata v segashno vreme [For History in the Present Tense]', *Istoria* 2 (1993), 17–21.
  17. As shown by Baeva in 'Za istoriata v segashno vreme'. Among the new 'myths' listed by the author is 'the myth of the tens of thousands of martyrs in the cause of democracy in Bulgaria' after 1944. Ibid., 19.
  18. 'Presentism' means the domination of the agenda of the present over the interpretations of the past; see on this F. Hartog, *Regimes d'historicite: presentisme et experiences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003).
  19. M. Radeva, 'Vtori symposium po vuprosite na obrazovaniето [Second Symposium on Education]', *Istoria* 1 (1992), 9–19.
  20. T. Georgieva, 'Istoria, demokraticni tsennosti I tolerantnost [History, Democratic Values and Tolerance]', *Istoria* 1 (1995), 1–8.
  21. E. Kalinova, 'Bulgarskata istoria sled vtorata svetovna vojna: za i protiv prepodavaneto i [Bulgarian History after the Second World War: 'Pro' and 'Contra' its Teaching]', *Istoria* 6 (1993), 6–41.
  22. T. Georgieva, 'Istoria, demokraticni tsennosti I tolerantnost', 3.
  23. We might observe at this point that teachers' monthly salaries in the mid-1990s were equivalent to approximately 75–80 DM (Deutschmark), while a kilogram of meat cost 3–4 DM. Other issues were due to the fact that most of the teachers did not receive their copies of the new textbooks until the middle of the first term in which they were prescribed. Among the issues

- faced by educational reforms in the country at this time, were financial hardship among Bulgarian teachers and the impossibility of buying new books containing revised interpretations of the past from which Marxist-influenced distortions had been excised. See *ibid.*, 3–4.
24. They also mentioned the biased way in which the authors of textbooks used in Bulgaria generally presented the foreign policies of Bulgaria and its neighbours, with highly suggestive language referring to Bulgarian actions as the ‘incorporation’ and/or ‘liberation’ of territories and those of neighbouring states as ‘aggression’. G. Bakalov, ‘Opit za preosmisliane na niakoi aspekti ot bulgarskata srednovekovna istoria [An attempt to rethink some aspects of Bulgarian medieval history]’, *Istoria* 1 (1993), 14–18.
  25. On new directions in Bulgarian post-communist historiography, see D. Koleva and I. Elenkov, ‘Did “the Change” Happen?’, 94–127; R. Daskalov, *Debates over the Past*, especially 318–367.
  26. K. Daskalova, ‘Der Einschluss und Ausschluss von Frauen in Bulgarischen Geschichtsbüchern der 1990er Jahre’, *L’Homme. Europäische Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 15 (2004) 2, 331–344; P. Bourdieu, *La domination masculine* (Paris: Seuil, 1998).
  27. *Ibid.*, p. 17. On this, see also T. Georgieva, ‘Istoria, demokraticzni tsennosti I tolerantnost’, 6.
  28. C. Koulouri, ed., *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, 4 vols (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2001); C. Koulouri, ed., *Clio in the Balkans. The Politics of History Education* (Thessaloniki: CDRSEE, 2002).
  29. The journal, edited by a team of academic historians from Sofia University, made its debut in 1992. See the editorial by J. Shopov, ‘Uchitelite pred istoriata [Teachers before History]’, *Istoria*, 1 (1992) 1, 1. Academic historians also organised several discussion forums on the new requirements for the training of history teachers. See ‘Krugla masa po vuprosite na obrazovanieto po istoria [Round Table on History Education]’, *Istoria* 4 (1995) 2, 1–13, and (1995) 3, 1–13. A similar aim—improving history education in tune with the dynamic changes in the field of history and the debates within it—was formulated by *Sdruzhenieto na prepodavatelite po istoria* [The Union of History Teachers], established in 1999; see ‘Ustav na sdruzhenieto na prepodavatelite po istoria [The Statutes of the Union of History Teachers]’, *Istoria*, (1999) 1, 1–7.
  30. P. Nora, ‘Le retour de l’événement’. In *Faire de l’histoire, I. Nouveaux problèmes*, ed. P. Nora and J. Le Goff (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 287–291. The most vocal participants in the nationalist discourse were daily newspapers such as *24 chassa*, *Trud*, and *Politika*, which published interviews with and statements and views formulated by the main participants in the debates.
  31. There was obvious misunderstanding (or speculation) around the use of the term ‘myth’. While common parlance, and all Bulgarian mass media, associated the term with an event with a legendary character, Ulf Brunnbauer

stated in interviews and elsewhere that the project's use of the term referred to a specific type of historical representation which links the past with the present and the future. See, for example: U. Brunnbauer and T. Proichev, 'V museia na Batak ne ni razbraha [People from the Museum in Batak did not Understand us]', *Politika* 158 (2007), 27 April–3 May, 4. See also U. Brunnbauer, 'Ethnische Landschaften: Batak als Ort des Erinnerns und Vergessens'. In *Batak kato miasto na pametna/Batak, ein Bulgarischer Erinnerungsort*, ed. M. Baleva and U. Brunnbauer (Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2009), 98–105.

32. Titles such as: T. Proichev, 'Bashibuzuk s germanski butush [*Bashibuzuk* with a German Boot]', *Politika* 158 (2007) 27 April–3 May, 3–4; B. Dimitrov, 'Pometohme politprostitutkite [We Swept up the Political Prostitutes]', *Politika* 158 (2007) 27 April–3 May, 5; G. Markov, 'Istoriata prechi na globalizma [History Hampers Globalisation]', *Politika* 158 (2007) 27 April–3 May, 5; and G. Purvanov, 'Proektut e ostra provokatsia [The Project is a Big Provocation]', *Politika* 158 (2007) 27 April–3 May, 3, clearly indicate the disposition of public discourse in the Bulgarian media and the principal players in this political scandal.
33. A. Zaprianova et al., 'Istoriographiata', 3–97.
34. B. Zlatanov, 'Kak da pishe istoria na blizkoto minalo ili edin aktualen istoriografski debat [How to Write the History of the Recent Past, or About a Historiographical Debate]', *Istoriчески pregled* 62 (2010) 1–2, 200–213.
35. Ibid.
36. For more on this, see V. Prodanov, 'Bitkite za minaloto i akademichnata nauka [The Battles for the Past and Academic Scholarship]', *Istoriчески pregled* 3–4 (2008), 109–132.
37. Especially helpful in this respect were the contributions to the conference organised by the Council of Europe in Sofia in 1994, Maria Radeva, 'Vtori symposium' and the previously mentioned series of round-table discussions organised in the 1990s.

## Further Reading

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# 9

## Burundi

Denise Bentrovato

### Introduction

Burundi is a small African country with a troubled recent history which has indelibly marked relations between its Tutsi minority and its Hutu majority. The country has experienced recurrent internecine conflict and mass violence against a backdrop of long-standing Tutsi military rule: it witnessed violent political crises in 1965, 1972, 1988, 1991 and 1993. The 1993 crisis in particular, sparked by the assassination of Burundi's first Hutu president since the country gained independence, marked the beginning of a long period of civil war and ethnic violence. In 2000, a political compromise brokered by external parties initiated Burundi's transition to peace. A briefing paper published in 2011 by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) underscored the fragile and delicate nature of the process. According to the authors, peace in Burundi had been signed in an atmosphere in which 'all camps considered each other as aggressors-oppressors'.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter illustrates that Burundi's tragic post-colonial era has been accompanied by a vigorous endeavour to control the past. Through the decades, those with political aspirations have regularly evoked and manipulated history to support their respective ideologies and their claims to power. In a context in which interpretations of the past have been at the centre of bitter ideological confrontations between opposing camps, parallel and antagonistic memories and histories have emerged along both ethnic and political lines. In particular, Hutu and Tutsi appear to have retained competing memories of victimisation and martyrdom that have inevitably contributed to the

crystallisation of two separate collective identities. In the wake of the civil war, conflicting memories have remained a source of division and tension in Burundi. The existence of partisan recollections and representations of the past is proving a major challenge in the country's struggle to establish a durable peace and an obstacle to achieving reconciliation and constructing a strong national consciousness. In defiance of commitments to confront the past and to the reconciliation of one-sided historical views, controversies have thus far remained largely unchallenged due to a continued lack of objective investigation and clarification of past events. Against the backdrop of unresolved 'wars' over history and memory, history teaching continues to be a divisive issue on which consensus is yet to be reached.<sup>2</sup>

## Context and Historical Background

Burundi's current historical controversies and debates have unfolded against the backdrop of long-standing political contention and disputes surrounding the interpretation of the country's history. Until the early 1990s, Tutsi-dominated regimes propagated a version of history intended to favour their hegemony through its support for a unitarist ideology that outlawed and criminalised references to people's ethnicity and promoted an 'illusion of ethnic harmony'.<sup>3</sup> The regime's ideological approach to history was intended to prove both the irrelevance of ethnicity in the Burundian setting and the danger it posed to society. Accordingly, the official discourse asserted that the ancient unity of Burundi had been severely undermined by the colonisers and their malicious policies of 'divide and rule'. According to the state narrative, ethnicity was a foreign invention that belonged in 'the dustbin of colonial historiography'.<sup>4</sup> The government's approach to the more recent post-colonial past further reveals its political interest in obscuring the existence of ethnic issues in Burundian contemporary society, an interest most blatantly manifested in official denials and enforced amnesia with regard to the various violent 'crises' that had engulfed the country after independence. With specific reference to the 1972 events, René Lemarchand, for instance, highlighted how the state had put in place 'a vast disinformation campaign', a 'conspiracy of silence' and a dangerous 'negationism' around what he described as a 'Hutu genocide'.<sup>5</sup> The reality of the army's repressive response in 1972 had been successfully suppressed until recently: the state propaganda of the time blamed the troubles on an externally abetted plot by 'criminals' and 'traitors to the nation', whose aim was not only to overthrow

the regime but also to exterminate the Tutsi, continuing a chain of genocidal actions that had started in 1965.<sup>6</sup>

In Burundi, this official history was imposed as the only legitimate account of the country's past. The radical Hutu opposition-in-exile formulated and disseminated a rival narrative articulated most effectively in *Persecution of the Hutu of Burundi*, a political manifesto written between the late 1970s and the early 1980s by Rémi Gahutu, the founder of the Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (Palipehutu). The pamphlet documents how Palipehutu principally invoked the past to prove what it believed to be the congenital perfidy of the Tutsi and to justify what was portrayed as a righteous struggle for the 'liberation' of the Hutu and for the 'defence of democracy'.<sup>7</sup> Largely reproducing Manichean theories from the colonial period, Palipehutu emphasised the primordialism of 'racial' differences and conflict in Burundi's society. Gahutu recounted how the 'autochthonous' Bantu Hutu had been conquered and cunningly reduced to a state of 'servitude', which subsequently endured for centuries, by the Hamitic Tutsi 'foreign invaders' and feudal 'oppressors'.<sup>8</sup> The pamphlet encouraged the Hutu to 'strengthen their own identity' in order to be able to 'retake their country'<sup>9</sup> and rejected the concept of national unity, denouncing it as a shrewd strategy for the concealment not only of the injustice deriving from Tutsi domination but also of systematic killings and persecution of the Hutu. The hidden killings mentioned by Gahutu referred in particular to the events of 1972, which featured strongly in Palipehutu's accounts of the more recent past. Several observers, notably Liisa Malkki,<sup>10</sup> report that this dissident 'mythico-history'<sup>11</sup> was effectively preserved in Palipehutu-controlled refugee camps in Tanzania. Here, what Marc Sommers calls 'refugee historians'<sup>12</sup> were found to have been remarkably successful in keeping alive a traumatic collective memory of long-standing Hutu victimhood, as well as the fear of a looming and long-planned extermination of the Hutu. The preface to Gahutu's 'historiographical pamphlet'<sup>13</sup> shows that Palipehutu understood the promotion and transmission of the 'historical truth' among the Hutu population as an important mission in the face of the historical 'falsification' promoted by the Tutsi holders of power. The author declared:

We urgently demand that the Hutus of Burundi who read this book teach their children the exact truth about their subjugation. The goal of this document is to remove the misunderstandings and falsifications of Burundian history that have been encouraged by certain corrupt members of the blood-soaked Tutsi regime.<sup>14</sup>

In Burundi, where the views of Tutsi-dominated regimes had long been hegemonic, curricula and textbooks developed under their rule reproduced and propagated the official unitarist discourse of the state. The study of Burundian history focused on exalting and celebrating what was depicted as the country's glorious pre-colonial past of unity and solidarity, the achievements of great kings and heroes, and the richness of its ancient culture and tradition. At the same time, it omitted all reference to ethnicity and to ethnic conflict and violence.<sup>15</sup> Little has changed to this day: a thorough reform of history education remains a challenge in the post-war era, in which bitter antagonism around historical events has continued to thrive. Currently, due to a persistent lack of historical clarification and consensus on the highly sensitive and controversial post-colonial past, the history taught in schools essentially ends with the departure of the colonisers in 1962. In a 2012 report, Aloys Batungwanayo and Benjamin Vanderlick explain that, '[h]aving failed for fifty years to harmonize [the country's] contemporary history, the Burundian government, in offering no teaching of this recent history, today still leaves the young generations to research for themselves their national history', a practice which frequently sees young Burundians educated in these matters via the oral transmission within families and communities of a 'simplified and subjective reading of the conflict'.<sup>16</sup> Thus, as lamented in 2008 by the prominent Burundian historian Emile Mworoha, a situation has prevailed whereby 'young people are terribly ignorant of the historical realities of this country'.<sup>17</sup>

## Current Debates: Documentation

In post-war Burundi, history has remained an issue of bitter contention between opposing factions which have each claimed a monopoly on the 'truth' while accusing their rivals of historical manipulation and falsification. Simon Turner observes that '[t]he right to tell this national history is a highly contested domain in Burundi. All parties to the conflict are eager to tell "the truth" about what actually has happened and is happening in their country'.<sup>18</sup> As a result of vigorous, politicised efforts at historical reconstruction, competing and conflicting accounts of the country's past appear today to openly coexist in the public realm. The Burundian historian Melchior Mukuri commented in 2004 that 'the Burundian "reality" is differently perceived and disseminated by Burundians'.<sup>19</sup> Stef Vandeginste explains the current coexistence of fundamentally different 'truths' by highlighting that, in Burundi, '[v]ery factual data are presented differently, using different terminology, providing

different interpretations, referring to different contextual explanatory factors, and this very often occurs along ethnic lines'.<sup>20</sup> Such interpretations, typically associated with either a Hutu or a Tutsi perspective, have tended to show a convenient selectiveness in their arguments and an expedient omission or manipulation of uncomfortable truths. Hinting at the adverse effects of such practices on the country's chances of earnestly facing its sensitive past, Lemarchand has referred to the 'extraordinary combination of misperceptions, selective sifting of evidence, and denial of historical facts' which takes place around history in the country, calling it 'a combination that to this day stands in the way of a dispassionate assessment of the Burundi situation'.<sup>21</sup> In such a politicised setting, historians and other scholars have inevitably been caught in the crossfire: fierce accusations of pro-Tutsi or pro-Hutu partisanship have discredited the reliability of analyses produced by both national and foreign intellectuals.<sup>22</sup>

Echoing the arguments prevalent in the respective official and dissident propaganda released prior to 1993, conflicting post-war views have, in the most extreme cases, been antithetical on issues related to identity and origins, and especially on the Burundian conflict. With regard to the former, opposing camps have either affirmed or negated the traditional relevance of ethnicity, which some have viewed as an ancient and relevant form of identity in Burundian society and others have denounced as a dangerous and irrelevant colonial fabrication that irrevocably destroyed the secular unity of the Burundian nation. The discursive contention on the origins of ethnicity coincides with a disagreement regarding the origins of ethnic conflict in Burundian society, which have been variously located either in the pre-colonial or in the colonial period. Lemarchand asserts that ethnic conflict in post-colonial Burundi has often been simplistically presented either 'as a carryover of historical antagonisms' or 'as the direct outcome of colonial rule'.<sup>23</sup> Besides persistent disagreement on issues related to ethnicity and the origins of the conflict, controversies have been most acute with regard to the more recent, and more sensitive, past. The issue of genocide, particularly in the cases of the two major crises of 1972 and 1993, has been especially contested. In a context in which, as Lemarchand observed, 'the term genocide ... has repeatedly been hurled by one [side] against another',<sup>24</sup> balanced and objective analyses have found themselves challenged by the propagation of simplistic, Manichean and uncompromising views that reduce the country's complex history to a tale of victimisation and martyrdom, legitimisation and justification, and scapegoating. In this sense, Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Jean-François Dupaquier speak of 'a dialogue of the deaf between two camps presenting themselves as absolute victims'.<sup>25</sup>

This lack of shared collective memory in Burundi has found expression in one-sided and exclusive memorialisation, with each group speaking only of the atrocities it has suffered and remembering and mourning its own dead separately, at distinct times and venues.<sup>26</sup> A report issued in December 2011 by the well-respected local non-governmental organisation (NGO) Centre of Alert and Conflict Prevention (CENAP) observes that '[c]ommemorations that take place in Burundi are generally selective and ethnically based. The most prominent examples of selective commemorations are the commemoration of the massacres of 1972, generally organised by Hutu, and that of the massacres of 1993, primarily celebrated [*sic*] by Tutsi'.<sup>27</sup> Although some in Burundi have acknowledged the occurrence of a 'double genocide', one committed in 1972 against the Hutu and one perpetrated in 1993 against the Tutsi, there is an observable tendency for opposing camps to claim the primacy of their own suffering, while perceiving and depicting the commemoration of the suffering of the 'other' as an attack on the dignity of their own victims and as a form of revisionism. Initiatives to introduce an official shared day of commemoration and open a national memorial site, eventually built by the government in 2010 in memory of all the victims of Burundi's post-colonial violence, long remained controversial. A participant in a workshop organised by CENAP in April 2011 echoed others' views in giving voice to the sense that 'before collective commemoration, one must first know what happened'.<sup>28</sup>

In the face of a sensitive and controversial past about which 'the truth has long been an object of divergences between Hutu and Tutsi',<sup>29</sup> opinion in Burundi seems equally divided on the issue of whether and how to publicly address that past. Reportedly, while some today fear that confronting it might hamper reconciliation by reopening old wounds, others consider such a process to be a necessary condition for long-lasting peace.<sup>30</sup> In recognition of the importance of earnestly facing history, there have been numerous expressions of support for an academic, objective historical investigation and reconstruction of the events, which would be able to challenge selective and antagonistic memories and promote 'a common reading of the history of Burundi'.<sup>31</sup> Against this backdrop, investigative initiatives were launched within the context of the country's peace-building process. Most notably, the 2000 Arusha peace agreement provided for the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with the aim of advancing historical reconciliation. Its mandate specifically included the ambitious mission of clarifying the country's entire history, 'going back as far as possible in order to inform Burundians about their past', and of 'rewriting Burundi's history so that all Burundians can interpret it in the same way'.<sup>32</sup> Following the president's announcement in



2011 and the subsequent passing of legislation in 2014, the long-awaited TRC was finally materialising in 2017, albeit amid concerns about the identity of the authors of the ‘truth’ the process is expected to generate.<sup>33</sup>

Besides the TRC, another relevant, but largely unnoticed initiative is the UNESCO-sponsored historiographical project ‘*Écriture de l’Histoire du Burundi*’ (Writing the History of Burundi).<sup>34</sup> This collaborative undertaking, the primary aim of which was the production of a reference work on Burundian history by a team of more than 60 academics, was the result of a call in 1997 to mobilise national and international scholars to rewrite the country’s history. Officially launched in 1999, the project was designed with an important educational dimension: while it did address the general public, the primary projected purpose of the anticipated publication was to serve Burundi’s history teachers, who were referred to as ‘the first users of the proposed book’. The project’s strong educational focus further became apparent in a provision for the development of two textbooks, for primary and secondary schools respectively, which would be based on the authors’ historiographical work. In a testament to its far-reaching societal ambitions, the initiative’s stated objectives explicitly linked the promotion of the knowledge of Burundi’s history and culture to the imperative goals of national identity-building, peace, and reconciliation. The project was presented as offering an important contribution to such processes in two main ways: firstly, the expressed intent of its historiographical undertaking was to complement and support the work of the TRC by encouraging a collective and objective exploration of the country’s past that could bridge the plurality of existing readings. Secondly, it was believed that, by producing much-needed educational tools, the project could inform and educate the population on the nation’s complex and often controversial and sensitive past.<sup>35</sup> In 2001, the project was officially recognised by the Burundian government and was placed under the aegis of the Ministry of Peace Mobilisation and National Reconciliation. Despite the government’s apparent support, the project has suffered from a chronic lack of funding. As a result, its completion has been considerably delayed. The situation does not seem to have significantly changed in the meantime.

## Conclusion

Before the outbreak of a new violent political crisis in 2015—an obvious setback for transitional justice—reflection on the past appeared to have gained momentum in a Burundi which in 2012 had celebrated the 50th anniversary

of its independence. While the democratic nature of the current Burundian government came increasingly into question even before 2015, the country's sensitive and controversial history had emerged from decades of imposed amnesia and silence and become a recurrent topic of discussion and debate. With the TRC expected to commence operations, the hope before the recent relapse into violence was for the Burundian people to finally have the chance to collectively face their nation's difficult past and to reach a mutual understanding and recognition of each other's experience of suffering. In conjunction with a resurrection of the long-dormant historiographical project '*Ecriture de l'Histoire du Burundi*', the TRC process also has a potentially important role to play in promoting education reform and, particularly, in facilitating the introduction of the study of the country's recent history into Burundian schools. In the long term, through its capacity to enable new generations to better understand their country's past and present, education, if it can remain free of political impositions, may prove crucial to long-lasting peace.

## Notes

1. International Center for Transitional Justice, 'Le Processus de Justice de Transition au Burundi: Défis et Perspectives [The Process of Transitional Justice in Burundi: Challenges and Prospects]', *ICTJ Briefing*, 18 April 2011, 5. Translated from French by the author.
2. For a more detailed exploration and analysis of the issues presented in this chapter, see D. Bentrovato, 'Narrating and Teaching the Nation: History, Identity and the Politics of Education in the Great Lakes Region of Africa' (PhD diss., Utrecht University, 2013). This chapter was first drafted in 2011 and was last updated in early 2015, before the highly contested national elections of July 2015, which saw Burundi's relapse into conflict as Pierre Nkurunziza, president since 2005, forcibly held on to power for a third term.
3. R. Lemarchand, *Burundi. Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice* (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1996), 32.
4. *Ibid.*, 9. See also J.-P. Chrétien and J. F. Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972: Au Bord des Génocides* [Burundi 1972: On the Edge of Genocides] (Paris: Karthala, 2007), 315.
5. R. Lemarchand, 'Le Génocide de 1972 au Burundi: Les Silences de l'Histoire [The 1972 Genocide in Burundi: Historical Silences]', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 167 XLII (2002) 3, 551–567. Translated from French by the author. See also, R. Lemarchand, 'La Mémoire en Rivale de l'Histoire [Memory as a Rival of History]', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 173–174 (2004),

- 431–434; and R. Lemarchand, 'Burundi: The Politics of Ethnic Amnesia'. In *Genocide Watch*, ed. H. Fein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 70–86.
6. J. P. Chrétien and J.-F. Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, 316–317.
  7. *Ibid.*, 110.
  8. R. Gahutu, *Persecution of the Hutu of Burundi* (undated), trans. from French by Hugh Hazelton and Peter Keating, 9.
  9. *Ibid.*, 49.
  10. L. H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). See also: S. Turner, 'Representing the Past in Exile: The Politics of National History among Burundian Refugees', *Refuge* 17 (1998) 6, 22–28; and S. Turner, *Politics of Innocence: Hutu Identity, Conflict, and Camp Life* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).
  11. L. H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, 54.
  12. M. Sommers, *Fear in Bongoland: Burundi Refugees in Urban Tanzania* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 42–43.
  13. Chrétien, 'Le Défi de l'Intégrisme Ethnique dans l'Historiographie Africaniste: Le Cas du Rwanda et du Burundi [The Challenge of Ethnic Fundamentalism in Africanist Historiography: The Case of Rwanda and Burundi]', *Politique Africaine* 46 (1992), 71–83; here 78. Translated from French by the author.
  14. R. Gahutu, *Persecution of the Hutu of Burundi*, 1.
  15. D. Bentrovato, 'Narrating and Teaching the Nation'; A. Obura, *Staying Power: Struggling to Reconstruct Education in Burundi since 1993* (Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning/UNESCO, 2008), 106; A. Barampama, 'Apprendre à Vivre Ensemble Grâce à l'Enseignement de l'Histoire et de la Géographie au Burundi: Idéal et Limites [Learning To Live Together Thanks to the Teaching of History and Geography in Burundi: The Ideal and its Limits]'. In *Rapport Final du Colloque sur le Thème Apprendre à Vivre Ensemble Grâce à l'Enseignement de l'Histoire et de la Géographie* [Final Report on a Colloquium on the Theme of Learning To Live Together Thanks to the Teaching of History and Geography], ed. Y. Andre and A. Mouzoune, Proceedings of a Colloquium Organized Jointly by the International Bureau of Education (UNESCO) and the University of Geneva, 12 June 1998, 41–49.
  16. A. Batungwanayo and B. Vanderlick, *Perspectives Series: Research Report. Les Lieux de Mémoire, Initiatives Commémoratives et Mémorielles du Conflit Burundais: Souvenirs Invisibles et Permanents* [Lieux de Mémoire, Commemorative Initiatives and Memorials to Burundi's Conflicts: Invisible and Permanent Memories] (Utrecht: Impunity Watch, 2012), 14. Translated from French by the author.
  17. E. Mworoha, 'Etat des Lieux et Défis Relatifs à la Réalisation du Projet Ecriture de l'Histoire du Burundi [Current Situation and Challenges Related

- to the Implementation of the Project *Writing the History of Burundi*’. In *Rapport, Atelier d’Information et d’Echange sur le Projet Ecriture de l’Histoire du Burundi* [Report, Workshop of Information and Exchange on the Project *Writing the History of Burundi*], Bujumbura, 16 December 2008, 9. Translated from French by the author. Insights into the scope and nature of historical knowledge among young educated Burundians can be found in D. Bentrovato, *Narrating and Teaching the Nation*.
18. S. Turner, ‘Representing the Past in Exile’, 23.
  19. Mukuri, ‘Recours à la Pratique du Deuil [Recourse to the Practice of Mourning]’, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines* 173–174 (2004), 427. Translated from French by the author.
  20. S. Vandeginste, ‘Transitional Justice for Burundi: A Long and Winding Road’. In *Building a Future on Peace and Justice: Studies on Transitional Justice, Conflict Resolution, and Development*, ed. K. Ambos (Heidelberg: Springer, 2008), 398.
  21. R. Lemarchand, *Burundi*, xxvii.
  22. In particular, accusations and counter-accusations have been part of a long-standing academic dispute between Chrétien (the primary exponent of a so-called ‘*Ecole Historique Burundo-Française*’) on the one hand and R. Lemarchand and F. Reyntjens on the other.
  23. R. Lemarchand, *Burundi*, 19–26.
  24. *Ibid.*, xxvi.
  25. J. P. Chrétien and J. F. Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, 135. Translated from French by the author.
  26. The long-suppressed memory of the 1972 Hutu massacres has mainly been honoured abroad each April, notably in Belgium. Conversely, the 1993 Tutsi massacres have predominantly been commemorated at the most well-known among the country’s very few memorial sites (at Kibimba) each October.
  27. Centre of Alert and Conflict Prevention (CENAP), *Rapport de Mise en Œuvre des Recommandations Issues de la Recherche sur la Thématique: Justice Transitionnelle* [Report on the Implementation of the Recommendations Issued from Research on the Topic of Transitional Justice], December 2011 (Bujumbura: CENAP), 8. Translated from French by the author. CENAP recently took steps to organise collective commemorations, bringing together various victims’ associations. These were first held in 2011.
  28. CENAP, *Justice Transitionnelle*, 17–18.
  29. CENAP, *Traiter du Passé et Construire l’Avenir. La Place de l’Histoire dans la Thérapie Collective* [Dealing with the Past and Building the Future. The Place of History in Collective Therapy], May 2010 (Bujumbura: CENAP), 23. Translated from French by the author.
  30. B. Ingelaere, *Living Together Again: The Expectation of Transitional Justice in Burundi: A View From Below*, IOB Working Paper/06 (Universiteit Antwerpen,

- Institute of Development Policy and Management, 2009), 6; CENAP, *Traiter du Passé et Construire l'Avenir*, 11.
31. Republic of Burundi, *Rapport de la Commission Technique Chargée de la Préparation du Débat National sur les Problèmes Fondamentaux du Pays* [Report of the Technical Commission Charged with the Preparation of the National Debate on the Fundamental Problems of the Country], December 1995 (Bujumbura), 43; and *Synthèse des Travaux de la Table Ronde Tenue à Burasira du 19 au 21 Août 1997* [Synthesis of the Works of the Round Table held in Burasira from 19 to 21 August 1997].
  32. Republic of Burundi, *Accord d'Arusha pour la Paix et la Réconciliation* [Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement], 28 August (Arusha, 2000), art. 8, Protocol 1, chap. 2, p. 23. Translated from French by the author.
  33. The operational phase of the TRC was officially launched in March 2016, after the writing of this chapter, but was significantly hindered by the political crisis and violence that have once again engulfed the country since 2015.
  34. E. Mworoha, *Historique du Projet* [History of the Project] (Bujumbura, 2003).
  35. P. Ngarambe, *Note Etat d'Avancement* [Progress Note] (Bujumbura, 2004), 57.

## Further Reading

- Centre of Alert and Conflict Prevention. *Traiter du Passé et Construire l'Avenir. La Place de l'Histoire dans la Thérapie Collective* [Dealing with the Past and Building the Future. The Place of History in Collective Therapy]. May, Bujumbura: CENAP, 2010.
- Lemarchand, R. 'Burundi 1972: Genocide Denied, Revised, and Remembered'. In *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial and Memory*, edited by R. Lemarchand, 37–50. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Lemarchand, R. *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide*. New York: Woodrow Wilson Center and Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Manirakiza, D. 'Libertés Académiques et Responsabilité Sociale des Intellectuels Burundais: Le Piège de l'Ethnisme [Academic Liberties and Social Responsibility of Burundian Intellectuals. The Ethnism Trap]'. Paper presented at the International Colloquium on 'Libertés Académiques et Responsabilité Sociale des Universitaires et des Chercheurs en Afrique: Quels Nouveaux Défis? [Academic Liberties and Social Responsibility of Academics and Researchers in Africa: Which New Challenges?]', 9–11 March 2010. Oran, Algeria.

# 10

## Canada

Christian Laville

### Introduction

Since the Confederation Act of 1867, which created the country as it exists today, Canada has provided, and continues to provide, a fertile ground for conflicts and debates over history and history education. In this chapter, I recount the general Canadian context, and then illustrate the question by discussing, as a case study, a debate over a planned new history curriculum for high schools that raged some time ago in the Province of Quebec.

### General Canadian Context

At the birth of the nation, four former British colonies in North America were brought together to form Canada. These colonies were distinctly different from each other, in their pasts, their economies, their languages and their religions. Historians and schools were then called upon to establish a national narrative with a view to uniting the citizens, and future citizens, of this new country through a common historical consciousness—a shared Canadian identity. Even at the beginning, calls for such a mission were unequivocal: ‘Can’t we agree upon certain broad features common to the whole of this Dominion with which we can indoctrinate our pupils?’ asked the Minister of Education of the Province of Ontario in 1892.<sup>1</sup> The main vectors of Canadian identity were to emerge with two interconnected aims: the first was to distinguish Canada from its American neighbour through its history and culture

and the second was to emphasise the development of characteristics specific to Canada, especially characteristics of British heritage.

Over the last century and a half, Canada has seen the construction and deconstruction of a dozen projects to create a pan-national history curriculum or common textbook on Canadian history.<sup>2</sup> None of these projects has succeeded. In most cases, the jealous care taken by the provinces to defend their sovereignty in education has thwarted them. But another stumbling block has also been the reality of this country whose population has vast and varied backgrounds and interests, a population that is scattered over an area of 7000 kilometres from east to west. Across this vast swathe of territory, forging a sense of Canadian identity to echo the motto of Canada, *ad mare usque ad mare*, has faced many obstacles, including a north-south attraction to the United States. In the 1960s, scholarly historiography emphasised the difficulty of building a common Canadian identity and developed instead the concept of *limited identities*<sup>3</sup>: Canada would not be a country of a common culture extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, distinct from American culture, notably because of its British heritage, but rather a loose assembly of regions characterised by great diversity in ethnic, social and cultural make-up.

Since then, governments, both federal and provincial, appear to have abandoned the idea of pan-Canadian history education aimed at developing a common historical consciousness and a shared Canadian identity. A recent survey on the situation of national history curricula in the provinces shows clearly that none imposed on students a history course designed with this perspective in mind, and that most of their courses in Canadian history are otherwise centred on the history of their province or region.<sup>4</sup>

This has not gone unchallenged and is being fought on two fronts nationally. On the one hand, conservative historians lament that history, when lacking broad national perspective in the themes studied, contributes to the 'Sundering of Canada', as the situation is described in the title of an article by one historian.<sup>5</sup> Another wrote: 'We have a nation to save and a future to build. How much easier will it be to accomplish these goals if Canadians in every province and region can begin from the firm foundation of our History?'<sup>6</sup> As these words come from renowned historians, they have resonated widely, especially in the media. On the other hand, private institutions are actively working to achieve the same goal, notably the Historica-Dominion Institute and Canada's National History Society. In various ways, these institutions aim to revitalise the teaching of Canadian history, with the objective of unifying people all across the country. As a past director of the Historica-Dominion Institute wrote, 'History teachers want to focus not on what separates us as Canadians, but to figure out what can hold us together ... History is truly a tie that



binds'.<sup>7</sup> Heavily subsidised by the business world, they do not lack resources to continue their efforts.

Despite these efforts, it is more often at the provincial level that the fiercest battles over history and history education are waged as the possibility of creating a unifying Canadian history wanes and as provinces become more invested in protecting their jurisdiction over education. We illustrate this with a 'history war' that recently erupted in the Province of Quebec.

## The Quebec Curriculum: A Disputed Issue

Quebec is certainly the province that in the past has given the most importance to history and history education. For decades, history has been used to define a specific French-Canadian identity: that of a population of French origin, conquered by the English, surrounded by a hostile environment, and which expected to survive and evolve while keeping its sights firmly set on what some view as the ultimate goal, namely Quebec's independence from Canada. Nowadays, it is still the province that gives the most importance to history in school curricula. For example, in some provinces, there is no mandatory history course in high school, and in many others completion of a national history course is not required for graduation. However, Quebec students take a history course each year, and success in Quebec 'national' history is required for graduation. It is in this particular context that a storm of controversy broke out in 2006 about the teaching of history.

In the latter half of the 1990s, the Quebec Ministry of Education launched a vast operation to update school curricula, some of which had not been revised for a number of years. All subjects were to be revisited. The reform was intended to reaffirm the principle of a pedagogy centred on the student, that is, a pedagogy of learning, more than a pedagogy of teaching. This would enable students to develop the various competencies on which personal autonomy is built. There was nothing really new or original about this; it was essentially the same as contemporary revisions elsewhere in the West. Moreover, in Quebec, as elsewhere in Canada and in other countries, there was a renewed concern for developing citizenship education. Within the framework of the Quebec reform, the responsibility for developing this citizenship education was to be bestowed upon history.

The first new history programme for high schools<sup>8</sup> was launched in 2000, and it focused on Western civilisation. The programme was readily accepted by education authorities, teachers and the community at large, and was smoothly introduced into schools.

In 2006, the *History and Citizenship Education* programme for grades 9 and 10 was to be implemented. This programme was to replace the *History of Quebec and Canada*. On 27 April, before it was even completed, a journalist published a robust critique against it on the front page of *Le Devoir*, a moderate nationalist newspaper, under the title: 'A purged history course for high school'.<sup>9</sup> 'Purged'? Of what? A subtitle specified: 'Quebec envisions "a less political" teaching approach that is non-nationalistic and more pluralistic'. The journalist went on to state that the programme had been purged of a certain number of essential events and dates for this very purpose. We examine the precise nature of those events and dates later.

In the following weeks, the question of the new history programme invoked a response of 'sound and fury'. The media were in a state of frenzy over it, especially French-language newspapers, but also some English-language newspapers in Quebec and even some in the rest of Canada. Editorial writers, respected columnists, experienced journalists, historians, professors of history and readers of various backgrounds put it on trial, not without excess on occasion. For example, on one Internet site, an opponent invited people 'to take the protest to the streets',<sup>10</sup> a nationalist leader<sup>11</sup> declared the programme to be 'Stalinist' and a respected columnist explained in *Le Devoir*: 'Their perspective falls under the hateful movement of historical revisionism, such as it is practised in all the dictatorships, tyrannical or not'.<sup>12</sup> People suspected of supporting the programme were widely pilloried.

Finally, on 15 June, following two months of almost daily debates in the media, the Minister of Education gave in: a revised version of the programme would be published, integrating the factual additions requested by the programme's opponents.<sup>13</sup>

This case is not really exceptional. In fact, it seems rather typical of the wars waged by nationalists and conservatives that we observe almost everywhere when it comes to modernising the perspectives and contents of history and its teaching. So, let us look more closely at the specific characteristics of this case and the lessons that could be drawn.<sup>14</sup>

*A Question of Nationalism:* For the opponents of the programme, the problem was that it failed to mention certain historical facts and dates. Given the nature of the facts and dates in question, it is clear that the problem is a matter of nationalism. The information that the programme would have 'purged', according to its opponents, were all facts and dates of political history. None are facts of social, economic or cultural history, and none are related to these 'new objects' (*nouveaux objets*) in which historians have been interested since the 1970s. It is easy to realise that those political facts, essentially reminders of tensions and past conflicts, are those which traditionally have been used to

give legitimacy to the question known as *la question nationale*, that is, the place of Quebec in Canada, which for many evokes the idea of independence. Several consider those facts to be essential to sustaining the nationalist flame. Recently, a coalition of nationalists who were against the programme asked the following question to some teachers: 'Currently, the programme *History and Citizenship Education* marginalizes *la question nationale* in favour of a social approach to history and treats as secondary major events of the national and political history of Quebec. In your opinion, should the curriculum content be revised so that *la question nationale* and the political dimension become more present?'<sup>15</sup> How could it be clearer that the alleged treason simply lies in the omission of such facts, which in the view of some hard-line nationalists would endanger a solution to *la question nationale* through independence?

In fact, if we look at the list of the many adversaries of the programme, we see that a great number of them come from the ranks of the nationalist militancy, devoted to the independence of Quebec. But not all opposing voices came from those ranks, and this leads us to the role of the media.

*The Power of the Media:* This crisis concerning the history programme lived essentially through the media. It was a journalist that opened this Pandora's box, and many others then jumped on the content of the article, repeated it and amplified it. The power of the media in such cases should not be underestimated.

Reading the multiple attacks against the programme, one quickly realises that many had not actually read the programme they fought against. The same facts, the same sentences, the same objections were copied and repeated ad nauseam in the criticisms.

The media's involvement was thus of primary importance. It is true that the journalist who sparked the debate was from a self-declared independentist newspaper, *Le Devoir*, and that most of the attacks were published in its pages. But many non-independentist journalists and media outlets shared similar points of view, even if they could not be suspected of a pro-independence inclination. Certainly, the main opponents of the programme came from the traditional nationalist milieu, a somewhat older generation. But we must recognise that the crisis mobilised a notable quantity of young people, from history students to signatories of petitions against the programme, as well as an appreciable number of relatively young teachers.

*A Voluntary Blindness:* 'In the analysis which follows', a group of historians wrote, 'we explicitly put aside any discussion on the teaching dimension of this project of programmes'.<sup>16</sup> It seems curious to examine a school programme by putting aside the teaching dimension. Presumably, such a pre-

amble is simply a pretext to examine the programme for 'missing' historical facts and dates only, as described earlier.

The majority of the opponents to the programme ignored a fundamental fact: the programme, like all programmes in the reform, was organised around competencies to be acquired or developed, and was not a programme of factual content. This did not mean that teaching would go without facts, but, beyond general directions of content, details of the facts to be included were to be left to the teachers' discretion. Few of the opponents in search of a list of expunged facts and dates seemed to have been aware of this.

If it is true that the historical content of the programme was not detailed, the same is also the case of the programme for Western civilization, which was built using the same model and aimed at developing the same competencies as the disputed programme. It had been introduced into schools two years earlier without anybody worrying about any lack of historical facts and dates. It is clear then, that the problem lay not with facts and dates per se but with a specific content of 'national' history.

*Armchair Pedagogues:* An eternal problem of history education is that everyone feels qualified to expound on it. Someone who would not consider themselves qualified to speak out about chemistry or mathematics would not hesitate to speak as an expert in the case of history. The problem is that for most people 'good history' is what they studied when they were at school and many parents are guilty of such behaviour.

It should be realised that history education, during the last decades, has itself become a quasi-scientific field. It is no longer a simple by-product of academic history, as it was at its birth. It has its own goals and has developed a conceptual apparatus adapted to its goals and needs. Even many historians are unaware of this evolution, and they react no differently to lay people when history education is involved. Then, during the debate, a series of baseless assertions came from their ranks and were understood by the general public to support opponents of the programme. In the end, the result was that anyone felt qualified to express an opinion and indeed hundreds of people and organisations did so. Colleagues have counted 225 commentaries from different authors in Quebec newspapers alone. There was little independent research in what was, ultimately, a large copy and paste operation, since the views and arguments were essentially the same. However, the programme's image was, nonetheless, seriously tarnished.

*The Theory of the Plot:* But what best highlights this crisis is the continual evocation of a conspiracy. Even if the authors of the programme were known, and most of them were schoolteachers, opponents saw the spectre of a conspiracy from both the federal government and the provincial government. One form of conspiracy would involve the non-nationalist government of

Quebec. For example, a respected writer explained in *Le Devoir*: 'To think that censure is a prerogative of totalitarian governments is an illusion ... The history programme currently censured by the Ministry of Education is grafted with the universal history of the control of ideas considered to be harmful for the exercise of power'.<sup>17</sup>

But a majority mentioned a form of Canadian federalist conspiracy, which brings us back to our words of introduction. Which is why, for a writer of historical novels, the hidden agenda of the programme was 'to create a single textbook in Canadian history'.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, an influential columnist wrote in the liberal-leaning newspaper *La Presse*, 'We could believe that it is a gigantic enterprise of federalist propaganda',<sup>19</sup> a sentiment echoed by two classroom teachers: 'It is nothing less than a pure exercise of federalist propaganda which one wants to impose on secondary education in national history'.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes, in the context of conflict over history, as in international relations, it can be convenient to suggest that a foreign hand is leading a plot from the outside!

## Conclusion

What can be learnt from these lessons? Certainly that in conflicts about history the media play a leading role, that accuracy of information is not always the first priority and that things are not always done in good faith. But most importantly perhaps, that nationalism remains a force of great magnitude, in both Canada as a nation and specifically at a regional level in Quebec. In other countries, nationalism has been in competition with other forces that have brought about different types of debates and conflicts about history. In France, for example, history and history teaching have been the subject of debates about the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, slavery and colonisation: debates which have gone beyond the question of national identity and unity. Canadians and Quebecers have faced similar questions, but without substantial debates about them, since the issues of national unity and identity remain dominant, in both federal and provincial contexts.

One last lesson could be drawn: in this history war in Quebec, the opposition won. As indicated earlier, after two months of virulent debate, the non-nationalist Ministry of Education revised the programme in an attempt to calm the fervour and gave in to most of their opponents' demands,<sup>21</sup> illustrating the degree to which history remains a controversial issue, even today.

## Notes

1. Quoted in G. Laloux-Jain, *Les manuels d'histoire du Canada au Québec et en Ontario (de 1867 à 1914)* [History Textbooks in Quebec and Ontario] (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1974), 82.
2. A. Lanoix, *Historica & compagnie: L'enseignement de l'histoire au service de l'unité canadienne, 1867–2007* [Historica & Company: The Teaching of History in the Service of Canadian Unity] (Montréal: Lux Éditeur, 2007).
3. See notably J. M. S. Careless, 'Limited Identities in Canada', *Canadian Historical Review* 50 (1969) 1, 1–10.
4. C. Laville, 'L'histoire enseignée au Québec, l'histoire enseignée au Canada: 1995 et 2010 [History Taught in Quebec, History Taught in Canada]', *Canadian Issues/Thèmes canadiens* Winter (2010), 22–27.
5. M. Bliss, 'Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada', *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26 (1991–1992) 4, 5–57.
6. J. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1998), 149. In the 2007 edition of the book, Granatstein notes: 'since the first edition of this book appeared, it has been quoted in Parliament and in provincial legislatures, and reviewed more extensively than anything else I have written. It has generated, and still generates, hundreds of letters to me from teachers, parents, and grandparents'.
7. 'R. Griffiths on the Dominion Institute's website', accessed 28 October 2002, <https://www.historicacanada.ca/>.
8. *Histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté, premier cycle du secondaire*, Québec, Ministère de l'éducation du Québec, 2002.
9. Antoine Robitaille 'Cours d'histoire épuré au secondaire'. *Le Devoir* 27 April 2006. Translation. All translations from French to English are by the author.
10. 'Descendre dans la rue' from [www.vigile.net](http://www.vigile.net). According to Graeme Hamilton in 'Quebec propose making history less anti-English', *National Post*, 28 April 2006.
11. Gilles Rhéaume, *ibid.*
12. Denise Bombardier, 'Les belles histoires des pays d'en haut', *Le Devoir*, 29 April 2006 ('Leur démarche s'inscrit dans le mouvement haïssable de la réécriture historique telle qu'elle se pratique dans toutes les dictatures, tyranniques ou pas').
13. Ministère de l'Éducation, ed., *Histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté: Deuxième cycle* [History and Citizenship Education: Second Cycle] (Québec, 2006), accessed 23 May 2017, <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/>. For more details about the controversy, see: Cardin, J.-F., 'Quebec's New History Programme and "la Nation"'. In *Contemporary Public Debates over History Education*, ed. I. Nakou and I. Barca, 185–201 (Charlotte, North Carolina: IAP, 2010).

14. For more, see: M. Dagenais and C. Laville, 'Le naufrage du projet de programme d'histoire 'nationale' [The Sinking of the Proposed Programme of 'National History']', *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 60 (2007) 4, 517–550.
15. La coalition pour l'histoire, 23 July 2010, [https://www.coalitionhistoire.org/sites/default/files/Plateforme\\_integrale\\_PDF.pdf](https://www.coalitionhistoire.org/sites/default/files/Plateforme_integrale_PDF.pdf). 'Le nouveau programme Histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté marginalise la question nationale au profit d'une approche sociale de l'histoire et qu'il traite comme secondaires des événements majeurs de l'histoire politique et nationale québécoise. Que le programme ... soit révisé afin que la question nationale et la dimension politique soient rendues beaucoup plus visibles'.
16. ('nous mettons explicitement de côté toute discussion sur la dimension proprement pédagogique de ce projet de programme'.) In Jean-Marie Fecteau et al., 'Quelle histoire du Québec enseigner?', *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, 15, 1 (Autumn 2006), p. 183.
17. ('Penser que la censure est l'apanage des gouvernements totalitaires est une illusion ... Le projet d'histoire censurée actuellement à l'étude au ministère de l'Éducation se greffe à l'histoire universelle du contrôle des idées jugées néfastes pour l'exercice du pouvoir'.) Bruno Roy, 'L'engagement de l'histoire', 15 June 2006.
18. Micheline Lachance, on Radio Canada, 22 August 2007.
19. ('On serait porté à croire qu'il s'agit d'une gigantesque entreprise de propagande fédéraliste Lysiane Gagnon') 'L'histoire pour les nuls', *La Presse*, 29 April 2006.
20. ('Il s'agit de rien de moins qu'un pur exercice de propagande fédéraliste') Felix Bouvier and Laurent Lamontagne, 'Quand l'histoire se fait outil de propagande', *Le Devoir*, 28 April 2006.
21. Subsequent governments kept to the same path. For a follow-up to the debate, see: J. Létourneau, 'La renationalisation de l'histoire québécoise [The Re-nationalisation of Quebec History]', accessed 23 May 2017, <http://www.tonhistoireduquebec.ulaval.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Jocelyn-L%C3%A9tourneau-LA-RENATIONALISATION-DE-L%E2%80%99HISTOIRE-QU%C3%89B%C3%89COISE1.pdf>.

## Further Reading

- Bliss, M. 'Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History, the Sundering of Canada'. *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26 (1991–1992) 4, 5–57.
- Careless, J. M. S. 'Limited Identities in Canada'. *Canadian Historical Review* 50 (1969) 1, 1–10.
- 'Débat sur le programme d'enseignement de l'histoire au Québec [Debate on the Curriculum of History in Quebec]'. Special issue of *Bulletin d'histoire politique* 15 (2007) 2.



- Lanoix, A. *Historica & compagnie: L'enseignement de l'histoire au service de l'unité canadienne, 1867–2007* [Historica & Company: The Teaching of History in the Service of Canadian Unity]. Montréal: Lux Éditeur, 2007.
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# 11

## Caribbean

John Hamer

### Introduction

‘Of my six and one-half years at the Grammar School, during which entire period I studied history formally, it was only for one year ... that I read any West Indian history’, complained a future Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines recently. ‘For the other five-and-one half years I read mainly British and European history with a smattering of Roman and World history.’<sup>1</sup> His experience was by no means unique. It is only in the last half century that the history syllabus in the schools of the West Indies has come to consist substantially of West Indian history. Nevertheless, despite this shift, there are commentators and historians who, observing the history curriculum, remain concerned about issues of Eurocentrism and neo-colonialism, of failure by governments to recognise the central importance of history in young people’s education, of the perpetuation of stereotypes and of the gap between the work of academic historians and what is taught in schools.

### Historical Background

For some 100 years after 1863, when schools in the Anglophone Caribbean<sup>2</sup> first began to enter students for public examinations at the ages of 16 and 18, the questions their students faced were set by an English examining body.<sup>3</sup> The history they studied, and on which they were examined, consisted of outlines of British (largely English) and European history with an emphasis on events related to the British Empire and its expansion. As a subject in the

school curriculum, West Indian history did not exist. Prominent among those instrumental in putting it there—several members of the history department at the University of the West Indies—were two eminent historians and educators, Elsa Goveia and Roy (later Sir Roy) Augier. Born in St Lucia and educated at the University of St Andrews and the University of London, Augier ‘wrote to Cambridge and said to them that this syllabus was not West Indian history because there was really nothing justifying the notion about background which is entirely European in what was supposed to be a Caribbean paper. This was my essential criticism.’<sup>4</sup>

The alternative examination syllabus that Augier produced and Cambridge accepted was a significant step towards legitimising West Indian history as a subject. It was based on the principle that the history of the West Indies should focus on the activities, events and issues that had taken place in the Caribbean and the individuals who had played a part in them.

It proved more difficult, however, to persuade others that they should welcome this move. Not all school administrators and teachers were easy to convince. In much of the Caribbean, education had been shaped largely around the pattern existing in Britain, including the model of the grammar school, whose curriculum prepared students, as Augier himself had been prepared, for higher education at British and North American universities. It was an established model, and the more entrenched among its supporters saw no good reason for change. Furthermore, on a practical note, even if such a move were desirable, no materials existed with which to begin teaching West Indian history in Caribbean schools.

Augier, Goveia and others, therefore, embarked on a campaign to win over hearts and minds and to provide the necessary resources. They promoted discussion with school principals, held seminars and teachers’ workshops and wrote textbooks. By the end of the 1950s, students were increasingly being prepared for examinations in West Indian history; *The Making of the West Indies* was published in 1960, followed by *Sources of West Indian History*; a decade later, all secondary schools in the region were entering students for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination in West Indian history at Ordinary (O) level.<sup>5</sup>

As yet, however, there was no syllabus in West Indian history for older students who wished to pursue the subject up to university entrance level. What was available was a choice of examinations in English or European history from the end of the fifteenth century to the outbreak of the Second World War; English social and economic history after 1815; or world affairs after 1939. Augier persuaded the examination board to add an examination of his devising on ‘Emancipation and its results in the British West Indies 1833–60’.

Initially, a little over 600 candidates sat Augier's paper, with the number rising to 1688 by 1997, the year before the Caribbean Examinations Council produced its first advanced-level syllabi.

## The Debate

### Combatting the Legacy of Colonialism

Interviewed in 1996, Roy Augier affirmed that 'Caribbean history is alive and well'.<sup>6</sup> This, his interviewer suggested, was a tribute to both his work and that of others in successfully introducing West Indian history into schools in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Two decades on, many historians and educators would concur with Augier's assessment. While cautioning against regarding the process as complete, they express a high degree of confidence that the writing of Caribbean history has moved away from dominance by its colonial past. Others, however, are less sanguine. Not all are assured that the process of revision in Caribbean history—and hence in what is taught in history classrooms—has progressed sufficiently far from the dominant narrative initially shaped by the region's erstwhile colonial rulers. Even where the historical record has been revisited, there is no guarantee that the results of this process have found their way into school classrooms. Commonly—and this is by no means confined to the Caribbean—there is little interaction between university historians and teachers of history in primary and secondary schools. Consequently, historical research and re-interpretation may take a long time to filter through to the majority of classrooms.

In two presentations at recent meetings of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGPAD),<sup>7</sup> Verene Shepherd, Director of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, noted that history education found in Caribbean schools was coming under increasing scrutiny for its possible impact on young people of African descent, especially young women.<sup>8</sup> She attacked much of the curriculum and many of the textbooks used to teach it on the grounds that they remain, in her view, essentially Eurocentric, transmitting potentially damaging cues to both Caribbeans of African or Asian descent and indigenous Caribbean people and, further, failing in the important task of empowering the children and youth at whom they are directed.

Central to Shepherd's concerns is that for the young people of the Caribbean, as for those elsewhere, history education can play a significant role

in shaping their sense of identity; yet many of the history textbooks with which they are confronted offer misrepresentative and stereotypical images of people of African descent. This is in spite of attempts by indigenous writers to replace the more traditional texts, which largely reflected European colonial subjectivity and authority. As a result, too many young people are growing up either ignorant of their African heritage or with a distorted view of it.

There are echoes here of earlier concerns. In 1922, the British under-secretary of state for the colonies commented on the fact that Jamaica was too dependent on English publications, highlighting the need for material produced locally in a range of subjects including history. Today, almost a century later, his comment still resonates.<sup>9</sup> More recently, in the history textbook evaluations published when the newly created Caribbean Examinations Council was setting its first examinations in Caribbean history, an important criterion was how the textbooks approached the founding cultures of the region, in particular those based in Africa. Some texts in particular were sharply criticised on the grounds of 'their Eurocentrism, their failure to treat the Caribbean people as active agents making their own history, their inadequate depiction of the founding cultures and the slave trade'.<sup>10</sup>

Verene Shepherd has also identified further failings in the teaching of history, failures in relation to the formation of gender identity.<sup>11</sup> She argues that contemporary authors of history textbooks, although more enlightened than their predecessors in the 1970s, still commonly reinforce hegemonic models of maleness, failing to give young men the sort of information they need in order to overturn commonly held views on the inherent superiority of men and the subordinate position of women. The treatment of resistance to slavery, she suggests, is a case in point, with many texts ignoring the fundamental role of women in armed revolt, as in Jamaica in 1831–1832.

The current significant shortcomings in the teaching of history, Shepherd asserts, are exacerbated by the failure of regional education ministries to recognise the essential part that history plays in young people's education. As a consequence of what she regards as the ministries' blinkered view, history does not occupy the mandatory place she believes it should have in the general curriculum.<sup>12</sup> Other voices have joined Shepherd's in asserting that this is a wholly inadequate state of affairs and, indeed, that history in many schools is in a state of crisis.<sup>13</sup> This is especially true where history, dependent on attracting students, has to compete with—and often loses out to—other subjects, social studies in particular. Referring to social studies as an inter-/multi-disciplinary subject, curriculum information on the Jamaican Ministry of Education website, for example, appears to support history education only as part of social science education.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of

Education notes that ‘a primary purpose of social studies is to enable students to function comfortably in today’s society. Thus, the curriculum is not designed or intended to teach the discrete social science disciplines such as history, geography or economics. Rather, it takes what it needs from such disciplines in order to achieve its aims and objectives.’<sup>15</sup>

## The Need for a New History?

Other voices, however, call for the rewriting and refocusing of Caribbean history and history teaching. They do so as much on linguistic as on historical grounds. Proposing that the history of the Caribbean should be written not merely by Caribbean authors but also in the language of the Caribbean, one scholar declared, for instance, that, as things stand, ‘I have been taught to be *myself* through the narrative gaze/text of the *other*.’<sup>16</sup> This line of argument suggests that the idea of writing the history of the region in the language of the region is not as radical a proposition as it might first appear. What is wanted is not the invention of a totally new discourse, but rather the legitimisation and incorporation of an already established indigenous discourse into the historical canon.

Proposals and criticisms such as those outlined here are not confined to the realms of academic discourse. They have been given wider, and in some instances more strident, expression in the columns of the popular press. A recent article published in the Jamaican newspaper *The Gleaner*, for example, called for the teaching of ‘a new history’.<sup>17</sup> Caribbean society is overwhelmingly made up of people whose roots lie elsewhere. Therefore, the author argued, the challenge confronting historiography and the teaching of history in schools is to focus on finding a response to the crucial question of how a population primarily composed of migrants and displaced persons came to be one new people. In this sense, the problem confronting the Caribbean is similar to that faced by other countries such as the United States.

The article maintains, however, that unlike the United States, Caribbean society remains in thrall to its overseas roots and its European, African and Asian ancestors, and it has yet to accept the fact of being a completely new people. Both drawing on this misplaced backwards orientation and also contributing to its perpetuation, the history taught to Caribbean children is still disproportionately focused on slavery and migration. Continuing, the article argues that rather than concentrating on these topics so exclusively, history education should place much greater emphasis on the history of the Caribbean immediately before independence and on political and economic history to the present day. So chronic is this problem, the author suggests, that Jamaica

dedicates a whole month to Black History Month in a predominantly black society, and countries such as Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana still struggle to balance teaching about Africa and India with education on their respective cultures.

## Conclusion

The parlous place of history in the curriculum, the perceived flaws in much of the history being taught, and its damaging impact on current and future generations by its perpetuation of a sense of 'positional inferiority' are recurrent themes in the debate. It is a debate in which the influence of historians such as C. L. R. James and his former pupil Eric Williams, particularly the work they produced in the 1930s and 1940s, is clearly visible:

If schools were to study Williams' text, and engage their teachers in dialogue, it may begin to reverse ... the 'sanitizing' of history in the classroom ... a silencing of voices. It also means that the adults who have power will tell students' stories. When children are not allowed to learn a more complete version of history in a shared space like school, and tell their own stories, they are robbed of an opportunity to provide counter-narratives to the stereotypes that exist about them.<sup>18</sup>

Another source documents the current situation in history education, still considerably informed by imperial structures:

The lamentable status of History as a non-mandatory subject in most Caribbean schools, or the Eurocentric nature of the history texts and curricula, further contributes to Afro-centricity's failure to take root in any organized fashion. Under British administration in the CARICOM [Caribbean Community] region and still-colonized countries, the history of England and the United Kingdom was taught instead of African or Afro-Caribbean history. People of these countries learned British geography and culture in schools, cultivating a sense of patriotism and pride in Britain as a homeland despite the subordination experienced at the hands of imperialism. Even following independence, however, the education system retains a school year calendar and pedagogical philosophy inherited from the former colonizing power.<sup>19</sup>

As elsewhere in the world, the teaching of history in the Caribbean raises some problematic issues that provoke a range of different—sometimes radically different—answers. History teachers face varied and often daunting assaults on their subject, assaults that challenge not simply what its content



and purpose should be, but also its very position in the school curriculum. The history of the region they teach about is rich and varied but also complex. There are questions of interpretation, of how far history education has moved away from its colonial past, of the 'right' kind of history to be teaching. Despite support for the subject, some are concerned that ministries of education do not give sufficient weight to history in the curriculum and that the number of students studying history in secondary schools is declining. This notwithstanding, the ambition remains to promote teaching history in schools with a distinctly Caribbean perspective: a perspective that 'acknowledges the need for a respect of human life and a cultural heritage that values harmony and cherishes diversity as a strength'.<sup>20</sup>

## Notes

1. R. E. Gonsalves, *The Making of 'The Comrade': The Political Journey of Ralph Gonsalves* (St Vincent and the Grenadines: SFI Books, 2010), 31.
2. The term 'Anglophone Caribbean' refers to the 15 independent English-speaking countries of the Caribbean region.
3. Until the late 1970s the secondary school leaving examination, the General Certificate of Education (GCE), was administered by the University of Cambridge Examination Syndicate. In 1972, however, an alternative Caribbean-based examining body, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), was established to examine students and issue certificates. The first examinations set by this new body were administered in 1979. In 1998, CXC offered the first Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE).
4. Interview with Roy Augier (1 October 1996), quoted in B. M. Allen, 'The Introduction and Development of West Indian History in the Curriculum of Caribbean Schools: Roy Augier's Contribution'. In *Before & After 1865: Education, Politics and Regionalism in the Caribbean*, ed. B. Moore and S. Wilmot (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1998), 78.
5. *Ibid.*, 81.
6. *Ibid.*, 86.
7. The Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (WGPAD) was established by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/68 of 25 April 2002.
8. V. Shepherd, 'Structural Discrimination & Knowledge Production in Post-Colonial Societies: Examples from the Caribbean', paper presented at the 9th Session of the WGPAD, Geneva, Switzerland, 13 April 2010; V. Shepherd, 'Obstacles to the Creation of Afrocentric Societies in the Commonwealth Caribbean', paper presented to the 10th Session of the WGPAD, Geneva, Switzerland, 28 March to 1 April 2011.

9. E. Bailey, "Positional inferiority": A Postcolonial Analysis of the Experience of Jamaican Teachers', *TOJNED: The Online Journal Of New Horizons In Education* 1, no. 2 (2011): 33.
10. B. Brereton, 'Teaching the Caribbean: An Assessment of Texts for the CXC Caribbean History Syllabus'. In *Before & After 1865: Education, Politics and Regionalism in the Caribbean*, ed. B. Moore and S. Wilmot (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1998), 89.
11. Shepherd, 'Structural Discrimination', 9.
12. Shepherd, 'You Can't Hide the Truth From the Youth: Education and Advocacy in a Post-Colonial Society', paper presented to the Yute X 2010 Conference, Kingston, Jamaica, 24 November 2010.
13. See, for example, the views expressed by teachers at a SEPHIS history workshop in 2009. SEPHIS (South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development) was established in 1994.
14. Ministry of Education, Youth & Information, Jamaica, 'Lower Secondary—Social Studies Curriculum', accessed 23 May 2017, <http://www.moe.gov.jm/curricula>.
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# 12

## Chile

Rodrigo Henríquez

### The Battle for Memory: Dictatorship and Democracy in Perspective

Virtually all discussions around teaching and learning history in Chile are connected to the influence exerted on Chilean society by the military dictatorship that held power from 1973 to 1990. The dictatorship fundamentally changed Chile's policies of educational, economic, and political development, policies that had been in place and evolving since 1920; it privatised major public services, including the entire educational system from kindergarten to universities.<sup>1</sup> The regime systematically violated human rights, committing murder and torture, consigning some of its opponents to exile, and depriving the population of its civil and political liberties; its actions amounted to the overturning of a fragile but developing democratic culture by a violent military coup and subsequent repression. The history curriculum introduced by the dictatorship praised patriotic values and military exploits and blocked any objective approach to recent history, demonising the *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity), the democratically elected coalition led by President Salvador Allende which was in power from 1970 until the coup d'état in 1973.

Almost 20 years later, the dictatorship met its end and gave way to the hesitant beginnings of democratic government; this course of events allowed space for a discussion around the design, development, and implementation of reforms to education, reforms which, however, were forced to remain within the framework of the law on education imposed by Pinochet on the very last day of his dictatorship's rule. In 1992, the reform efforts involved the attempt to incorporate a vision of renewal into the Chilean history and social studies

curriculum, emphasising the values of democracy and respect for human rights, and raised the issue of the need to add the recent history of Chile (1960–1990) to the curriculum. This matter generated intense debate among historians, teachers, educationalists and curriculum reformers, especially from 1990 to 1998, during which time the former dictator remained a threatening presence as commander-in-chief of the Chilean armed forces. These tensions were reflected in the debate on curricular content and in the lack of participation of teachers in the development of textbooks and courses.

## Historical Background

The fragile democracy installed in 1990 maintained both the political structures imposed by the authoritarian constitution of 1980 and the neoliberal economic system of the ‘Chicago Boys’.<sup>2</sup> Policies from the dictatorship continued to influence military and political matters. The memory of recent history was stifled by the informal ‘stability’ agreements between the political leaders of the *Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia*, a coalition government formed in 1990 by the Christian Democrats, liberals and socialists, and Pinochet’s supporters on the political right. The first initiative aimed at approaching the remembrance of the regime’s crimes that was undertaken during the ‘transition to democracy’ after 1990 was the promotion of the National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation. Its *Informe Rettig* (Rettig Report, 1991) was an attempt to ‘clarify the truth’ about the serious violations of human rights which had taken place under the dictatorship. However, the Commission did not judicially investigate or prosecute the individuals and institutions guilty of crimes, and many events remained unexamined. This lack of judicial reckoning with the crimes of the past influenced the development of the curriculum for history and social studies in Chile’s schools. The meaning of concepts such as ‘dictatorship’, ‘human rights’, ‘citizenship’, and of historical phenomena such as the *Unidad Popular* was the focus of intense disputes among historians, partisan think tanks, and curriculum reformers. In some cases, the outcome of these debates was to minimise the most controversial aspects of recent history in the curriculum; the current rightist government headed by Sebastián Piñera, for instance, allowed the Chilean primary education curriculum (the Foundations Curriculum for Basic Education 2012) to use the concept of a ‘military regime’ as a synonym for ‘dictatorship’, which caused an intense public debate. These matters proved some of the most sensitive issues to arise during the ‘transition to democracy’.

Citizens' demands for policies of remembrance challenged the *Concertación's* accommodation of the political right, which identified strongly with the former dictator. Since the end of the dictatorship, human rights groups and social and political movements without parliamentary representation had consistently called upon the state to assume responsibility for the recovery of historical memory. Despite occasional attempts in this direction, including the creation of state agencies to promote human rights and compensation commissions for victims of the dictatorship and those imprisoned for political reasons during its rule, the *Concertación* governments (1990–2009) were wary of addressing the recent past because many of their political partners had held important positions of political and economic responsibility in the dictatorship.

Official discourse on recent history was also marked by the *Concertación* governments' fear of confronting the army and its political supporters with responsibility for and the consequences of the dictatorship's imposition of neoliberal economic policies from 1975 onward. The *Concertación* continued the neoliberal policies imposed by the dictatorship, with both the centre-left government and the rightist opposition praising the economic changes introduced by the 'Chicago Boys'. Textbooks issued during the period from 1998 to 2009 supported the idea that the dictatorship built the foundations for economic growth, which then drove the development of the Chilean economy during the 1990s. The student demonstrations of 2011 indicated that the dictatorship's 'economic miracle' had increased inequality; the socially divisive effects of the privatisation of education, healthcare, and social security questioned the legitimacy of the economic model represented by the dictatorship. After 1990 the official view of the *Unidad Popular* was ambiguous because the party, now one of the main coalition partners, had been one of Allende's bitterest opponents. Government agencies used the historical interpretation of 'two devils' to refer to Allende and his opponents. In this view, which holds that the excessive radicalisation of political parties and movements both for and against Allende led to the 'breakdown of democracy' and the inevitability of the coup d'état, blame and responsibility for the events are assigned equally to the regime and its predecessors. Many textbooks produced during the period detail the positions of Allende supporters and defenders of the military coup. However, as noted in Teresa Oteíza's analysis, 'textbooks—especially in the sixth year of schooling—do not provide two clearly opposed positions or offer clear reasons for the events. Assessment of the coup [takes place] from an emotional perspective, rather than as an explanation of historical events.'<sup>3</sup>

The arrest of former dictator Augusto Pinochet in London in October 1998 generated a major debate on Chile's recent history because the former dictator had previously gone unpunished by the Chilean justice system. As a result of Pinochet's arrest the construction of history developed by the dictatorship came under renewed critical scrutiny and revealed a perspective that emphasised values such as order, economic liberalism, moral conservatism, and patriotism. The arrest sparked a debate surrounding the realistic possibility of conducting a proper analysis of the dictatorship while the dictator and his followers remained in political positions. It also gave rise to new debates in historiography on how to approach and understand Chile's recent history, which content should be analysed, and which methodologies were most appropriate. A series of articles on Pinochet's arrest written by the conservative historian Gonzalo Vial, who had served as a minister during the dictatorship, initiated one of the first debates on recent history to have significant media impact.

Vial's defence of the historical image of Pinochet generated a response, published in 1999 as the *Manifiesto de los Historiadores*,<sup>4</sup> from historians, students, and a wide range of organisations and social movements. The document challenged the idea, forged since the beginning of Chile's Republic, that Chile had always had the most stable democracy in the region. This notion considered the advancement of the Chilean nation to have shown a continuity which was ruined by the political radicalism of the 1960s, whose outcome was the 1973 coup d'état. In this view, the dictatorship is portrayed as the restorer of the republican regime initiated by the 1833 constitution under the leader Diego Portales (1793–1837), defender of order, free trade, and political authoritarianism. This view became the official version of memory imposed by the dictatorship, and it was widely presented in school history classes at all levels.

The *Manifiesto* rejected this thesis, instead putting forward the view that the dictatorship was an expression of certain authoritarian continuities in Chilean history, not a tradition of heroism and military valour, but rather the continuity of an endemic social conflict, the expression of an authoritarian tradition resting on the Chilean state's exclusionary attitude towards the political participation of citizens and supported by military threat. The *Manifiesto* proposed a reading of the coup d'état from the perspective of certain challenging points in Chilean history: one of the most important was the rise of citizen participation from the 1940s onward, which was supported at that time by the state. Indeed, this view sees one of the most profound effects of the dictatorship on Chilean society as being the shift from the developmentalist

economic model that had been followed since the 1920s to the neoliberal model imposed in 1973.

The dictatorship justified this change by employing a view that delegitimised the developmentalist model, which it criticised for its high level of state-owned enterprises, inflation, and its 'welfare state' philosophy. This view also strengthened the idea that the dictatorship introduced a 'successful' economic model pioneered in Western democracies.

The mythology, coined by the right, of Pinochet's heroic deeds had been losing credibility after numerous declassified documents provided evidence of the manoeuvres by the US that damaged Chile's economy and assisted in the overthrowing of Allende. The US government's intervention, although it was a crucial factor in the crisis during the *Unidad Popular* and the coup d'état, is absent from the historical interpretation of the period that is dominant in Chile. The *Concertación* governments have continued to support this controversial justification for the economic paradigm shift, and functions such as social security, health, and education remain in the hands of private enterprise.

## Conflicts over History Textbooks and Curricula: The Shadows of the Past in the Present

An essential area of ideological control for the dictatorship was the teaching of history. It transferred authority in educational matters to the *Comando de Institutos Militares* (Military Institutes Command), whose mission was to maintain ideological control of education and censor any hint of criticism or any denunciation of the new military authorities.<sup>5</sup> This control was expressed in the 1981 curriculum reform, which placed great emphasis on military prowess and the individual values of those it styled as having sacrificed their lives for their country. The Ministry of Education controlled the market for textbooks and the few existing publishers were forced to adopt this version of history.

The 1990 inauguration of the *Concertación* government liberalised the textbook market. Pinochet's law on education, passed in March 1990, had established a mandatory curriculum stipulating content and objectives, along with optional 'contextualisation' programmes. In practice, publishers aligned with the official programmes. Under the current law (from 1998), the Ministry of Education invites tenders for the textbooks which are then provided free by the state to municipal (state) schools. Privately funded schools and schools with mixed public and private funding, which together comprise the majority



of Chilean schools, select textbooks based on market criteria, while publishers promote textbooks with intensive advertising campaigns. Although history textbooks have gradually begun to incorporate critical views on recent history, many continue to present an ostensibly neutral representation of the past. As Oteíza has shown, the books still contain value judgements and interpretations that tend to avoid addressing traumatic issues of national history.<sup>6</sup>

Issues such as human rights violations and the exclusion of ethnic groups were explicitly addressed during the development of overarching objectives for the proposed 1992 Chilean curriculum, which also incorporated topics such as gender equality and human rights. Pressure from the political right and the Catholic Church led the government to postpone the debate. Furthermore, curriculum reformers found themselves forced to 'negotiate' with historically conservative groups over certain sensitive issues including the occupation of the Araucanía region (Mapuche) by the Chilean state in the nineteenth century, euphemistically called the *Pacificación de la Araucanía* (Pacification of Araucanía) in many textbooks. Although the historical record shows that the Chilean state military have occupied the Mapuche area from 1861 to the present day, expelled the Mapuche people from their lands and subjected them to systematic oppression, neither the history curriculum nor textbooks address these matters. In many cases, the treatment of the Mapuche and other ethnic groups are referenced as belonging to the past (pre-Columbian and colonial system), rendering them invisible in the context of current, ongoing problems.

Discussions on these and other curricular matters were held between 1992 and 1998 among a closed group, without the participation of teachers or other social stakeholders. This manner of proceeding increased criticism and hindered the implementation of curriculum changes.<sup>7</sup> The lack of progress in pending human rights cases<sup>8</sup> led the government to form a round-table forum in 2000 entitled *Mesa de Diálogo*, in which the military and victims of the dictatorship were brought together. This forum saw the presentation of conflicting views on the causes of the coup d'état, similar to those expressed in the curriculum for the sixth year of schooling whose analysis is cited above.

Although the round-table forum generated a debate primarily among historians, it was clear at the time that the treatment of recent history is a complex issue with wider public implications. It also emerged that the development of the history and social studies curriculum has been decisively influenced by pressure from the political and economic right as well as the Catholic Church in matters of citizenship and gender rights. Since the adoption of the current history and social studies curriculum, some adjustments have been carried out by closed working groups consisting primarily of historians, with little involve-

ment on the part of teachers. Despite having a history curriculum more or less to their liking, the incumbent rightist coalition decided in November 2010 to cut teaching time for history and social studies by one hour a week, reducing the time available for these subjects to four hours, and to reallocate the time thus made available to languages and mathematics. A massive, and unexpected, social mobilisation of historians, history teachers, and students forced the Ministry of Education to reverse the change. These events illustrate that debate on the content, teaching, and learning of history remains dynamic even in a society running the risk of getting stuck in presentism and only analysing the past from a present viewpoint.

Debate on the interpretation of the causes of the coup d'état following the publication in 2000 of the official textbook for the sixth year of schooling

The excerpts below, from two letters sent to the editor of the conservative national newspaper *El Mercurio*, illustrate the two opposing camps in this debate. The first letter presents the perspective of supporters of the dictatorship, while the second represents the supporters of a more inclusive democracy, and considers a more balanced, consensus view.

Juan Ricardo Couyoumdjian, professor at the Institute of History, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Letter to *El Mercurio*, 21 May 2000

Overall, I am referring not only to the textbooks; you should allow some time to pass (it used to be a generation) before writing the history of a period. [This is] not because of the methodological difficulty of doing so, but because of the advantage of looking at it in perspective and dispassionately. It is understandable that young people want to know about the recent past they did not live through, all the more so due to its strong influence on the present. The difficulty is in providing a dispassionate view of periods of conflict that is supported by the facts and that reflects a social consensus on them...

Instead, today we see political groups and individuals interested in keeping alive the tensions of the past, a kind of 'hate industry' in Chile, which moves in the opposite direction to [the] national reconciliation promoted by the Church. Clearly, in this context it becomes much more difficult to reach a consensus view on the last thirty years of Chilean history.

Letter to *El Mercurio* from a group of historians on the depiction in textbooks of recent Chilean history. *El Mercurio*, 18 May 2000

[Regarding the above-mentioned criticism of the depiction of the dictatorship in the sixth-year textbook] We believe that what drives these people is not the defence of the historical truth, but the defence of the 'interpretation' of the years of military rule (the government which they supported) that was given by the supporters of the former dictatorship about the period. They claim that the representation of this period in the

memory of Chileans is simply a matter of saving the image of the country, an image that has been badly damaged in the present. People know that the word of historians is very important in a political struggle, especially if their professional view is expressed in textbooks. The Right is very clear, which explains its angry reaction. For our part, we think the sixth-year textbook, which admittedly contains certain minor errors of detail (for example, the statement that the majority secured by President Frei in his election in 1964 was the highest in the history of Chile until that point), is a balanced version of what happened in contemporary Chile, suitable for delivery in the sixth year of schooling. This is even more evident when it is compared to the textbooks issued during the military government, which contained a much skewed view of the recent history of Chile. In this regard, we support the authors of the textbook, which was selected by the Ministry of Education through public tender and prepared by Editorial Don Bosco S.A. (Salesiana), and we reject the challenge by representatives of the political right who seek to impose their vision of Chile's immediate past.

## Conclusion: Better History Teaching for Better Citizenship

Echoes of the dictatorship continue to resonate in contemporary Chile because the official version of memory imposed by the dictatorship, namely the idea that the coup redeemed the national soul, still has supporters ready to defend it. Following Jörn Rüsen's typology of forms of historical consciousness,<sup>9</sup> Chile is an exemplar of the type of consciousness that maintains specific ideals revolving around authoritarianism, moral conservatism, and the economic principles of free trade. From 1990 onward, Chile has been tentatively opening up new space for a historical consciousness that promotes social values and attitudes based on the recognition of the historical trauma that occurred as well as the values of social inclusion and citizen participation.

## Notes

1. The dictatorship changed the Chilean constitution to assign primary responsibility for education to parents; it also provided subsidies to private schools that charged for tuition and competed with state schools. The state school system is now considered inferior, with only a minority of Chilean students attending primary and secondary state schools.
2. The 'Chicago Boys' were Chilean economists educated at the University of Chicago as part of a US government programme that commenced in the 1950s. Many of these students went on to help the dictatorship develop and implement its neoliberal economic policies.

3. T. Oteíza, 'Cómo es presentada la historia contemporánea en los libros de textos chilenos para la escuela media [How contemporary history is presented in Chilean secondary-school textbooks]', *Discurso & Sociedad* 3 (2009) 1, 150–174, here 169.
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6. T. Oteíza, 'Cómo es presentada la historia', 169.
7. J. Pinto, 'La reforma curricular en el área de Historia y Ciencias Sociales: propuestas y debates [Curricular reform in history and social science: debates and proposals]', *Revista Chilena de Humanidades* 18–19 (1998–9), 231–242.
8. As of 2012, the official number of people 'disappeared' or killed between 1973 and 1990 was 3,216, and the number of survivors of political imprisonment and/or torture was 38,254. Figures from the Interior Ministry Human Rights Programme state that between 2000 and May 2011, 773 former members of the security forces had been charged with or convicted of human rights violations. 245 had had final sentences confirmed, but only 66 were in prison. The others benefited from non-custodial sentences or sentences that were later reduced or commuted. Amnesty International, *Chile Report*, 2012, accessed 22 June 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/chile/report-2012>.
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# 13

## China

Biao Yang

### Introduction

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, several major debates in China's history education community have been broadening people's opinions and horizons and exerting a profound influence on the evolution of history education in China. These debates have had a far-reaching impact on academic thinking about history textbooks. Today, although political considerations may still be in play, writing history as it happened and offering a comprehensive perspective on historical events have both become far more central to the concerns of those who compile history textbooks. There continue to be problems but this trend reflects the growing integrity of history as an academic discipline in contemporary China and the positive influence this has had on history education.

### Historical Background

Over the six decades since the foundation of the People's Republic of China, there have been numerous interesting and meaningful debates in the field of history education. Controversies regarding the content of history textbooks have been a frequent occurrence. Political considerations prevailed in the history textbooks compiled shortly after the People's Republic came into being, with only rare allusions to the historical facts of anti-Japanese battles conducted by troops under the nationalist government and an evident omission

of traditional Chinese culture. By 1978, when the Cultural Revolution was over, debates among scholars concerning the compilation of new history textbooks centred on the treatment of the late nineteenth-century Self-Strengthening Movement and peasant uprisings; these debates ended in compromise and agreement on a neutral approach.

## The Debates

A debate began in 1999 that concerned history textbooks published by the People's Education Press (PEP). Most of the discussions surrounding this debate, which lasted for nearly two years, were published in *History Teaching in Middle Schools*, a journal published by Shaanxi Normal University. At the time, schools all over China (with the exception of those in Shanghai) used history textbooks published by the PEP. The debate initially centred on the PEP's monopoly on textbook compilation, which had given rise to various problems. History scholars and school teachers joined together in opposition against the PEP. There were two key aspects of contention: firstly, the presence or absence of errors. Some scholars argued that school history textbooks should be absolutely free of errors as they are defined as the primary source of knowledge on Chinese and world history and as conducive to the development of an 'appropriate' world view, philosophy of life, value system and historical perspective. They argued that history textbooks have a profound potential to influence students and are important to the enhancement of the overall quality of the populace. The editorial staff of the PEP, however, insisted that textbooks should be treated no differently from other regular publications and should be allowed an error rate.

The second part of the debate concerned academic points of view used in textbooks. Many scholars argued that different academic viewpoints on major historical events, including the latest research findings, should be presented objectively and not necessarily limited to the 'universally recognised' perspectives. In this view, with appropriate guidance provided by teachers, most students should be able to arrive at their own conclusions through debate and reflection. As long as students could be continually exposed to different versions of textbooks and academic views, they would, so ran this argument, be able to develop their own views, and there should be no need to worry that any particular academic point of view would impair teaching and cause 'ideological confusion'. The editors at the PEP admitted that some academic viewpoints in their textbooks were somewhat dated, but insisted that this was appropriate. They argued that conservative material selection is suited to sec-



ondary school history textbooks and only those views universally recognised and accepted in the Chinese academic community should be included in textbooks.

A direct outcome of this debate was a fundamental change to the existing monopoly in the history textbook industry in China. As a result, in the opening years of the twenty-first century multiple versions of school history textbooks were introduced, using the same guidelines and curriculum outlines, with the aim of enhancing the quality of history textbooks. In addition to the PEP, the People's Publishing House, Yuelu Press and Daxiang Publishing House all published their versions of secondary school history textbooks, while eight new versions of lower-stage secondary school history textbooks were published—changing the previous uniformity of the Chinese history textbook system.

An article entitled 'Modernization and Issues in Chinese History Textbooks' by Professor Yuan Weishi from Guangzhou, published in *Oriental Culture* in June 2002, caused an uproar. It was reprinted in full four years later by the *China Youth Daily* in its *Freezing Point Weekly* on 11 January 2006, reopening the debate and bringing it to nationwide attention.

Yuan reviewed accounts of major and more minor events in modern Chinese history published in Chinese textbooks, focusing on the period from the outbreak of the Opium War in 1840 to the Boxers' Rebellion at the end of the nineteenth century. He pointed out that when dealing with topics concerning China's relationship with foreign countries and foreigners, the accounts appearing in history textbooks showed little self-reflection and lacked any critical perspective. Yuan suggested that correctly depicting international relations was a prerequisite to national modernisation. Furthermore, he argued that since the instigation of reform and of the process of opening up to the wider world, China's foreign policy had been fairly rational; if, however, schools continuously instilled what Yuan described as irrational impulses in young people through history textbooks of this sort, which were contrary to government policy choices, undesirable and unintended consequences might eventually result.

Yuan's criticism of Chinese history textbooks gave rise to strong reactions among educators and politicians in the country and the initial official response was harsh. The Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Youth League, which supervised *Freezing Point Weekly*, made a public statement 13 days after the reprint of Yuan's article, denouncing it as trying to reverse the official verdict on the crimes of invasion by the imperialist powers, distorting historical facts, violating propaganda discipline, hurting Chinese national

feelings and causing a negative impact. Disciplinary action was taken against certain individuals and *Freezing Point Weekly* was shut down.

Some non-government observers viewed the article more neutrally. They believed that Yuan had not been wrong in saying that the breach by the Chinese of treaties that China had entered into with western powers had led to conflict and wars. However, they also suggested the treaties should be presented in a wider context as having been unreasonable in the first place.

In the early twenty-first century, a new version of the secondary school history textbook was composed and issued in Shanghai. It discarded the traditional chronological order of historical events and adopted a thematic arrangement, highlighting the progress made by human civilisations. The compilers believed that history textbooks for the new era should be based on historical timelines but adopt the histories of civilisations as primary themes. They argued that civilisations are the accumulative material and spiritual outcome of human beings' efforts to improve their natural and social environment and are a mark of social progress. History is laden with strenuous, and at times glorious, efforts to survive and progress and, where it develops in line with positive social and historical values, is inherently progressive in nature. The history of civilisations provides a record of such efforts and processes. This new version of the textbook for secondary schools aimed to provide students with an academic framework of civilisations.

A *New York Times* article published on 1 September 2006, entitled 'Where's Mao? Chinese Revise History Textbooks'<sup>1</sup>, was quickly translated and excerpts reprinted in Chinese media, with local sensationalism added. Chinese internet forums also buzzed with discussions and references to a 'soft coup' or 'colour revolution', brewing a storm of criticism.

Shanghai's new history textbook became a focal point of contention. Although the textbook, with modifications carried out in response to criticism, might still have had the chance of continuing use in Shanghai, events later took a sudden downward turn. In October 2006, the Social Sciences Development Research Centre of the Ministry of Education issued six circulars (*Situational Report on Social Sciences*) under the heading 'Comments by Well-known History Scholars on Shanghai's New Edition of [the] High School History Textbook'. These commentaries were provided by seven historians based in Beijing and contained criticism of the Shanghai secondary school history textbooks. After citing examples from the book, they concluded that 'the compilers were confused in their thinking, which caused the textbooks to be uprooted from the realities of Chinese society and the development of historical studies in China. [The textbooks] are full of attempts to play down ideology or get rid of ideology altogether'. The commentaries further

stated that ‘Shanghai’s new history textbooks have deviated from Marxist historical materialism, dwelling on superficial phenomena without investigating their nature. They have erred seriously in their political, theoretical and academic orientation’.<sup>2</sup> These scholars proposed an immediate ban on Shanghai’s new high school history textbooks. In addition to issuing the circulars, which contained minutes of their discussions, the scholars also organised a meeting in the name of the Chinese History Society and sent a formal petition to the authorities. The use of these textbooks was consequently suspended.

Although the new version of the history textbook was only in use in Shanghai for a very brief period, its format and focus on the history of civilisations undoubtedly had a far-reaching impact on the community of school history teachers. Furthermore, this version was more concise than any secondary school history textbook published in China in recent decades. While most other history textbooks increased in length, the compilers of the Shanghai history textbook produced a less bulky volume, allowing more class time for in-depth interactive discussions on case studies.

## Conclusion

Although no direct changes were made to textbook wording at the time due to the official stance, the controversy inspired new thinking in history education and led to tolerance of multiple perspectives and the development of dialectical thinking. Indeed, the approach of taking on multiple perspectives has become indispensable in history teaching. History educators have also gained increasing awareness of the impact of the negative elements of nationalism. Ultimately, a raised sensitivity to the potential impact of educational media seems to be answering the following call from a journal article published in 2001:

The bone of contention centres on how to regard errors and serious mistakes in the textbooks; how to deal with situations in which textbooks and the mechanism of their compilation do not fulfil the desired function; and what attitude to adopt in response to criticism and comments from teachers and the public of textbooks via the mass media. In spite of an increasing tendency to accept public debate about their work, publishers’ attitudes towards academic criticism are still disappointing and far from satisfying. As far as authors are concerned: promoting constructive academic criticism would help to gather differing opinions; positive reforms could be carried out on the mechanisms of textbook compilation and more weight placed on input from the numerous teachers directly participating in teaching and research activities.<sup>3</sup>

The debates have also revealed an increasing shift in public and official opinion on the writing of history textbooks. History scholars taking different academic points of view would be likely to emphasise specific events when seeking to influence textbook writing. The debates and controversies surrounding history education in China in the first decade of the twenty-first century prompted an understanding of the principle that at the core of history education is the provision of a true representation of history. Only by ensuring it communicates truths can history education in China genuinely enter a new phase of its development.

## Notes

1. Joseph Kahn, 'Where's Mao? Chinese Revise History Textbooks'. *New York Times*, 1 September 2006.
2. *Nan Fang zhou mo* [Southern Weekly], 13 September 2007.
3. Huang, A. 'Xian xin zhong xue li shi jiao cai zhen yi de si kao [Reflections on the Current Controversy on High School History Textbooks]', *Jiu jiang shi zhuan xue bao* [The Journal of Jiujiang Teachers' College] 2 (2001).

## Further Reading

- Sun, J., and C. He, 'Wo Men Dui Li Shi Jiao Ke Shu Da Tao Lun De Si Kao: Zen Yang Kan Dai Li Shi Jiao Ke Shu Da Tao Lun [Reflections on the Great Debate on History Textbooks: How Should It be Viewed?]', *Zhong Xue Li Shi Jiao Xue Can Kao* [History Teaching in Middle Schools] 12 (2000).
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# 14

## Croatia

Snježana Koren

### Introduction

Since the end of the nineteenth century, history has been considered one of the so-called national subjects in Croatia (along with subjects such as language, geography and music). This term clearly indicates the special status given to these subjects: they are supposed to convey specific cultural and political traditions of the nation and influence the construction of students' individual and collective identity through attachment to affective values, such as common language, culture and memory. Furthermore, the teleological notion of the historical process that is still strongly present in history education in Croatia, especially where national history is concerned, has led to very recent events being included in history education. The interpretation of these events in history curricula and textbooks thus frequently becomes a medium for the expression of different and often conflicting viewpoints and attitudes, as well as for the interests of different groups in Croatian society. This chapter will focus on controversies and debates on teaching about the wars that have taken place in Croatia since 1990. They have been part of wider debates in society (politics, historiography, media), which have also reflected different views on Croatian society and its core values.

### Historical Background and Context

In the period of intense political change at the beginning of the 1990s,<sup>1</sup> history played an important role: it served as a tool to re-examine and redefine identity. National history was written anew, in historiography and also in

political documents such as the preamble of the 1990 Croatian Constitution that includes the list of historical events which, according to lawmakers, led to present-day Croatia. History teaching, too, underwent extensive, and later often contested, changes that were introduced politically at the beginning of the 1990s. New educational authorities perceived history teaching primarily as an instrument for the promotion of national identity on ethnic foundations. It was mostly the content of history education that was subjected to change, although at the same time there was a great deal of continuity from the history teaching of the communist period in terms of methodological assumptions and pedagogical approaches, as well as the perception of the purpose of history teaching. Among many politicians and educators, and even some historians, history textbooks and curricula are still perceived as primary instruments for transmitting official interpretations of the past.

As early as 1991, the first modifications were made to textbooks inherited from the communist period. This was called 'de-ideologisation', which implied the removal of interpretations inspired by the Marxist view of history from textbooks. In fact, these changes meant replacing the ideology of Marxism with that of ethnic nationalism. The old textbooks were severely criticised in the Croatian Parliament in the spring of 1992, after the proclamation of independence. The most prominent actors in this first major textbook affair were a group of MPs from the ruling party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), including the president of the parliamentary committee on education, culture and science. Acting simultaneously as a deputy assistant minister of education, he wrote a report on history textbooks, criticising them because of their 'pro-Yugoslav content' and their 'lame and feigned support for new changes'.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, some of the existing textbooks were further modified, and those dealing with modern and contemporary history were replaced by new ones: 'singling out Croatian history from the Yugoslav context' became the motto of changes in the new generation of history textbooks produced in the 1992/93 school year.<sup>3</sup>

These new textbooks firmly promoted the ideology of Croatian statehood; in their narrative, the continuity of the Croatian state from the Middle Ages to the present day was asserted, and every Croatian state was presented as a positive historical fact, including the pro-fascist Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*, or NDH) during World War Two. Although topics that were subjected to re-interpretation ranged from the Middle Ages to current events, it was the topic of World War Two in Yugoslavia that underwent the most dramatic modifications. The 1941–1945 war, which in Yugoslavia was called the 'National Liberation Struggle' (*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*, or NOB), was a topic of particular significance in the history curricula

and textbooks of communist Yugoslavia. The 'common struggle of all Yugoslav nations against the occupying forces and collaborators' and the unity of the NOB and the socialist revolution were meant to provide the basis of legitimacy for the Yugoslav communist regime.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, different interpretations, among the political and intellectual elites of the six Yugoslav republics, of the role of each of the Yugoslav nations during the war and their merits within the second Yugoslavia were reflected in the history textbooks that each republic produced, and at times also served as indicators of deeper inter-ethnic rifts, especially in Croatian-Serbian relations.

In the 1990s, the HDZ leadership, together with President Franjo Tuđman (1990–1999), promoted the idea of 'national reconciliation' among former war adversaries (Partisans and Ustašas) and their descendants, taking the synthesis of state-building elements from different political ideologies originating from World War Two as the basic precondition for the creation of the independent Croatian state. The manner in which this entire question was dealt with served as a strong impetus for revisionism of the history of the NDH and the Ustaša movement.<sup>5</sup> Among historians, a small group actively supported the authorities in their shaping of a new historical memory of World War Two; some had a major impact on history teaching because they were actively engaged in the creation of new textbooks and curricula.

The 1991–1995 war contributed to the radicalisation of narratives and forestalled necessary discussions about the methodology and aims of history teaching. The ethno-national paradigm that had been introduced at the beginning of the 1990s was most rigidly expressed in the history curricula of 1995 and in some textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education in the second half of the 1990s. At the same time, questions began to be raised about the existing paradigm. Some Croatian historians and journalists, as well as several international experts, repeatedly raised several issues, criticising history curricula, the procedure of textbook selection and the content of history textbooks, especially those dealing with twentieth-century history.<sup>6</sup> The emergence of alternative and parallel textbooks, introduced for the first time in the 1996/97 school year, gave additional impetus to those debates.<sup>7</sup> State control over the production of history textbooks, however, remained considerable throughout the 1990s, especially where twentieth-century history was concerned: only two authors were allowed to publish textbooks on twentieth-century history for primary schools and the different types of secondary schools.

After the political changes of 2000,<sup>8</sup> the Ministry of Education introduced a more liberal policy of textbook approval: committees appointed by the ministry in that period used evaluation criteria that gradually facilitated a move



away from the rigid framework imposed by the 1995 curricula. However, the system of parallel textbooks has constantly been contested by those who perceive the deconstruction of the traditional ethnocentric narrative as a danger to Croatian national identity.<sup>9</sup> Since 2004, there has been another shift in the Ministry of Education's policy towards textbooks in general: it introduced a more restrictive procedure of textbook approval, which has limited the number of parallel textbooks per grade and increased the possibility of state intervention and political interference. The 1995 curriculum for compulsory education was replaced with a new one in 2006 that brought about moderate changes in didactics and content, but the 1995 history curricula for secondary schools are still in use.

The political changes that occurred in 2000 re-ignited the public debate on school textbooks that had started in the 1990s. These debates were prompted when, in 2000–2001, the Ministry of Education established the Commission for the Evaluation of History Textbooks inherited from the 1990s. The commission's activities were most vehemently opposed by those who participated in defining history education in the 1990s. In the end, the commission's work did not produce any significant results; instead, it incited a debate, in newspapers as well as at round table conferences, in which interpretations of World War Two in history textbooks played an important role.<sup>10</sup> However, as a result of these debates and critiques, most textbooks published since 2000 have abandoned contested and controversial interpretative paradigms from the 1990s (or at least their most controversial parts), although some of them still reflect the underlying assumptions of those paradigms to a certain extent. In subsequent years, disputes on interpretations of World War Two have continued, and other actors have entered the debate, among them veterans of World War Two anti-fascist movements, strongly supported by President Stjepan Mesić (2000–2010). Although they rightly warned about the way this topic was dealt with in the 1990s textbooks, the interpretations they offered mostly did not go beyond the old paradigms of the communist period. On the other side of the spectrum, there are those who emphasise the communist aspect of the Partisan movement and the atrocities committed by Partisans during World War Two, whilst downplaying its anti-fascist character and role as a resistance movement. Such disputes usually escalate during election campaigns,<sup>11</sup> commemorations of World War Two events<sup>12</sup> or debates about the names of streets and squares, such as the ongoing debate over the name of one of the main squares in Zagreb, which still bears Tito's name<sup>13</sup>; history curricula and textbook narratives usually play an important role in such discussions.

## Debating the 'Homeland War'

In the last couple of years, however, another war has come into the focus of debates about the content of history education in schools: the 1991–1995 war, which in Croatia is called the 'Homeland War'. Narratives about this recent war entered the history textbooks almost immediately: the 1992 textbook already included highly emotional descriptions of the conflict, and the topic was subsequently included in the 1995 history curricula. The textbook narrative was very much in tune with official memory and did not change much during the 1990s. However, the term Homeland War, widely accepted today in textbooks, historiography, political documents and public discourse, appeared in textbooks for the first time in 1999; until then, textbooks mostly used terms such as 'the war of Great Serbian forces against Croatia' or 'Great Serbian aggression against Croatia'.<sup>14</sup> In the years following the end of the conflict, the war has acquired an important place in official memory: it has been portrayed as one of the key events in Croatian history, the victory of Croatian defenders over the Serbian aggressors, which ensured the very existence of today's independent Croatian state. Especially since 2000, increasingly greater political significance has been attached to the Homeland War: for many, it is no longer the synthesis of different ideological state-building elements originating from World War Two that provided the foundation for today's Croatia but the 'values and virtues of the Homeland War'.<sup>15</sup>

Several examples can demonstrate how politically and ideologically important this topic has become. During the recent constitutional changes in 2010, the 1991–1995 war was added to a list of key events in Croatian history from the Middle Ages to the present day.<sup>16</sup> In 2001 the Croatian government passed a resolution to initiate academic research into the Homeland War by the Croatian Institute for History, and in 2004 it founded the Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre for the Homeland War and in 2014 the Memorial Centre of the Homeland War in Vukovar. The Croatian Parliament issued several declarations attempting to define the character of the war, the most important among these being the Declaration on the Homeland War (2000) and the Declaration on Operation Storm (2006). Both documents attempt to provide an official interpretation of the war: thus, in the Declaration on the Homeland War, it is emphasised that Croatia 'led a just and legitimate, defensive and liberating war, and not a war of conquest and aggression against anyone; it defended its territory from the Great Serbian aggression, within its internationally recognised borders'. In the Declaration on Operation Storm, this military operation is described as a 'legitimate', 'victorious', 'allied', 'anti-

terrorist', 'decisive' and 'unforgettable' battle. Furthermore, the 2006 declaration attempts to compel 'the Croatian parliament, the Croatian expert community, Croatian scientific and educational institutions, and the media' to interpret Operation Storm in such a way that it becomes 'a part of the Croatian past useful for (*korisna prošlost*) future generations'.<sup>17</sup>

Since the war ended, several public holidays and memorial days that commemorate war events have been introduced, the most important of which is Victory and Thanksgiving Day on 5 August, which since 2008 has also been celebrated as Croatian Defenders' Day. On that date in 1995, the Croatian Army captured the city of Knin during Operation Storm, which brought an end to the Republic of Serbian Krajina, a self-proclaimed Serb entity in Croatia; simultaneously, it resulted in an exodus of the indigenous Serb population from that area. In the last few years, it has become one of the key public holidays which celebrate Croatia's military victory in the war imposed on the country. However, this commemoration is burdened by the unresolved question of Serbian refugees, and thus every year it provokes opposing reactions, both in Croatia and in neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, the official memory of the war has remained one-sided, and the experiences of Serbian refugees are mostly excluded from the speeches of state officials, which tend to recount the victories and sufferings of their own side. Another important date is 18 November, the Day of Remembrance of the Sacrifice of Vukovar in 1991. On that date, the destruction of the city of Vukovar is commemorated, as well as the suffering of its population after the city was captured by the Yugoslav army.<sup>18</sup> There are other memorial days that are associated with commemorating war events: the Day of Remembrance of the Genocide in Srebrenica (11 July, observed since 2009) and the Day of Remembrance of the Detainees of Enemy Camps (14 August, observed since 2010).<sup>19</sup>

However, since the war ended, further questions have arisen that burden the memory of the war. Among those that have influenced the textbook debates are divisions in memory about the war, the issue of war crimes, and different evaluations of war events, reflecting not only differences of opinion between Croats and Serbs but also within each of these groups. Attempts to raise these questions have met with strong resistance, especially among politicians and those who regard it as their duty to protect what they refer to as the 'dignity of the Homeland War'. In the field of history teaching, there have been two parallel processes during the last decade, both very much determined by contemporary political debates and controversies. Some textbooks published after 2000 cautiously began to offer narratives that went beyond the simplified descriptions of war events characteristic of the 1990s. At the same time, there were increasing demands by some war veterans' associations

and some politicians to dedicate more space in curricula and textbooks to the topic. However, this issue only really came into public focus after 2003, when the Ministry of Education had to deal with the end of the moratorium on teaching recent history in Podunavlje, one of the Croatian regions most affected by the recent war.<sup>20</sup>

When Croatia regained control over the majority of its territory in 1995, only the most eastern part, Podunavlje (the Danube region), remained under the control of the local Serbs. In November 1995, a peace agreement was signed, and the region was placed under the UN Transitional Administration, which lasted until 1998, when Croatia regained full sovereignty over its entire territory. In 1997 a letter of agreement was signed that ensured the educational rights of the Serbian minority in the region. Part of the agreement was the implementation of a five-year moratorium on the teaching of contemporary Croatian history in classes of Serbian pupils. With the moratorium's five-year expiration date approaching, the Ministry of Education organised several meetings and consultations with teachers, experts on intercultural education and political parties from the region. A decision was reached to end the moratorium, but none of the existing history textbooks was acceptable to the representatives of the regional Serbian community.<sup>21</sup>

In January 2003, the ministry appointed a commission whose members included historians, experts on intercultural education and several ministry officials, which eventually decided to fill the gap in contemporary history materials with a temporary supplement to the existing textbooks that would be used until new textbooks were developed. After two failed attempts in 2003, the commission assigned the job to another team of authors in 2004. The text, entitled *Supplement to the Textbooks on Current Croatian History*, was eventually finished in April 2005 and accepted by the commission. It was decided at that point that the supplement should serve as additional material not only for pupils in the Danube valley region, but for those all over Croatia. The ministry then decided to have the text reviewed by various institutions and individuals. This resulted in quite a divided response, with some reviews evaluating the text positively and others negatively.<sup>22</sup>

In July 2005, in the charged atmosphere of war crime trials and the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Operation Storm, negative reviews of the supplement appeared in some daily newspapers and on some TV networks. The supplement came under fierce attack from a number of right-wing politicians, journalists from the right-wing media and various war veterans' associations, as well as some historians, mostly from the Croatian Institute for History. The attempts to introduce different perspectives to the teaching of recent conflicts and to address crimes committed by both Serbian and

Croatian forces were condemned variously as education 'without any value guidelines', a 'distortion of the historical truth about the Serb aggression', a 'relativisation of the Serbian responsibility for the war' and an attempt 'to show Croats as equally guilty for the war as the Serbs'.<sup>23</sup> The supplement was also condemned because of its 'neutral terminology' and its avoidance of the term 'Homeland War'.<sup>24</sup> The following paragraph from one of the articles, written by a historian and published in a weekly church magazine, sums up the most important arguments of the critics of the supplement:

It should be normal to expect that a textbook which will be published with the approval of the Croatian Ministry of Education is written from the Croatian point of view. It should be normal to expect that this book presents the Croatian truth ... What have these authors done? They have relativised everything that happened in the past 15 years, and then they have asked students to create their own truth about these events. This is totally inappropriate! It is good and necessary to encourage a critical spirit among students, but in this case, the students are overestimated in their ability to understand the truth, which even the authors themselves probably did not understand, and therefore they did not present it in the textbook ... Is it really possible that elementary or high school students are capable of writing their own story of the war which is correct and truthful if the authors themselves have avoided doing this? They have relativised all events by citing different opinions, but at the same time they have not represented the Croatian stance.<sup>25</sup>

On the other side were those who supported this multi-perspective approach to the teaching of the recent war. Among these were some non-governmental organisations, especially those committed to dealing with the past, and some historians and experts on intercultural education. For example:

It should be stressed that the Supplement represents an important qualitative shift in textbook presentations of important historical events. For the first time, the principle of multi-perspectivity has been applied as one of the postulates of intercultural communication. In several cases, authors presented different views on the character of the war and the political regime in Croatia. They used photographs to illustrate events during the war from both sides' points of view. This is a courageous and fairly consistent attempt to demythologise the war and the political context of the 1990s. It is consistent because the authors did not dispute that the regime of Slobodan Milošević and the former Yugoslav army committed aggression against Croatia, but they (rightly) ... refused a unilateral approach which, because of the fact that the aggressor is known, attempts to justify everything that was committed in the name of the defence of Croatia.<sup>26</sup>

Negative publicity eventually resulted in the ministry's decision in August 2005 to give up the project. The debate, however, continued for some time even after the ministry gave up the book. More than 60 articles were published in different newspapers and journals, ranging from heavy criticism to praise. Two round table conferences were organised, in 2008 and 2009,<sup>27</sup> and two books were published as a result of the debate. The first one, *Jedna povijest, više historija: dodatak udžbenicima s kronikom objavljivanja* (One Past, Many Histories: the Supplement to Textbooks with a Chronicle of Publication), offers the perspective of the authors of the supplement, containing the supplement itself, newspaper cuttings, essays written by the authors of the supplement and the president of the ministry's commission and various documents. The other, *Multiperspektivnost ili relativiziranje: dodatak udžbenicima za najnoviju povijest i istina o Domovinskom ratu* (Multiperspectivity or Relativisation: the Supplement to Textbooks and the Truth about the Homeland War), offers the perspective of the critics: this book contains several essays by historians who wrote negative reviews of the supplement, as well as their reviews.

Furthermore, as echoes from the debate still reverberated, changes were made to the new history curriculum for compulsory education, which was at the time under construction (2005–2006). The topic of the recent war underwent the greatest modifications: new details were added, making it the most extensive topic in the new curriculum.<sup>28</sup> Students were expected to describe in detail the course of the war and the most important military operations of the Croatian army, to 'name distinguished Croatian defenders' and to 'precisely define who was the aggressor and who was the victim'. Students were also expected to describe the sufferings of civilians in the war, but only those crimes in which Croats and Bosnian Muslims were victims were mentioned (Dubrovnik, Vukovar, Srebrenica).<sup>29</sup> At the same time, this topic was purged of any events that could interfere with the official memory of the war: for example, a sentence from the original curriculum proposal that mentioned the exodus of the Serb population after Operation Storm was removed in the final version. Similarly, Croatia's role in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not mentioned.<sup>30</sup>

Another cycle of debates on teaching about the war started in spring 2007, when some of the new textbooks written according to the new curriculum nevertheless offered interpretations of the recent war that differed somewhat from those in the curriculum, including some strategies and approaches very similar to those in the supplement of two years before. Although the 2007 debate was not as high profile as the 2005 one, and was mostly conducted with the same arguments, it reached its peak when a group of historians and members of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts sent an open letter to

the prime minister, the president of the Croatian Parliament and the parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture, asking for the withdrawal of those new textbooks that offered a more critical perspective on the war. They criticised the authors for failing to recognise that 'besides scientific and pedagogical standards, history textbooks should also acknowledge national and state criteria'. They received an answer from another group of historians, from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities in Zagreb, appealing for the kind of history education that fosters a culture of critical thinking about historical heritage.<sup>31</sup> Another issue in both of these debates was the way in which textbook authors should deal with the parliamentary declarations on the Homeland War and Operation Storm: some politicians and historians criticised the textbooks for not being consistent with the Declaration on the Homeland War and considered these declarations an obligatory interpretative guide for textbook authors.<sup>32</sup> Others were of the opposite opinion: they perceived the attempt to define the nature of the war through parliamentary declarations as a 'form of violence' against historical inquiry and history teaching.<sup>33</sup>

The Ministry of Education eventually accepted all textbooks after some minor changes. The time that has elapsed since the war and the more favourable political context have proven to be crucial factors for the teaching of recent conflicts.<sup>34</sup> However, this debate also encouraged the Ministry of Education to start organising annual seminars for history teachers on the Homeland War, which commenced in 2008: in-service training of history teachers has proven to be another important strategy the ministry has at its disposal to promote an official version of history.<sup>35</sup> The teaching of the 1990s conflicts continues to be the contested issue, becoming especially heated during election campaigns and in the current debates surrounding the reform of the national curriculum and the proposal for the new history curriculum.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

History textbooks and curricula published in the last 20 years have continuously reflected the clash of interpretations and the disparate memories of World War Two and the wars of the 1990s that exist in Croatian society. On the most general level is the question of how the history of wars should be taught, especially those that are considered to have been the starting point for the emergence of a new state. Teaching about recent wars has proven to be a difficult task because it involves strong emotions and invokes traumatic memories. Reactions to both of these cases have also revealed the political impor-



tance still attached to history education, as well as different and competing conceptions of the purpose of school history and its potential role in the formation of pupils' identities. More recent events have indicated that the government and political parties have not given up their intentions of intervening in history textbook narratives, but have also shown that society has become open enough to question interpretations and not allow only the official memory of the war to be promoted. However, the debates on interpretations of World War Two and the 1990s wars in curricula and textbooks are far from over and still have the potential to create political and ideological conflicts in Croatian society. Moreover, attempts to manipulate the history of an already polarised society simply result in another debilitating circle of fruitless debates and endless divisions over the difference between 'us' and 'them'.

## Notes

1. The first multi-party elections after World War Two were held in April and May of 1990. The former League of Communists of Croatia, then renamed the Party of Democratic Change and now called the Social Democratic Party, lost. The elections were won by the right-wing nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, or HDZ), which remained in power through the entire 1990s.
2. All translations are by the author unless otherwise specified.
3. W. Höpken, 'History Education and Yugoslav (Dis-)Integration'. In *Öl ins Feuer? – Oil on Fire? Schulbücher, ethnische Stereotypen und Gewalt in Südosteuropa. Textbooks, Ethnic Stereotypes and Violence in South-East Europe* (= *Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung* 89), ed. W. Höpken (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996), 114; S. Koren, 'Slike nacionalne povijesti u hrvatskim udžbenicima uoči i nakon raspada Jugoslavije [Images of national history in Croatian textbooks before and after the breakup of Yugoslavia]', *Historijski zbornik* 60 (2007): 259–263.
4. S. Koren, *Politika povijesti u Jugoslaviji (1945–1960). Komunistička partija Jugoslavije, nastava povijesti, historiografija* [The Politics of History in Yugoslavia (1945–1960): the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, History Education, Historiography (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2012), 309–377.
5. S. Koren and B. Baranović, 'What Kind of History Education Do We Have after Eighteen Years of Democracy in Croatia? Transition, Intervention, and History Education Politics (1990–2008)'. In *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, ed. A. Dimou (Göttingen: V&R uni-press, 2009), 118–119; S. Koren, 'Nastava povijesti između historije i pamćenja: hrvatski udžbenici povijesti o 1945 [History teaching between his-

tory and memory: Croatian history textbooks on 1945]'. In *Kultura sjećanja 1945: povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti*, ed. S. Bosto and T. Cipek (Zagreb: Disput, 2009), 241–245.

6. For a list of some of the newspaper articles and historians' analyses, see Koren and Baranović, 'What Kind of History Education Do We Have', 135–140.
7. Höpken, 'History Education', 96–105.
8. In January 2000, the HDZ lost the parliamentary elections for the first time since 1990. A coalition of six political parties, led by the Social Democrats, formed a government (2000–2003). The HDZ again won the parliamentary elections in November 2003. Although there was no reversion to the positions of the 1990s after the HDZ returned to power (2003–2011), its educational policy in the field of history teaching generally remained ambivalent, either for pragmatic or ideological reasons.
9. Koren and Baranović, 'What Kind of History Education Do We Have', 105–118.
10. *Ibid.*, 108–111.
11. This was reflected in recent political developments. In 2011, a coalition government led by Social Democrats came to power, while HDZ was the strongest opposition party. During the run-up to presidential elections in December 2014 and January 2015, with parliamentary elections scheduled for December 2015, history textbooks and teaching once again became a political issue. In speeches in 2015, Tomislav Karamarko, the leader of HDZ, outlined certain policies his party would implement if they were to win the next parliamentary elections. There were three main points: lustration, removal of Josip Broz Tito's name from public spaces (streets, squares, etc.) and the unification of history textbook narratives dealing with twentieth-century Croatian history. He labelled existing history textbooks 'quasi-Communist histories' and described their interpretations of World War Two in Croatia, socialist Yugoslavia, the wars of the 1990s and the role of Franjo Tuđman as distorted and false. According to the HDZ leadership in 2015, current history textbooks portrayed the partisan movement during World War Two and within socialist Yugoslavia, and the role of Tito, too positively, while glossing over partisan crimes at the end of the war and not properly addressing the role of post-1945 Croatian political emigration. They also announced that both history textbooks and the Croatian Constitution would include a positive evaluation of Franjo Tuđman's political doctrine. They also discarded the politics of national reconciliation during the early 1990s as an unsuccessful experiment because it was, as they put it, exploited by those 'who never wanted an independent Croatia' (usually labelled 'Yugonostalgics', that is, those in Croatia who allegedly want the restoration of Yugoslavia and communism). Behind these announcements was once again the notion of a school history that conveys only the 'official history' defined by the party in power. For the quotes, see S. Koren, 'Twentieth-century wars in history teaching and public memory

- of present-day Croatia', *Studi sulla formazione* 2/2015, 11–32 (<http://www.fupress.net/index.php/sf/article/view/18013>).
12. In April and May 2012, for example, during a commemoration at the Jasenovac concentration camp, President Ivo Josipović declared that history textbooks did not present the 'whole truth' about World War Two. Additionally, the Croatian Parliament decided by a majority to abolish its sponsorship of the commemoration of the events at Bleiburg field at the end of the war, when Partisan forces committed mass murder of captured enemies, mostly soldiers of the NDH. This decision was made because this commemoration regularly served not only to pay homage to the victims, but for many participants also as a memorial celebration of the NDH.
  13. Tito's name was removed from one of the main squares in Zagreb after a decision by the Zagreb city assembly in August 2017. See, for example, 'Zagreb strips Marshal Tito name from square', *The Guardian*, 1 September 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/01/zagreb-strips-marshal-tito-name-from-square-croatia>.
  14. Koren and Baranović, 'What Kind of History Education Do We Have', 122–124.
  15. *Ibid.*, 123.
  16. S. Koren, "Korisna prošlost"? Ratovi devedesetih u deklaracijama Hrvatskog sabora ['Useful Past'? The 1990s wars in declarations of the Croatian parliament]. In *Kultura sjećanja: 1991. Povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti*, ed. T. Cipek (Zagreb: Disput, 2011), 128–130, 141–142.
  17. *Ibid.*, 131–141. For both declarations see *Narodne novine*, the official gazette of the Republic of Croatia: *Narodne novine* 102/2000, [http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000\\_10\\_102\\_1987.html](http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_10_102_1987.html) (Declaration on the Homeland War); *Narodne novine* 76/2006, [http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006\\_07\\_76\\_1787.html](http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006_07_76_1787.html) (Declaration on Operation Storm).
  18. Subsequently, this commemoration became highly politically charged. In 2013, the state delegation, including the president of the republic and the prime minister, was prevented from participating in the commemorations by some veterans' associations, who were frustrated by the government's decision to introduce Cyrillic inscriptions to Vukovar. This decision was mandatorily implemented after the 2011 Croatian census, which showed that Serbs make up more than one third (34.8%) of Vukovar's total population. L. Ostroški, ed., *Statistički ljetopis Republike Hrvatske 2015/Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia 2015* (Zagreb: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2015), 47.
  19. Koren, "Korisna prošlost?", 141–142.
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23. Mato Artuković, 'Recenzija knjige "Dodatak udžbenicima za najnoviju povijesti" [Review of the book "Supplement to textbooks on recent history"]'. In R. Skenderović, M. Jareb, M. Artuković, *Multiperspektivnost ili relativiziranje? Dodatak udžbenicima za najnoviju povijest i istina o Domovinskom ratu* [Multiperspectivity or relativisation? The supplement to textbooks on contemporary history and the truth about the Homeland War], (Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski institut za povijest—Podružnica za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje, 2008), 109–114.
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# 15

## Cyprus

Eleftherios Klerides

### Introduction

At the beginning of the new millennium, persistent calls for the reform of school history in the Greek and Greek Cypriot systems of education sparked political, ideological, historiographical and pedagogical controversies and conflicts in Cyprus.<sup>1</sup> Within the context of the issues discussed in the current volume, this chapter explores the contextual particularities of the contentions over school history in the Greek Cypriot community during the period from 2002 to 2014.

This chapter argues that the ‘history wars’ of this period were fought from two distinct positions. The first, ‘the position of derision and reform’, criticises school histories on the grounds of being ethnocentric and monovocal, and calls for them to be re-articulated according to principles of multiculturalism and multiperspectivity. The second, ‘the position of non-reform and defence’, dismisses this criticism. It defends existing histories, either explicitly or implicitly, on the grounds that they merely reflect, to use Ranke’s famous expression, the past ‘as it actually was’, so there is no need to rewrite them.

The chapter is divided into three sections. In order to contextualise the history debates of the period under study, the first section briefly narrates two historical struggles over school history in the Greek Cypriot community. The second section examines a series of incidents that triggered conflicts over history teaching in the period from 2002 to 2014. The third section describes the agents representing the two positions of the debates and the principal topics and arguments constituting those positions.

## Historical Background

Symbolic wars surrounding school history are not a new phenomenon in the Greek Cypriot system of education. The elimination of the teaching of the history of Greece from primary school curricula in the 1930s, when Cyprus was under British rule (1878–1959), ‘brought the Greek educational authorities in[to] confrontation with the colonial government: ... the Orthodox ethnarchic church against the British government, and the Cypriot Hellenists ... against the colonialists’.<sup>2</sup> The British administration in Cyprus abolished Greek history in an effort to combat *Enosis*, the Greek Cypriot movement aimed at uniting Cyprus with Greece. The teaching of Greek history in Cyprus had been institutionalised at the turn of the twentieth century and the justification for its endorsement rested on a belief that the Greek-speaking, Orthodox population of the island was an indivisible part of the Greek nation. ‘It is natural’, as the Locum Tenens of the Archbishopric wrote in a letter of protest to the British Governor of Cyprus in 1935, ‘that Greek History should have an important place in the curriculum of the elementary schools of Cyprus whose inhabitants are privileged to be direct descendants of the ancient Greeks’.<sup>3</sup> The teaching of Greek history was reinstated in the later period of British rule and continues to dominate both primary and secondary curricula today. Greek Cypriot pupils are taught Greek history by means of textbooks imported from Greece.

Similar, albeit less intense, controversy arose in the years from 1976 to 1980, when Chrysostomos Sofianos, the then education minister in the Republic of Cyprus, suggested, against the backdrop of wider educational reforms, that the history of Cyprus ought to be taught in schools along with the history of Greece.<sup>4</sup> Opposed by the Church of Cyprus, the Greek Cypriot Association of Greek Philologists and the right-wing DISY party, this proposal was a manifestation of efforts to legitimise and strengthen the Cypriot state. Although it had been created in 1960, the Cypriot state remained, in the eyes of Greek Cypriots, a ‘reluctant republic’.<sup>5</sup> Until the 1976–80 reforms, pupils were taught very little about the history of Cyprus,<sup>6</sup> and even the handful of history textbooks produced on the island by Greek Cypriot authors presented Cypriot history as part of the Greek national story.<sup>7</sup> Sofianos introduced the teaching of the history of Cyprus as a subject separate from the teaching of the history of Greece, but Cypriot history never acquired the same status as Greek history.<sup>8</sup> In light of this, new school textbooks on the history of Cyprus were produced: two for primary education in the late 1970s and a series of four for secondary education in the early 1990s under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.



At the beginning of the new millennium, calls to rewrite textbooks on the history of Cyprus, as well as new textbooks on Greek history in Greece, triggered debates within educational, academic, journalistic and political circles in Cyprus. This latest episode of conflict over school history was distinctive from earlier ones. The two earlier episodes possessed a colonial logic (the first centred on the colonised versus the coloniser) and a postcolonial framing of state formation (the second centred on the separation of Cypriot statehood and Greek nationhood). The more recent 'history wars' emerged within a context marked, among other things, by the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the European Union (2004) and the resulting intensification of direct talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriots seeking to bring an end to the island's division, as well as by the internationalisation of history education, by the rise of multicultural and intercultural ideologies in education, and by the emergence of new historiographies in Cyprus and Greece. Nevertheless, all three episodes share certain commonalities. They are framed by the argument that the 'Greekness' of the island is a target of attempted annihilation by a 'Cypriot ideology'. They also illustrate that 'history wars' are often manifestations of a rivalry between church and state and are characterised by the direct involvement of high-profile *dramatis personae*, such as the (British) Governor of Cyprus, the (Greek Cypriot) President of the Republic, the head of the Church and education ministers.

## The Debates: Key Incidents

The first incident that triggered public debate occurred in 2002. In this year, a new Greek history textbook for the third grade of *lyceum* (*The Modern and Contemporary World, 1815–2000*) was published in Greece and imported into Cyprus. In its depiction of the Greek National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters (EOKA) Struggle of 1955–59, the Greek Cypriot anti-colonial struggle for the union of Cyprus with Greece, as 'a socially ultra-conservative nationalist movement', the textbook was denounced for belittling the memory of the EOKA heroes. It provoked a reaction from Ouranios Ioannides, the then education minister, who stated that 'we cannot write history to order'.<sup>9</sup> The depiction of EOKA as a nationalist movement was consequently removed from the textbook and the then Greek Minister of Education, Petros Efthimiou, apologised to the Cypriot Hellenists, elevating the EOKA heroes to exemplars of the heroism of the Greek nation.<sup>10</sup>

Further tensions followed the publication of the Report of the Education Reform Committee in 2004.<sup>11</sup> The Committee, comprising a group of Greek Cypriot and Greek academics and working at the request of the centrist-leftist

government of President Papadopoulos, criticised the existing textbooks on the history of Cyprus, depicting them as ethnocentric and biased towards Turkish Cypriots. The Committee went on to recommend their rewriting by both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot historians in accordance with the principles of multiculturalism and multiperspectivity. A coalition of social stakeholders, including the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus, members of the Open University of Cyprus, educators, right-wing politicians and former education ministers, dismissed the Report, accusing the Education Reform Committee of assaulting the Orthodox heritage and Greek values of Cyprus.

The beginning of 2007 witnessed a third cycle of debate. The initiative once again came from Greece, with the publication of a new Greek history textbook for the sixth year of primary schooling (*In Modern and Contemporary Years*). The textbook, written by a team of authors led by Professor Maria Repoussi, was condemned for allegedly falsifying the history of the Greek nation. This criticism aligned Greek Cypriot reactions with wider opposition to the textbook emerging in Greece during the same period.<sup>12</sup> The textbook also generated local hostility, as it was accused of distorting the modern history of Cyprus. The then Interior Minister and acting Education Minister, Neoclis Silikiotis, banned the textbook from Greek Cypriot schools; under his instructions, a request was sent to Greece for corrections to be made to certain events of Cypriot history. In September 2007 the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture ordered the withdrawal of the textbook, following a similar measure in Greece.

The fourth period of friction occurred from 2008 to 2010 and followed the rise to power of a coalition of centre-left parties led by Demetris Christofias, the leader of the left-wing party Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL). From the very beginning, the Christofias Government (2008–13) declared its intention to introduce changes to the Greek Cypriot system of education, including school history, in line with the suggestions made by the Report of the Education Reform Committee.<sup>13</sup> There were calls by Andreas Demetriou, the Minister of Education and Culture (2008–11), for a new history curriculum and for new textbooks on the history of Cyprus within the framework of a new education policy aimed at the cultivation of ‘a culture of peaceful coexistence’ between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots.<sup>14</sup> The public response to these calls was varied. Some, academics in particular, hailed the proposal, while others were critical of the idea of new history textbooks. Right-wing politicians questioned the necessity and timing of history reform.<sup>15</sup> Archbishop Chrysostomos II warned the Government that if they did not abandon their history reform plan, the Church would ‘react vigorously’.<sup>16</sup>

The latest episode of tension occurred during the design and evaluation of the new history curriculum of 2010, although this remained out of the public spotlight. Following his pledges of curricular reform, the Minister of Education and Culture, Andreas Demetriou, set up a committee to design a new history curriculum. This committee consisted of five academic historians, three Greeks and two Greek Cypriots. Disagreements among committee members regarding methodology and content selection were so severe that the final proposal for a new curriculum was signed by only three of the committee's five members. The other two members submitted a separate proposal that was never published by the Education Ministry. Disputes were also evident between the committee for the new history curriculum and a working group of teachers and educators proposed by the ministry to provide the committee with pedagogical expertise. This dispute intensified at the evaluation stage of the new history curriculum; the evaluation committee criticised the new curriculum on pedagogical grounds, and the committee responsible for the production of the new history curriculum dismissed the criticism, arguing that 'educators are not the competent authority for assessing the historical content of the new curriculum proposal'.<sup>17</sup>

## The Debates: Documentation

This section argues that school history debates of the period 2002–2014 were fought from two distinct positions: 'the position of derision and reform' and 'the position of non-reform and defence'. Each position was supported by different individuals and institutions, with their own ideological orientations and thematic preferences, and articulates different academic, educational and political propositions arguing for or against history reform. The two positions, although they are mutually exclusive and in opposition to one another, are simultaneously characterised by intersections and overlaps blurring the boundary that separates and distinguishes them.

The position of derision and reform tends to be occupied by left-wing government officials, such as President Christofias, Education Minister Andreas Demetriou and Interior Minister Neoclis Silikiotis, as well as by AKEL politicians, especially Giorgos Loukaides, the party's education spokesperson. Others supporting and contributing to this position were the President of the Education Reform Committee, Professor Andreas Kazamias, researchers who are members of an NGO called Association for Historical Dialogue and Research (AHDR),<sup>18</sup> Greek Cypriot and Greek historians such as Rolandos Katsiaounis and Maria Repoussi, and Greek Cypriot sociologists and anthro-

pologists such as Nicos Trimikliniotis and Yiannis Papadakis, together with foreign peace mediators and representatives of the Council of Europe involved in history-related activities in Cyprus. Often, these agents proclaim themselves to be 'progressive forces' seeking to 'upgrade' history textbooks and to 'modernise' the teaching of history in schools. In their eyes, opponents of reform are an obstacle to the improvement of school history and are occasionally depicted as 'conservative' and 'nationalist'.

On the other hand, the position of non-reform and defence is often held by right-wing DISY politicians, church leaders (including the Head of the Church of Cyprus, Archbishop Chrysostomos II), and former, right-wing education ministers, such as Klairi Aggelidou and Ouranios Ioannides. Historians such as Petros Papapolyviou, philologists including Georgia Kouma and Demetris Taliadoros, educators such as Mary Koutselini, and journalists including Savvas Iakovides also support and contribute to this position. These participants in the debate tend to either implicitly or explicitly oppose the rewriting of history textbooks. By implication, they also project an image of themselves as guardians of historical truth and the identity of Hellenism and Cypriot Hellenism, which are deemed to be in danger from 'neo-historians' and 'national-nihilists'.

At an *academic* level, central to the position of derision and reform is the conviction that textbooks contain inaccuracies, are characterised by omissions and exclude 'the losers of history' (women, workers, children, the poor, minority groups). From this perspective, rewriting the history of Greece is welcomed as a process which would tackle many of these issues.<sup>19</sup> There is, adherents of reform argue, a similar need to rewrite Greek Cypriot textbooks on the history of Cyprus. They argue that revisions of historical content are natural, as 'textbooks will always need to incorporate new findings from historical research and the latest trends in historiography'.<sup>20</sup> Their argument is derived from a reading of history as a fluid heteroglossia. As Nicos Trimikliniotis, a sociologist at the University of Nicosia, points out, 'history is a continuous quest for the truth through competing accounts and from different perspectives'.<sup>21</sup> Yet not all adherents of the reform position see history as a contested and indefinite interpretation of the past. In a 2008 public speech, President Christofias stressed that the rewriting of Greek Cypriot textbooks 'will aim at restoring the truth of the history of our land'.<sup>22</sup>

Some opponents of reform, notably church leaders, right-wing politicians and journalists, dismissed the necessity of rewriting Greek Cypriot textbooks on the basis of a view of history as a body of value-free knowledge about the past that merely reflects 'how it actually was'. 'History was written and cannot be distorted', Lefteris Christoforou, a DISY Member of Parliament, writes.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise, Demetris Andreou, a well-known journalist, challenged the 2007 Greek textbook by stressing that ‘while to write the history of a nation takes millennia and needs wise and brave people; to rewrite [it]—or to write it off—a few weeks are enough’.<sup>24</sup> Other opponents of reform, especially academics and educators, do not subscribe to this essentialist philosophy of history. Like many advocates of reform, they maintain that ‘textbooks ought to be revised, enhanced and corrected, absorbing the findings of academic historiography’.<sup>25</sup> In their view, school historiography ought to (continue to) be tightly linked with academic historiography. They also believe that the history of the nation ought to maintain a privileged position in historical representation.

In the view of those supporting the position of derision and reform, Greek Cypriot textbooks are also guilty of an imbalance of content and glaring omissions. They claim that the books focus on the island’s ancient Hellenic past, underplaying more recent history.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, textbooks are criticised on the grounds that:

1. they promote memories of confrontation with Turkish Cypriots at the expense of memories of peaceful symbiosis, and
2. they place emphasis on shared descent, culture, language and religion with the people of Greece, omitting common historical experience, customs, literature and music with Turkish Cypriots.<sup>27</sup>

As a result, ‘Greek Cypriot pupils’, complains Giorgos Loukaides, the education spokesperson for AKEL, ‘finish school without learning that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots fought side by side for common class and socio-economic interests; more importantly, they do not learn that along with Greek and Turkish cultures, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots also created a shared Cypriot culture’.<sup>28</sup>

Omissions and exclusions from textbooks are often framed by both positions in *ideological* terms. The political right, exponents of reform often argue, has had free rein to include its version of the past in textbooks and to present it as ‘the absolute truth’,<sup>29</sup> and, by means of its Hellenocentric view of the history of Cyprus, to deny the island’s multicultural character.<sup>30</sup> Greek Cypriot textbooks are further attacked on the grounds that they hide the truth about the past and conceal the ‘real’ protagonists responsible for the division of Cyprus. For example, proponents of reform, particularly those on the political left, point out that the intimidation and killings of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leftists by right-wing Greek Cypriots in the period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s are not part of history teaching. For them, these

events are a major aspect of the recent Cypriot past and a key dimension of the existing ethnic divide.<sup>31</sup>

For some supporters of reform, the rewriting of Greek Cypriot textbooks will give pupils access to shared stories that have been suppressed and, by creating Cypriot narratives, school history would lead to the reconstruction of the identity of Greek and Turkish Cypriots alike.<sup>32</sup> Yet it would not seek to replace Greek identity, Andreas Demetriou, a former education minister, and Andreas Kazamias, the president of the Education Reform Committee, have repeatedly argued.<sup>33</sup> For other advocates of reform, especially those politically affiliated with AKEL, the rewriting of textbooks will give children 'the whole truth, to know and to judge all that happened in the past. Which events marked and harmed the land and who, according to their judgment, bears the burden of responsibility'.<sup>34</sup>

Political opponents of reform argue that the proposal to rewrite Greek Cypriot textbooks 'originates from AKEL's guilt for their blatant absence from, or unfortunate presence in, the most important historical events of our homeland'.<sup>35</sup> They stress that textbook revisions are just a 'pretext to promote party ideas and ideologies'.<sup>36</sup> They also express the fear that AKEL's intent is to use history textbooks to promote their 'neo-Cypriot ideology',<sup>37</sup> the ideology of a multi-ethnic Cypriot people consisting of both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and to exonerate themselves from the guilt of not participating in the anti-colonial struggle of EOKA.

Like opponents of reform in Greece, many opponents of reform in Cyprus see the 2007 Greek history textbook as an assault against Hellenism and accuse its writers of denigrating the Greek nation's history and identity.<sup>38</sup> Their assertion is that both the writing of new Greek textbooks and the calls for new Greek Cypriot textbooks (on the history of Cyprus) are determined by the politics of Greco-Turkish friendship and the anti-Hellenic processes of globalisation and Europeanisation. Some opponents of reform see these calls for new textbooks in Cyprus and Greece as part of an Anglo-American and pro-Turkish European plot seeking 'the demolition of Hellenism'.<sup>39</sup> In this light, opponents of reform call for the safeguarding of Hellenism in general and Cypriot Hellenism in particular, urging a 'battle of national survival'.<sup>40</sup> In the words of a Greek Cypriot teacher: 'our Greek consciousness must build walls and must not allow malicious plans to harm our Greek tradition, Greek culture and Greek greatness. It is of fundamental necessity that our consciousness safeguards in any possible way our Greek identity which is none other than our language and our historical consciousness'.<sup>41</sup>

The *pedagogical* mode of history textbooks and the purpose for which history is taught in schools also receive criticism from supporters of reform. This

criticism often stems from what has become internationally known as ‘history education’ or the ‘disciplinary approach’ to history teaching.<sup>42</sup> Supporters of reform argue that both Greek and Greek Cypriot textbooks are obsolete; they are still content-centred and teacher-based and facilitate rote learning of events and dates.<sup>43</sup> Exponents of reform further suggest that there are new approaches to the teaching, learning and writing of history that focus on historical enquiry, on fostering historical skills and concepts and on pluralism of perspectives. These approaches are child-centred, make history an enjoyable and interesting subject and are aimed at the promotion of historical thinking and understanding.

From the viewpoint of supporters of reform, the traditional role of history in school curricula should be challenged and rejected as ‘national indoctrination’. Instead, democratic citizenship, the development of civic virtues, the securing of international understanding, respect and tolerance, and the continual search for historical truth in competing historical sources and interpretations are often cited among the educational benefits of a reformed history teaching. Charis Psaltis, a social psychologist at the University of Cyprus and a member of AHDR, speaks of history’s new purpose in the following way:

Through the promotion of historical thinking and the cultivation of critical analysis and skills, history could contribute to the creation of democratic citizens committed to the principles of freedom, peace, tolerance and solidarity, and consequently, to the making of a citizenry capable of living and creating in the context of a peaceful, multicultural and reunited Cyprus.<sup>44</sup>

While supporters of reform reject teacher-led, content-based approaches on the grounds that they do not cultivate thinking and understanding, some opponents of reform depict learner-led, enquiry-based approaches as inferior methods of history teaching to content acquisition and as foreign to Greek norms. The committee responsible for the proposal of a new history curriculum responded to the evaluation of the curriculum by educators as follows:

It is obvious that the evaluation was not conducted by historians, but it was carried out by educators. This is reflected in the nature of their observations and in their methodology, that is, the abstract intellectualism with frequent references to foreign scholars (not from the discipline of history, but from sub-fields of education). Obviously, this is the main—and perhaps trivial—pool of arguments used by the reviewers of our proposal.<sup>45</sup>

More importantly—from the perspective of the non-reform position—learner-led, enquiry-based approaches to history teaching and learning are



regarded as undervaluing historical content in an endeavour to promote the all-round development of pupils. Georgia Kouma, a former president of the Greek philologists of Cyprus, asserts that 'students ought to obtain a corpus of basic historical facts if they are to appreciate the deeper meaning of historical events and their complex relationships. In history teaching, historical content is of great importance, for it is upon historical content that historical thinking and enquiry will be based'.<sup>46</sup> She goes on to argue that an emphasis on learning to think like a historian means that pupils will learn very little history and their knowledge of the past will be fragmented and incoherent.

The traditional justifications of history as a subject in Greek Cypriot schools, that is, the instilling of a sense of belonging to the Greek nation and the cultivation of a spirit of resistance against the Turkish occupation, are often cited by opponents of reform as the benefits of history teaching. 'Educating the Greek children of Cyprus in a Greek manner', maintains the Archbishop of Cyprus, 'is a recipe that has been tested over time, has maintained Hellenism throughout the centuries, and should not change, especially now, when our land is under the boot of the occupying army'.<sup>47</sup>

At a *political* level, there is an underlying belief among adherents of reform that new history textbooks can contribute to the reunification of the island, because they can promote mutual respect, tolerance and reconciliation between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. In the words of a secondary school headmaster, textbook revisions 'can contribute to the demolition of the walls of hatred and the elimination of prejudice'.<sup>48</sup> This argument is based on the view that existing textbooks promote slurs and insults against Turkish Cypriots, and that, by means of this negative representation of the 'other', they breed hatred and legitimise the maintenance of ethnic division.<sup>49</sup>

The representation of Turkish Cypriots in Greek Cypriot textbooks is a matter that has divided teachers, academics and politicians since the publication in 2004 of the Report of the Education Reform Committee. While textbooks are often accused of disparaging Turkish Cypriots by those favouring their rewriting, accusations of ethnic bias and pejorative references are rejected as groundless by those who oppose it: 'The history textbooks are objective and moderate in their valuation of the History of Cyprus and they do not include chauvinistic elements', a school inspector stated.<sup>50</sup> In support of their claim, advocates of the no-reform position refer to the conclusions of a report commissioned in 2007 by the then acting education minister, Neoclis Silikiotis, and prepared by academics and teachers. The report found no negative prejudices against Turkish Cypriots in history textbooks.<sup>51</sup>

Opponents of reform maintain that a peaceful solution to the Cyprus divide will not come about through new school histories. This proposition,

they often point out, is an oversimplification of a much more complex reality. To back their argument, they point to Turkey's hegemony in the occupied north of Cyprus and foreign geopolitical interests in the eastern Mediterranean. 'We should not forget that the Cyprus Problem is rarely a bi-communal issue', Andreas Theophanous, a political scientist at the University of Nicosia, maintains. 'On the contrary, other aspects of the Problem are more important, with invasion and occupation being the prime issues'.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, although they do not disagree with the policy of reconciliation with Turkish Cypriots, opponents of reform argue that 'this aim should not divert us from the real problem, which is Turkish occupation'.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

A closer look at the incidents triggering the periodic wars of words concerning school history, as well as at the themes and individual argumentations of the two positions from which these wars are fought, indicates that theoretical devices such as *oscillation* and *border-crossing* can be used to creatively reconstruct the debates. At least three different forms of oscillation and border-crossing can be identified within these conflicts, and they underpin the struggles around history of the period from 2002 to 2014.

The first form of oscillation and border-crossing takes place within the discursive terrain of each of the two positions. Within each position, arguments for and against school history reform reveal fluctuations between art (the subjective act of recreating reality), science (the objective act of revealing the facts) and ideology (the bridge between the worlds of art and science).

The second form of oscillation and border-crossing is found in the shared space between the two positions, where there have been discernible fluctuations in the history battles outlined above. There are fluctuations between an essentialist and a constructivist view on knowledge, between a philosophical reading of history as interpretation or as truth, between traditional and progressive pedagogy, as well as between Greek and Cypriot narratives of identity. There are also fluctuations between a perspective on the 'Cyprus Problem' as a bi-communal dispute and its conception as a problem of Turkish invasion and occupation, and between a political vision of the future in terms of shared statehood based on equal political partnership and on the basis of a majority-based, Greek Cypriot state with the rights of the Turkish Cypriot minority guaranteed.

The third set of examples of oscillations and border-crossings is evident both within each individual position and in their commonalities. In this dis-

cursive domain, the ‘history wars’ of this period indicate fluctuations between the local (the Greek Cypriot space of Cyprus), the national (the landscape of Greece and more generally, the imagined community of Hellenism) and the international (the terrain of Europe and the world in general).

There is not space here to offer a detailed explanation of these three different forms of oscillations and border-crossings. It is crucial, however, that they are addressed in a considered and scholarly manner if academic research is to shed (further) light on the nature of ‘education in Cyprus’ and the conflicts around it.

## Notes

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11. Ministry of Education and Culture, ed., *Dimokratiki kai Anthropini Paideia stin Eurokypriaki Politeia. Prooptikes Anasigkrotisis kai Eksyhgronismou. H Ekthesi tis Epitropis* [Democratic and Humanistic Paideia in the Euro-Cypriot Polity. Prospects for Reconstruction and Modernisation. The Committee Report] (Lefkosia: Ministry of Education and Culture, 2004).
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31. See Y. Papadakis, 'Greek Cypriot narratives of history and collective identity: nationalism as a contested process', *American Ethnologist* 25 (1998), 149-165.
32. This is a central argument of the President of the Reform Committee, Andreas Kazamias. See: *Phileleftheros*, 16 June 2008; *Simerini*, 8 June 2008.
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36. See 'AKEL kai vivlia istorias tis Kyprou', *Simerini*, 25 March 2009; A. Themistokleous, 'To AKEL kai i istoria, i epanaproseggisi kai i lysi', *Phileleftheros*, 25 September 2008.
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# 16

## Czech Republic

Antonie Doležalová

### Introduction

This study seeks to answer the question of how the concept of history education has developed in the Czech Republic (CR) and what form the struggles surrounding the shaping of this concept have taken. The study focuses firstly on the milestones in changes to history education after 1989 and, secondly, on the debates surrounding these changes and the changes to interpretation frameworks.

The Czech Republic was founded in 1993 as one of the two states to succeed Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia had become part of the Soviet bloc after the Second World War when the Communist Party won the 1948 elections. Subsequently, a Marxist interpretation framework and, for a time, Stalinist dogmatism became incorporated into the educational system. The year 1989 brought significant changes to the distribution of power in society and to its economic and social parameters. It would be fair to assume that by now the changes to the social paradigm would have manifested themselves in school history education, affecting both the teaching and the facts used, as Czech history was supposed to be fundamentally ‘rewritten’ and placed within the contexts of European and world history. As a result, the greatest controversies connected to history education were related to the newly defined interpretation frameworks and the new interpretation of events which had previously been subject to Marxist-Leninist clichés.

## Historical Background

After November 1989, there was a general consensus in Czechoslovakia (and later also in the CR) that school history should be redefined and rethought and that there was a need for new textbooks and teaching aids. The key participants in the debates were politicians and civil servants, among them the Ministry of Education (MoE) and certain advisory institutions set up by the ministry, such as the Research Institute of Education and the Czech School Inspectorate, which oversees the external evaluation of schools. Eventually the EU's supranational institutions also became involved to a certain extent. Crucially, teachers, historians and the public also played their role in the debates.<sup>1</sup>

From the early 1990s, history lessons began to be crowded out of primary and grammar schools. By 1995, only six teaching hours were assigned to history in years 6 to 9 of primary schools; at eight-year grammar schools (known as *gymnasium*), history studies were concluded in the sixth form; at specialist secondary schools, history was taught only for one year; and the subject was completely abolished in vocational schools.

The MoE did not publish its first official document on education, entitled the National Education Development Programme, until 1999. In this programme, the MoE embraced the principle that the development of education should be derived from a generally accepted education policy and clearly defined medium-term and long-term goals (given as 2005 and 2010, respectively), which should be made public by means of the White Book,<sup>2</sup> a binding government document. The final version of the National Programme was approved by the government on 7 February 2001. The main strategic goals were very general. The text spoke of the need to improve the quality and functionality of education, encourage the autonomy and innovative potential of individual schools and their openness towards society, and strengthen the social and professional position of academics and educators. A 'general educational programme' (GEP) would then be issued for individual fields of study, replacing the provisional curricula. The GEPs would define the obligatory curriculum and expected outcomes and skills. Based on these, schools would create their own 'school education programme' (SEP).

The 2007 Education Act<sup>3</sup> upheld the existing legislation, which was in force from 2004 to 2006; stipulated the long-term aims, goals and criteria of the education policy; and unified the approach of individual regions, especially with regard to grammar schools. Primary schools started to teach history based on the GEP in the academic year 2008/2009 and secondary schools followed in 2009/2010.

In 2009 the MoE issued a statement regarding the conditions for granting or refusing the seal of approval for textbooks and teaching materials, and for adding them to the list of textbooks for schools. In 2010 the MoE promised financial support for the teaching of modern history and current affairs and invited applications for a number of grants from the EU's Structural Funds. In the same year, history questions were set in the final school-leaving examinations, although they did not follow the primary goals of the GEP.

## **The Debates: Fighting over History Education**

Numerous curricula for primary and grammar schools were published after 1990, each time with only a brief definition of the 'standards' of required coursework, that is, with just one page dedicated to several years' worth of coursework. At the same time, a number of initiatives took place in the CR, all apparently striving to change the approach to teaching history. Common to them all was an emphasis on the importance of a historical consciousness and the historical dimension of one's being; school history education was viewed as an essential factor in the creation of both of these. However, these initiatives rarely progressed beyond empty rhetoric. The discussions tended to be a mere formality, and their outcomes were not incorporated in the adopted documents. This has led to numerous controversies, of which there were three main types: conflicts over the place history should have within the education system, conflicts over textbooks and conflicts over the content of history education.

### **Fighting over History's Place in the Education System**

This first type of conflict is fundamental. It is a fight over the very preservation of history lessons, since the number of teaching hours allocated to history in the CR has gradually declined since 1990 and is now among the lowest in Europe. History as a school subject has been fading into the background within the field of social-science disciplines, which are all trying to respond to the requirements to instil civic and democratic principles, European consciousness and multiculturalism. As a result of history's reliance on pragmatism and established conventions, the above issues have been dealt with by subjects such as civic education and ethical education rather than history, and

subsequently, history has missed the opportunity to play a determining role within interdisciplinary relationships.

History teachers and historians from universities and science institutes had repeatedly drawn attention to this situation. A group of them began to meet at the Historical Club (HC) in the spring of 1990 during seminars on history teaching. From these meetings the History Council was created in 1992. It comprised a team of historians, teachers and officials, whose aim was to develop a new concept of history education and to oversee the quality of new documents and textbooks. The intention was also to bring together a board of historians and teachers as an advisory body to the MoE.

The prime topics of discussion were the concept of history lessons and the time allocated to them as well as the lack of quality textbooks and other teaching aids. Matters were complicated by a succession of different ministers. Discussions continued to take place until 1999 when the MoE rejected the outcome of the team's efforts, and the group was dissolved. That is when The History Teacher Association (THTA) and historians connected to the Association of Historians (AH, previously HC) took action.<sup>4</sup>

The 'war over history' broke out in earnest after the first publication of the GEP in 2000. Experts among the historians and teachers were critical when invited to express their opinions on the proposed strategy and the AH and THTA committees addressed the MPs, senators and the public in an open letter commenting on the state and circumstances of history education.<sup>5</sup> They demanded that history be taught for two hours per week throughout primary and grammar schools, and for at least two years at specialist secondary schools. The letter gained much media attention and a public hearing subsequently took place in the Senate Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions on 12 October 2000. The committee recommended that history education receive more attention. The MoE ignored the findings, and teachers and historians subsequently rejected the GEP.

Although there were further discussions, they did not result in any concrete outcomes. History and School Seminars have been held since 2002, their aim being to create a space for a completely open discussion (half the participants were employees of the MoE, while the other half comprised historians, museum representatives and history, geography and civic education teachers). The tangible outcome of the first seminar was a detailed formulation of the role and goals of history. Subsequent seminars focused on the syllabus, issues pertaining to teaching the history of the twentieth century, on interdisciplinary coordination and integration in creating new school subjects, and cross-sectional topics. Unfortunately, the results of the seminars were not absorbed into the curriculum and remained confined to the published brochures.

The second version of the GEP, in 2002/2003, proved to be even more general and non-specific than that of 2000/2001. Even though it was only made available to a limited selection of 54 schools in order to test its suitability for creating the SEP, it was again widely criticised on two levels. The first source of criticism concerned the materials which were given to the schools testing the GEP. These were general curricula, not subdivided into years, and the responsibility for the selection of appropriate content lay with the teachers. The content was not to be assessed by any experts. The second source of criticism was the GEP project itself, as prepared by the Research Institute of Education. It was leaked to the public that education should be structured into 'fields of study', for example, language and language skills, mathematics and its applications, 'man and nature' and 'man and society'. History, together with civic education, was listed under 'man and society'. Together, they shared a combined allocation of 9–12 teaching hours per week for the entire duration of primary school (i.e. 9 years); the division between history and civic education was under each principal's control. In reality the field of man and society was frequently not introduced before the fifth year of primary school, and history education was allocated only one or two teaching hours per week during the last four or five years of primary school, and those were shared with teaching on civic education.

In spring 2003, historians responded by releasing a memorandum titled *A Word on History*,<sup>6</sup> demanding that history should be a separate subject within the educational system and integrated into the state school-leaving examinations, and called attention to the attitudes of the MoE officials, who had not allowed democratic debate and had ignored the recommendation made by the EU. Historians proposed the creation of a board of experts that would carry out a structural analysis of the curricula and prepare a new concept for education. The memorandum was signed by more than 400 historians, natural scientists and teachers. It was submitted to the MoE in June, but rejected.

In autumn 2003, THTA issued a declaration: *We Do Not Want Another White Mountain: This Time in Education*.<sup>7</sup> The teachers' main criticism was that the GEP passed the burden of coursework selection onto schools, and that the power to decide about the extent and classification of subjects was given to school principals, who were not qualified to carry out such a reform. Above all, however, the teachers called attention to the MoE's unwillingness to engage in a real debate. They demanded that history should remain a separate subject at all general education schools and remain part of the newly rethought school-leaving examinations, and that its teaching time allocation should be increased. They advocated the creation of a new concept for education by renowned historians in cooperation with teachers. Ten days later, the

AH published the *Petition of 17 November*<sup>8</sup> about the dangers of integrating history and civic education and their fears that it could lead to undesirable changes in the system of university studies which lead to history teaching qualifications for primary and grammar schools.

The MoE responded by stating that decision-making about the form of history education was, in combination with civic education, to transfer to the hands of individual school principals. THTA became a target of criticism by MoE officials and received no state subsidies between 2004 and 2010.

In spite of this, pilot programmes were introduced to selected grammar schools in June 2005. Simultaneously, material was being gathered in order to create the Manual for the Creation of Grammar School Curricula. Although the CR had joined the EU the previous year, the adoption of European education development goals was limited to accepting support from the structural funds for the years 2007–2013.

Over the next few years, history lessons continued to be marginalised and objections by teachers and historians persisted. Teachers continued to call for a new concept of history education, for the results of their discussions with historians to be accepted, the provision of state-guaranteed training for teachers, the availability of grants for academic studies, modern teaching aids and a journal on methodology. Discussions between teachers and historians led to the creation of an alternative version of 'History for Grammar Schools' in 2008. At its core lay some important changes to teaching, for example, a greater emphasis on modern history and current affairs, a shift away from explanatory teaching and room for teachers to include local and regional topics in their lessons. In January 2009, THTA wrote an open letter to the MoE, pointing out that European research indicated a downward trend in the level of education among Czech students. An insufficiently thought-through curriculum was given as the main reason for this development.<sup>9</sup> During 2010, a team at the MoE began holding talks on the teachers' standards, but these were subsequently discontinued and therefore brought no tangible results.

## Fighting over Textbooks

Calls for better quality history textbooks became a standard part of all appeals for an improvement in history education. Given that the goals within the GEP are defined in very general terms and the lesson contents are referred to only briefly, covering no more than three pages of the whole document, the burden of deciding how best to spread out the coursework lies with the teachers, who are guided by the textbooks available to them. The publishing houses

have, paradoxically, become the authority that determines what will be taught during history lessons. The publishers and their authors are the ones who make decisions about publishing textbooks and about their layout. The text itself is reviewed by members of the MoE committee for textbook approval, which comprises the representatives of the Roma and Jewish museums, the Arabists, the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops' Conference. In 2010, THTA representatives also became members of the committee. The interpretation of certain topics is set. For instance, passages about Czech-German relations are based on publications by the Czech-German Commission of Historians, overseen by the MoE.

The greatest shortcoming in the process of textbook creation lies in the lack of clear rules with regard to the review and approval of textbooks, and in the fact that the process of evaluation is lengthy yet inadequate. The publisher initiates the process by applying for a seal of approval, which is granted by the head of the relevant department at the MoE, who also appoints two reviewers. At least one of the reviewers has to have a specialist qualification in the given field. History is one of the subjects where the seal of approval is granted only if a textbook forms part of a complete series. The same reviewers tend to be appointed for the complete series of textbooks. Whether or not a textbook is accepted by a school is decided by the principal or the school's commission on subjects.

There is also the issue of the profits which publishers earn through textbooks. There has been optimism ever since the beginning of the 1990s that the quality of textbooks would improve in an open market; the MoE even ceased to have its own publishing house. Whilst schools do not receive information about the quality of the textbooks, primary schools are only allowed to purchase books which have the MoE seal (this does not apply to private primary schools). Secondary and grammar school students purchase textbooks themselves based on the selection made by the teacher from the textbooks recommended by the MoE. Hence, not all students study history from the same source, and even the knowledge of students from parallel classes within the same school may vary. Furthermore, according to the MoE directive, the teacher can leave out up to 30 per cent of the subject matter and substitute it with topics of his or her own choosing. This poses a serious problem, considering that 25–28 per cent of history teachers do not have a specialist teaching qualification in the subject. Paradoxically, whilst there is a confusing array of different textbooks of varying quality, both teachers and students face a lack of other aids, such as maps, documentaries tailored to teaching, texts or audio documents. This situation is changing only very slowly, and the process is aided by NGOs and other organisations.<sup>10</sup>



## Fighting over the Content of History Education

This aspect of the conflict has many dimensions, one being the criticism directed towards history teachers. All official projects aim to provide support for the teachers and regard improving the quality of their work to be a priority. However, the conditions which were unfavourable to teaching history in the communist era continue to exist. The difference is that anyone can now teach anything and in whatever way they wish. The controversy centred around teachers' skills is undoubtedly the most newsworthy. The debate centres on whether or not teachers can fulfil the public's visions about the importance of history in guiding the formation of values and morals in younger generations and under what circumstances. First and foremost, the conflict is about whether teachers should have the opportunity to intervene in the GEP. But the debate also focuses on the way in which history is taught in the CR. While the first issue places teachers in the position of passive partners in the teaching process, in the second they become the object of criticism due to their explanatory style of teaching and because modern history is given so little room in the curricula. The commonly repeated claim is that teachers are not prepared to meet the demands placed on them, such as getting students interested in the subject, cultivating their empathy and tolerance and developing their value system. Teachers defend themselves by pointing out that these skills are only touched upon during their training at university, if they are taught at all, and that there are no theoretical works on what teaching approaches or methodology should be used when teaching history; there are no journals on methodology and no published reviews of textbooks. Most providers of further education and training for teachers were shut down by the MoE at the beginning of the 1990s, and the remaining regional centres were dissolved after 2000. The situation has begun to change in the last few years, as a number of methodological handbooks and translations of foreign literature have been published. NGOs are once again involved in the making of such methodological aids.<sup>11</sup>

The second aspect of the conflict centres on what facts should actually be taught and relates to textbook creation. As this is not governed by any binding instructions, two situations arise: either there is an emphasis on discussion with the students and the books ask questions, often concerning historical context with which the students are not familiar, or the books are laden with factual data, preventing a greater understanding and appreciation of interconnectedness. The titles of seminars and published works might lead one to believe that the topic is widely debated and that the outcomes of the discussions must have formed the basis of the curricula, but this is not the case.

Neither the concept of teaching nor the structure of coursework has been changed. The dispute really concerns the relationship between world history and Czech history. History classes continue to be largely about facts, and history education suffers from an excess of pragmatism.

Finally, the third conflict related to the content of history education concerns the interpretation of history. Prior to 1989, any debate about controversial historical topics was hampered by ideological restrictions and political interference, as was almost all material for history teaching. Therefore, one would have expected critical discussion and relevant literature to proliferate after 1989 when these extreme political limitations ceased to exist. However, a close examination of the way in which interpretations of the twentieth century's key conflicts have evolved reveals some surprising aspects of this development. First of all, the extent (and impact) of any discussion has been very limited. Second, both history education and textbooks remain influenced by established conventions and still evoke the impression of being ideologised and politicised. The struggle against communism continues to be largely ignored (the so-called Third Resistance, the Prague Spring in 1968 and the dissent in the 1970s), as is the case with conflicts between the Czech majority and the German, Polish, Hungarian and Roma minorities as well as the latest newcomers to the CR.

Czech-German relationships are routinely addressed by history textbooks. Although the way in which this relationship is presented has, surprisingly, not changed much since 1989, there is a great variation in the way Czech-German relationships are evaluated in Czech historiography. The Czech-German History Committee, which was established in 1992 and is made up of foreign affairs ministers from both countries, has played a key role. The committee's task is to objectively discuss past and present mutual relations. It has published numerous documents, relating to the key issues in the Czech-German relationship during the twentieth century, in particular the history of the Second World War and the displacement of Sudeten Germans. The MoE has recommended that the outcomes of the Czech-German committee's negotiations be utilised in lessons.

Although Czech-German relationships are addressed in school textbooks, the attention paid to this relationship is only marginal, and it is stereotypically portrayed as being a conflict that raged for centuries. Textbooks about the interwar period only briefly touch upon the presence of German activist parties in the government or German culture in Prague, for instance, dedicating much more space to the crisis in Czechoslovakia and the foundation of Henlein's movement. There is no mention of collaboration or areas of cooperation between Czechs and Germans. Research into the stereotypical images

that Czech teenagers have of neighbouring countries reveals the power of such interpretations of Czech-German relationships. Besides the fact that only Hungarians were less popular than Germans, another noteworthy finding concerned a question about collaboration between the Czechs and Germans: 80 per cent of the responding students did not answer this question at all and 50 per cent of those who responded stated that there was no positive aspect to Czech-German relationships.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

Two hypotheses were formed at the beginning of this chapter. The presumption was that the change in political circumstances in 1989 would have led to changes to the ways in which history was taught in schools and that the greatest controversies would have been associated with the new definition of interpretation frameworks and the new interpretation of historical events. It has been shown that neither teaching methods nor the contents of classes have changed and that the events of 1989 did not bring about a paradigm shift. It cannot be assumed that history interpretation frameworks were modified either, as this would, above all, have affected twentieth-century history, which is generally not taught due to time constraints. But for a few exceptions, the nature of the communist regime and the nature of institutional changes are yet to become subjects of wide debate. History education is still being fought over in the CR, where conflicts occasionally burst into the open but very rarely succeed in gaining the attention of the general public. The MoE and the teaching body are the main opposing parties; the remaining players play a passive role and bear the costs. The subject of history has not managed to regain the allocation of teaching time it enjoyed in schools prior to 1989. History is not presented as open-ended, rather as something not only irreversible but to which there was never an alternative solution at the time either. This logically leads to a rigid interpretation of 'problematic' historical periods, which are yet to become the subject of wide discussion in the CR. This in turn fails to encourage students to develop the ability to make their own assessment and draw their own conclusions. There are no clear goals for the current education system to aim for and the wording of programmes and strategies clings to clichés about competitiveness and human capital. Not once has the name of Comenius [Jan Amos Komenský, 1592–1670], an internationally renowned and respected educational reformer and Czech by origin, appeared in any of the official state education programmes.

## Notes

1. This group comprises students, their parents, the media and, relatively recently, NGOs. Publishing houses which specialise in textbooks also fall into this category.
2. *Národní program rozvoje vzdělávání v České republice: Bílá kniha* [National Education Development Programme: The White Book] (Prague: Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy, 2001).
3. Školský zákon 561/2004 Sb. [Education Act], accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.msmt.cz/file/19743/>.
4. THTA, founded in 1995, unites almost 300 history teachers from primary schools, grammar schools, special grammar schools and vocational schools across the CR. THTA actively cooperates on an international level within EUROCLIO, under the auspices of the Council of Europe.
5. 'Otevřený dopis [Open Letter]', *Zpravodaj Historického klubu* 11 (2000) 1, 7–13.
6. Beneš, Z., Čornej, P. *Slovo o historii* [A Word on History], *Zpravodaj Historického klubu*, 14 (2003) 1, 38–45.
7. 'Nechceme novou Bílou Horu—tentokrát ve vzdělávání. [We Do not Want Another White Mountain—This Time in Education]', accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.asud.cz>.
8. Pešek, J. *Petice 17. listopadu 2003* [Petition of 17 November 2003], *Zpravodaj Historického klubu*, 14 (2003) 1, 47–49.
9. 'Dopis panu Mgr. Ondřeji Liškovi, ministru školství. V Praze dne 6. ledna 2009 [The Letter to Ondřej Liška, Minister of Education, Prague, 6 January 2009]', *Zpravodaj Historického klubu* 20 (2009) 1–2, 106–109.
10. The Jewish Museum project 'Disappeared Neighbours', <http://www.zmizeli-sousedede.cz>, or the NGO Post Bellum project The Memory of the Nation, accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.pametnaroda.cz>.
11. The NGO Člověk v tísní (People in Need) with the project Variants, <http://www.varianty.cz>, or the NGO Antikomplex with their project The Landscape behind the School, <http://www.krajinazaskolou.cz>, accessed 24 May 2017.
12. A total of 794 students from the third year of grammar school and the ninth year of primary school responded. B. Gracová, *Školní výuka dějepisu a překonávání stereotypních obrazů sousedních národů I-II* [School History Education and the Overcoming of Stereotypical Images of Neighbouring Nations] (Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, Filozofická fakulta, 1999).

## Further Reading

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# 17

## France

Marcus Otto

### Introduction

In the 1990s the Algerian War (1954–1962) became a controversial issue within French politics of memory as well as in historiography and history education in the country. In 1999 this debate led to the official recognition of what had until this point been euphemistically called ‘measures to maintain order in Algeria’ as a veritable war.<sup>1</sup> Yet beyond this obviously highly politicised issue, which involved profound conflicts over immigration and national identity within French society as well as over the international dimension of France’s relationship to Algeria, the even more fundamental question of France’s (post-)colonial legacy continued to persist. Within the newly emerging arena of the politics of memory, the question of the representation of this legacy in history education evolved as a controversial issue in itself.

Since the 1990s, the discourse on history education and textbooks has been framed by two opposing tendencies: the monumental resignification of French history as a national patrimony, exemplified by Pierre Nora’s historiographical memorial project focusing on identifying sites of memory, on the one hand, and on the other what is referred to as the ‘duty of memory’ in the recognition of different group identities and communities, including their frequently victimised positions in French history. In the officialised national politics of memory, the French state has tried to bring together different aspects of its conflict-laden history into a regenerated discourse of ‘national unity’ and ‘republican integration’ whose intention is to explicitly counteract any tendency towards communitarianism and its implications. The colonial

issue is thus marked by the repeated refusal of any kind of repentance towards specific communities for the colonial past and for atrocities carried out by the French state and its governments. Furthermore, this republican discourse corresponds in manifold ways to the often-discussed integration of the 'civilising mission' into the self-description of modern France in general<sup>2</sup> and into the national narrative as it is widely taught, or prescribed for teaching, in history education and textbooks in particular.<sup>3</sup>

## Historical Background and Context

In the 1950s, the historians of the *Annales* school at least partially succeeded in establishing their new historiographical approach, which also resonated in history education. This new historiography, promulgated under the programmatic heading of an all-encompassing total history, or more specifically a history of civilisations,<sup>4</sup> implied and articulated a fundamental critique of a restricted national history and political history of events. This critique led in the 1960s to the introduction of what was known as the 'programme of civilisations' into history education and textbooks.<sup>5</sup> However, there remained in history education an element of traditional political and national history which was fostered by successive French governments in order to revive the national consciousness of the French amid the sense of national crisis felt in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Nazi occupation and the Vichy regime, and in the context of the decolonisation of the former French empire in the 1950s and 1960s. However, a crucial innovation of the new curriculum was that it explicitly introduced contemporary history into history education and textbooks. This made possible the introduction of so-called hot issues (*questions chaudes*), that is, contemporary conflicts within French society, into history education and textbooks.

Nevertheless, the 1980s saw the emergence of a critique of the perceived absence of history in general and national history in particular in history education and textbooks under the 'programme of civilisations'.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the reform introduced at the beginning of the 1980s, known as the Haby programme, structured and, according to its critics, absorbed the historical (national) narrative on the basis of concepts borrowed from the social sciences. Inspired by contemporary discourse on a perceived crisis of republican integration and national identity, the Ministry of National Education initiated and organised a national colloquium on history and its education,<sup>7</sup> not least in order to reinforce the idea of a genuinely republican civic education in history education and textbooks. As a consequence, history education and



textbooks were increasingly shaped and perceived as media of the national republican heritage, aimed at the regeneration of national identity and enhanced by a European dimension.

This in turn provoked an ongoing debate around the perceived re-introduction of the republican national narrative into history education and textbooks. In the 1980s, besides the ideological controversy over the alleged communist leanings of history textbooks, the history of the Vichy regime and French collaboration with the Nazis was the critical and most challenging issue in French national history and cultures of memory. Prevailing circumstances<sup>8</sup> since the 1990s have meant that the focus of public controversies over national history and history education has shifted to the Algerian War, which has become in its turn the critical issue in a newly emerging framework of issues,<sup>9</sup> bringing the (post-)colonial legacies of French history to the fore.

## The Debate

In the course of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the controversies over the post-colonial politics of memory had a direct impact on the issue of the colonial past in history education, curricula and textbooks. The conflicts that arose in this context culminated in the debate over the law of 23 February 2005 on colonialism, which related directly to history education by stipulating in Article 4 that '[s]chool curricula shall acknowledge in particular the positive role of the French presence overseas, notably in North Africa, and accord to the history and to the sacrifices of the combatants of the French army in these territories the eminent place they deserve'.<sup>10</sup> The ongoing public controversy eventually led on 29 November 2005 to a debate about the repeal of Article 4 in the National Assembly. The attempt of the parties of the parliamentary opposition on the left to have the article repealed failed because the majority of the Gaullist presidential party *Union pour un mouvement populaire* (UMP) continued to support the law. This parliamentary debate,<sup>11</sup> which saw explicit and impassioned discussion of issues of history education in general and history textbooks in particular, reflected and responded to the intense public debate which had evolved after the largely unremarked enactment of the law on 23 February 2005.

Three major, interconnected issues formed the general framework of the public debate which will be analysed here. On a first 'ideological' level, the confrontation between pro- and anti-colonial and post-colonial ideas of the colonial past re-emerged; the second level related to the more 'institutional' question of whether an official history provided by the state could acceptably

limit the autonomy of historiography and history education; and the third level involved the broader societal discourse of republican integration in view of the perceived potential threat of communitarianism. The law of 23 February explicitly argued in favour of the positive recognition of the protagonists of French colonisation overseas in general, and in North Africa in particular, and of their civilising work. This positive recognition was explicitly to include the 'repatriated', the so-called *pieds-noirs* (the French or European settlers in Algeria), the *harkis* (the Algerians who were accused of collaboration with the French colonists) and the French army. According to the dominant interpretation, the law was responding to the controversy over France's (post-)colonial legacies and, indirectly, to what was known as the Taubira law (2001), which recognised the transatlantic and Indian Ocean slave trade as a crime against humanity. While not explicitly addressing French involvement in the slave trade, this law nonetheless became perceived as a general condemnation of colonialist practices such as slavery. The law of 2005 explicitly prescribed, in its contested fourth article, the positive recognition and representation of French colonialism, particularly in North Africa, in history education, curricula and textbooks. It began a discourse over the post-colonial politics of memory which focused on what were referred to as the laws on history and memory. While the Taubira law of 2001 recognising the colonial slave trade as a crime against humanity expressed a critique of colonialism in general and thus only an implicit critique of France, the new memory law of 2005 made this critique explicit in reverse by recognising and affirming the 'positive role of the French presence overseas'. Although this law initially passed through the legislative process without noticeable resistance, it soon provoked public protests and debates, in particular among historians and history teachers' associations. The debate took on an international dimension when Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika denounced the pro-colonial memory law as a new kind of negationism and branded it an obstacle to the planned signing of an Algerian-French treaty of friendship.<sup>12</sup> In 2006 the heavily contested Article 4 was finally abrogated by the *Conseil d'Etat*.

## A Civilising Mission or a Crime Against Humanity? The Controversy over France's Colonial Past

Article 4 of the 2005 law clearly prescribed a positive representation of the colonial past in history education. This immediately provoked a controversy over the way in which the colonial past should be represented in historiogra-

phy and history education. The historian Claude Liauzu, an eminent figure in French colonial history, criticised the exclusionist message the law addressed to French citizens with origins in the former colonies:

The colonial wars of the past have become contemporary wars of memory in which the protagonists and their heirs dispute the exclusive role of victims and claim repentance as well as compensation. Draft legislation, which seems to have already been adopted, pays homage to 'the positive common work of our fellow citizens' in French Algeria. According to our elected deputies there have never been massacres, destruction, deprivation, or torture ... Likewise, [the legislation implies that] the benefits of the French Republic had been brought to that country even if its subjects never became French citizens, even if schools never became public and compulsory ... There is an urgent necessity to establish a history which explains to our children, and especially to those who feel excluded from official memory, how and why they live together in this world.<sup>13</sup>

In his argument, Liauzu linked his historiographical critique of the pro-colonial recourse to the colonial past with the contemporary effects of a corresponding politics of memory geared towards the young descendants of post-colonial immigration.

Within a relatively short period of time after the enactment of the law, Liauzu initiated a petition, which was supported by a number of his fellow historians as well as by representatives of the teaching and school communities. This declaration of protest explicitly contested the implications of creating an official version of history by arguing that the law had grave implications for the exercise of historical research and history education. It argued that

[t]his law has to be abrogated because it imposes an official history, contrary to the neutrality of schools and to the respect for liberty of thought which are central to French secularism [*laïcité*], also because, by focusing on the 'positive role' of colonisation, it imposes an official lie regarding the crimes, the massacres which became genocide, the slavery, the racism which have been inherited from that past, because it legitimises nationalist communitarianism in reaction to the communitarianism of groups which are thus denied any past.<sup>14</sup>

Impassioned responses to this line of argument came particularly from the politically influential intellectual camp known as the 'new philosophers'. In a television debate against Sandrine Lemaire, a scholar engaged in critical French post-colonial historiography, the leading 'new philosopher' Alain Finkielkraut argued that

[i]t is necessary to resist any imposition of education by the state. In this respect I join the protests of the historians but I add two qualifications. First, it is necessary to be true to oneself. Why have certain politicians engaged in this awkward and controversial initiative? They want to react to the negative and hyper-critical image of colonisation in education and society. They wish that people did not consider the repatriates in France to be monsters or descendants of monsters. Second, another law has already been passed, the Taubira law which institutes slavery as a crime against humanity. One of its articles prescribes that curricula and research acknowledge the slave trade and colonial slavery and give them an adequate place in teaching. Nobody protested.<sup>15</sup>

The controversy thus immediately gave rise to a fundamental debate concerning the autonomy of historiography and history education in the face of any tendency to prescribe an official version of history mandated by the republican state.

## An Official History Versus the Autonomy of Historiography and History Education

This line of argument on the autonomy of historiography and history education was subsequently also adopted by teachers' associations, who repeatedly and programmatically made such declarations as '[i]t is up to historians to write history and to teachers to teach it'.<sup>16</sup> A few days after the statement cited here was published, a group of well-known historians published a declaration in *Libération* entitled 'Liberty for History', which situated the debate in the context of broader questions about the role of history and the politics of memory:

It is in violation of these principles [i.e., the autonomy of historiography] that the articles of the successive laws of 3 July 1990, 29 January 2001, 21 May 2001 and 23 February 2005 constrain the freedom of the historian by prescribing on pain of sanctions what he has to research and what he has to find, prescribing to him the methods [to be used] and laying down limits. We demand the repeal of these legislative dispositions, which are unworthy of a democratic regime.<sup>17</sup>

Beyond the struggles over France's (post-)colonial legacies, the law, and Article 4 in particular, this also opened up intense controversy over the fundamental question of the role of the state in historiography and history education. The Committee of Vigilance on the Public Uses of History<sup>18</sup> became a

major voice within the discussion, taking a stance that was less polemical than reflective. This association of historians strongly disagreed with the declaration on 'Liberty for History' referred to above. While the 'Liberty for History' group argued generally against any kind of memory law, the Committee distinguished between different kinds of memory laws. It also widened the debate from the colonial issue and the corresponding politics of memory to problems of historical research and history education in general:

The current debate on colonial history illustrates a far more general problem concerning the teaching of our discipline, and the enormous gap between innovation in research and the curricula [taught in schools]. It is necessary to establish an institution to reduce the gap between research and education so that current issues in historical research are treated adequately.<sup>19</sup>

In view of this ongoing debate and the continued protests, French President Jacques Chirac intervened in the controversy, aiming to calm the antagonism of the conflicting groups:

Like all nations, France has known grandeur, it has known challenges, it has known moments of enlightenment as well as darker moments. This means a heritage which we have to recognise in its entirety. This means a heritage which we have to recognise in respect of each individual's memories, sometimes painful memories which constitute for many of our fellow citizens a part of their identity. History is the key to the cohesion of a nation. But it takes very little to turn history into a ferment of division which provokes passions and opens up the wounds of the past. In a Republic there is no official history. It is not up to the law to write history. The writing of history is the business of historians.<sup>20</sup>

In December 2005 the *Association des Clionautes*, an organisation for teachers of history and geography, supported the teachers' protest against Article 4 of the law.

As history teachers, we know very well which are the regimes that want to restrict and silence our discipline. In a democracy, history is neither written nor taught in front of parliamentary tribunals. The historian has to be able to research freely, and the history teacher has to teach freely, independent of any pressure.<sup>21</sup>

Finkielkraut, the leading member of the 'new philosophers', also argued in defence of the autonomy of historiography, but from a perspective that explicitly rejected the allegedly ideologically based and communitarian critiques of

colonialism that he claimed were predominant. He rhetorically broadened the debate by linking the law of 23 February to previous memory laws as well as to the 'communitarian' discourse on the 'duty of memory' in general and the politics of the memory of the Shoah in particular.<sup>22</sup> This kind of argument links the debate to the overall discourse of republican integration and the perceived threat of communitarian identity politics; the threat is viewed as especially strong where such politics are represented by minority and immigrant groups.

## The Discourse of Republican Integration and the Spectre of Communitarianism

Current discourse on republican integration in France encompasses both at least partial reassertions of the legitimacy of the 'civilising mission' and post-colonial critiques of colonialism expressed by various minority groups. History education and school as a republican institution and prominent site of the political struggle between republican integration and communitarianism have therefore become major issues within this discourse of the politics of memory of the colonial past. Thus the debate over the law of 23 February pitched the discourse of republican national unity and integration against the widely perceived threat of particularistic communitarian politics. This threat was identified by some commentators in laws on memory and history, which they viewed as part of an anti-republican memorialisation of victimhood. Another protest was articulated by French human rights associations during a press conference, where they pointed to the eventual communitarian and anti-republican repercussions of the law of 23 February, and argued that the law manifestly neglected the 'history, memories, biographies, and experiences of citizens with origins in the former French colonies' and therefore deprived them of their identities.<sup>23</sup> Following this line of argument, other groups and individuals also referred to the potential of a positive representation of French colonialism in textbooks to ignite conflict. Besides the historians and associations of history teachers that were the major actors in protests against the law of 23 February, associations of 'descendants of *harkis*', who were explicitly addressed in the law, protested against being instrumentalised by ideological politics.

We, daughters and sons of parents with Algerian origins, descendants of *harkis*, call for the articles 4 and 13 of the 23 February 2005 law to be abrogated and declare that ... we refuse to be exploited for purely ideological ends by politicians.

Furthermore, they declared that 'the abandonment of the *harkis* by the French state during the independence of Algeria and their imprisonment in camps is also vivid evidence of the negative acts arising from colonisation'.<sup>24</sup>

Approximately a year after the enactment of the law, the recently established and politically highly controversial group *Les Indigènes de la République* (Movement of the self-declared Indigenous of the Republic) published a sharply critical declaration that explicitly connected the post-colonial politics of memory with a critique of immigration policy and of the politics of social exclusion based on cultural difference:

We thank France for having colonised us! Isn't this what we had to declare [when] faced with the reading of a law which, in its first article, says that ... colonisation was a good thing and you have to recognise that. In calling colonisation an '*oeuvre*', a great work, in defining wars as a 'process', the law of 23 February 2005 does nothing but rewrite history. It seeks to impose a memory which contradicts the historical truth as well as our individual and family memories ... How could we, descendants of slaves and deported Africans, daughters and sons of colonised people and immigrants, French and non-French, '*Indigènes de la République*', accept that? This law is nothing less than an ideological enterprise which seeks to return the natives to their place ... In its entirety, the law of 23 February 2005 adopts the logic of other laws which construct and perpetuate the '*indigénat*'.<sup>25</sup>

This demonstrates the depth of political and social conflicts over the post-colonial politics of memory in general, and the representation of the colonial past in history education in particular, that continue to this day. In November 2005, these divisions became particularly evident when violent conflicts arose in the *banlieues*, which were interpreted in part within a post-colonial framework by participants and observers alike.

## Conclusion

The controversy over the law of 23 February evolved around three major issues and corresponding lines of argument, which also reflect discourse on the contemporary post-colonial politics of memory in general: first, the conflict between pro- and anti-colonial or post-colonial approaches to the colonial past; second, the conflict between official history prescribed by the state and the autonomy of historiography and history education; and third, the conflict between a broader ideological discourse on republican integration and the perceived potential threat of communitarianism. In general, the



debate was characterised by the presence of political, memory-related and historiographical strands of argumentation, reflecting the fact that historians and history teachers were among those most profoundly involved. Finally, in the context of contemporary conflict over national identity, immigration and cultural difference, the post-colonial politics of memory in general and the politics of the memory of the colonial past in history education, including textbooks, in particular have become particularly acute issues. This politics of memory is at the root of the most persistently conflict-laden issues in contemporary France. In sum, the ongoing conflict over the politics of memory in general, and especially the question of the colonial issue in history education, has given rise to, and makes reference to, the discursive re-introduction of the former distinction between the imperial power and its colonies within the erstwhile coloniser France itself.

## Notes

1. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author. It is interesting to note that the notion of the 'guerre d'Algérie' appeared in history textbooks as early as the 1960s.
2. See, for example, Dino Costantini, *Mission civilisatrice. Le rôle de l'histoire coloniale dans la construction de l'identité politique française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2008) and, especially concerning the integration of the history of decolonisation and the Algerian War into the republican master narrative, Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).
3. See in particular L. de Cock and Emmanuelle Picard, eds., *La fabrique scolaire de l'histoire. Illusions et désillusions du roman national* (Marseille: Agone, 2009).
4. These approaches of a *histoire totale* and *histoire des civilisations* beyond conventional methodological nationalism characterised the works of the *Annales* in general.
5. See F. Lanthéaume, 'L'enseignement de la colonisation et décolonisation de l'Algérie. État-nation, identité nationale, critique et valeurs. Essai de sociologie du curriculum' (PhD diss., Paris University, 2002); here, 225–251.
6. See, for instance, Patricia Legris, "'On n'apprend plus l'histoire à nos enfants!'" Analyse de la polémique sur l'enseignement de l'histoire'. In *Les Figures de l'Etat éducateur*, ed. J. Barroche, Nathalie Le Bouedec and Xavier Pons (Paris: Harmattan, 2008). Another controversy, situated in the context of the Cold War and ignited by the conservative press, evolved in the 1980s around the perceived communist and pro-Soviet ideology in French history textbooks.

7. See *Colloque national sur l'histoire et son enseignement: 19–20–21 janvier 1984, Montpellier* (Paris: Centre national de documentation pédagogique, 1984).
8. Such circumstances included, for example, the increasingly controversial post-colonial immigration to France, primarily from Algeria; the *affaire du foulard* (headscarf affair) in 1989; the emergence of political Islam; and the civil war in Algeria in the 1990s.
9. See, for instance, the conference *Mémoire et enseignement de la guerre d'Algérie. Actes du colloque, 13–14 mars 1992* (Paris: Institut du monde Arabe, 1993). This conference was publicly criticised by interest groups that supported the tradition of 'French Algeria' (*l'Algérie française*).
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# 18

## Georgia

Nino Chikovani

### Introduction

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the process of reviewing national history emerged as an integral part of the state-building process in Georgia. History was looked to for justification of the newly independent state and for the answers to all questions faced by the country. History came under the focus of both the titular nation and the ethnic minorities residing in Georgia. The debates on the new narrative—distinct from the Soviet narrative—and the methodology of history teaching were sharpened by the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s and complicated by the formation of post-conflict traumatic memory.

### Historical Background

Georgian nationalism has its roots in the 1860s and 1870s, when Georgia passed through a period of adjustment to the new reality of being a part of the Russian Empire. As in many other countries, the nationalist movement was initially framed around the common past. Later, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Georgian historiographical scholarship was shaped in opposition to Russian imperial policy, which aimed to reconstruct the historical memory of Georgians along imperial lines. National history became the main rallying point for an ethnic identity perceived to be under serious threat. Accordingly, the nation was perceived in its relation to others, who were often construed as ‘national enemies’. In a similar way to other cases where

professional historiography was formed as a response to an imperial challenge, the Georgian grand narrative was aimed at strengthening the identity of Georgians; therefore, history was expected to depict the difference between them and 'others', inside as well as outside of the country.

Imposition of Soviet rule brought significant changes to the process of historicity and identity discourse. However, as the Marxist framework of history writing combined with the propagation of national characteristics,<sup>1</sup> the narrative formed at the beginning of the twentieth century was largely maintained, although rearranged according to the new methodological requirements.<sup>2</sup> In the period of 'perestroika', the general process of reviving national identity was accompanied by growing interest in national history.

After the dissolution of the USSR, a period of deconstruction and reconsideration of the past began. From the end of the 1980s, Georgian history became a compulsory course for secondary schools and institutes of higher education. No new grand narrative was created; the spirit of positivist historiography was kept in all new texts, abounding in facts and heroic rhetoric. An aspiration towards the search for 'historical truth' was maintained and reflected in the sole 'true', institutionalised, official and positivist version of history. In this context, the Georgian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian narratives were formed as counter-histories and determined the formation of Georgians, Abkhazians and Ossetians as the different 'mnemonic entities'.<sup>3</sup> A problem emerged in relation to the principles of history education (usually defined by the state) in this multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state. The situation was complicated by the fact that until 2005, in the regions with compact ethnic minorities, history teaching was based on textbooks supplied by the ethnic homelands; indeed, the history of Georgia was not taught at all in those regions.

Two main directions could be observed in post-Soviet debates on the problems of representing and teaching history: (1) the Georgian grand narrative versus Abkhazian and South Ossetian versions of national history and (2) the Georgian grand narrative versus goals and standards of history teaching reflected in the National Standard as well as in the textbooks based upon it.

## The Debates

### The Georgian Grand Narrative Versus Abkhazian and South Ossetian Accounts

In the 1990s, the grand narrative was influenced by the difficulties of the state-building process. The rhetoric of 'brotherhood and friendship' of the Soviet era,

which had papered over the cracks between different ethnic groups, was substituted by a struggle for national rights that dominated the political atmosphere by the end of the 1980s. Ethno-territorial institutionalisation and the cultivation of national political, economic and cultural elites from the Soviet era became a source of inter-ethnic tensions. The situation was aggravated by the conflicts exploding in the South Caucasus. Quite often, they were accompanied or even preceded by 'history wars'. The motives, aspirations and actions of each side were reflected and narrated differently by their opponents based on myths, stereotypes, preconceptions and prejudices formed over a long period of time. The experience of coexistence and shared history was suppressed, as conflicts were followed by a dominance of post-conflict traumatic memory. As was the case in many other post-communist countries, the view of Georgia's history became more ethnocentric in the 1990s. It became a history of ethnic Georgians, with no place left for ethnic minorities. A sudden shift from a *correct* history (from the perspective of class struggle) to a *true* history (from the perspective of the Georgian people) took place.<sup>4</sup> The ethnocentric version of the nation's history met with analogous versions propagated by the ethnic groups holding autonomous status: Abkhazians and Ossetians.

A theory on the ethnic origins of Abkhazians (formulated in the mid-twentieth century) was added to the Georgian grand narrative. It represented the 'non-Georgian' Abkhazians as a non-indigenous population of the South Caucasus and considered them to have settled in 'Georgian' territory considerably later than Georgians. In opposition to this statement, Abkhazian historians stressed that Abkhazians had lived in the territory of Abkhazia from time immemorial. Meanwhile, the image of Ossetians as migrants who became the reliable collaborators of foreign (Russian) aggressors was set in the Georgian narrative. The South Ossetian narrative was framed around the events of 1918–21.

It could be said that the transformation of the Georgian professional historical narrative in the post-Soviet period occurred through the negation of the Marxist formational framework and an attempt at its demystification. The positivist basis remained unchanged: a strong accent on political history, concentrating on facts and causal links between them, searching for the 'historical truth'. Filling in the 'blanks' of history was considered to be the main task of Georgian historiography. A great deal of factual material appeared in the narrative, covering themes that had been forbidden in the Soviet era. These were mainly themes from modern history: political movements at the beginning of the twentieth century, political parties formed in Georgia during that period, their programmes and leaders, a detailed history of the Georgian Democratic Republic, Church history, the struggle against the Soviet regime in the 1920s and 1930s, Soviet political repression, Georgian emigration and so on.

The following changes could be observed in comparing the historiographical texts of the 1990s<sup>5</sup> with the eight-volume edition of the *Essays on the History of Georgia*, published in the 1970s and 1980s: quotations from Marxist-Leninist classics disappeared; substantial changes were made to sections dealing with the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (topics forbidden during the Soviet era were updated and presented with an impressive amount of documentary material); the emphasis appeared to move towards an interpretation of facts and events, which were reassessed to better suit the interests of the newly independent state. In the *Essays*, for example, emphasis was placed on the hostile political environment and the constant threat of physical annihilation to the Georgian people. Russia was considered to be a reliable co-religionist ally, with the voluntary unification with Russia enabling Georgia to eliminate its existing troubles. In the texts of the 1990s, the risk of losing national identity came into focus. The Russian Empire and its successor, the Soviet state, were transformed into the colonisers, represented as a serious threat to the Georgian people and Georgian culture.

However, these changes did not lead to the creation of a new narrative based on new methodological principles. Academic historians had difficulty giving up not only the old theoretical framework but also the traditional narrative of the Soviet period. The continuity of the grand narrative can be confirmed by comparing the eight-volume edition of the *Essays on the History of Georgia* published between 1970 and 1980 with the *History of Georgia from Ancient Times to the End of the 20th Century* in four volumes published in 2012.

As for the public discourse, ultra-patriotic sentiments appeared in the public speeches of the political leaders, in the printed media and on television after the end of the Soviet era. The principle of 'autochthonous population' became a subject of manipulation. Some political parties started to talk about the 'guests' who could not be considered part of the Georgian nation. The residence of different ethnic groups within the territory of Georgia was declared to result from the tolerance of the titular nation; voices introduced the notion of 'ingratitude' on the part of the migrants. Some activists from ethnic minorities were no less radical in their political rhetoric, using the concept of their 'historical lands' within the territory of Georgia.<sup>6</sup> Mutual accusations of falsifying history arose.

## **The Georgian Grand Narrative Vis-à-vis the National Standard in Teaching and Textbooks**

After achieving independence, Georgia faced a need for new textbooks on both national and world history. The principles of history education had not



been re-defined, thus the changes were made within the existing framework. The first post-Soviet textbooks were in full conformity with the grand narrative. They were full of facts and still compiled in the Soviet style. Marxist methodology was disregarded, but attaining methodological pluralism and establishing multi-perspectivity turned out to be a hard task. There was nothing new in terms of integrating ethnic minorities into the general narrative and, like in Soviet times, they were relegated to random mentions in the lessons on cultural history. Sections on the 'History of Georgia' and 'World History' were strictly separated.

It took some time to realise the importance of overcoming conflicting memories and forming a sense of national belonging regardless of ethnic, cultural or religious identity. At the end of the 1990s, the process of overcoming ethnocentric history began by way of secondary school textbooks. Elaboration on national and world history became the major task of the new curriculum and new textbooks. By this time, there still had not been any considerable changes to the grand narrative; academia had proved to be conservative, thus history textbooks could not be rewritten to include sweeping transformations.

In 1997, the new Law of Education was adopted and the National Educational Standard for the History of Georgia and for World History was created. The authors of the Standard tried to develop the concept of history teaching so that it would correspond 'to the perspectives of complete democratisation of the country and contribute to raising ... political, cultural, religious tolerance in pupils'.<sup>7</sup> The importance of a 'pluralistic-alternative teaching of history' was accentuated. However, the content of the Standard did not fully correspond to the declared principles. According to the Standard, the only aim of presenting alternative perspectives was to achieve the 'historical truth'.<sup>8</sup> It was not quite clear how to handle the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of the country or how the role of ethnic minorities in the history of Georgia should be presented.

The second post-Soviet generation of national history textbooks, created on the basis of the 1997 Standard, represented history as a collective memory aimed at strengthening national—or more precisely, ethnic—identity rather than as a form of knowledge involving particular disciplinary procedures and methods. The way historical events and facts were presented did not allow pupils to stand back and gain perspective. It led to the impression of history as destiny, a legendary story about the past.

Since the latter half of the 1990s, international participants have become involved in the process of reforming history education, collaborating with Georgian officials. The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook

Research has contributed greatly to the elaboration and evaluation of the standards and the new textbooks. Georgian scholars and textbook authors have been given the opportunity to work in the Institute library and learn from the experiences of other countries, participating in conferences dedicated to the problems of history education in the South Caucasus. Several articles regarding the ongoing reforms have been published in the Institute's academic series.<sup>9</sup>

From 25 to 27 September 1997, under the initiative of the Council of Europe, a Regional Seminar on 'The Reform of History Teaching in Secondary Schools' was held in Tbilisi and Tabakhmela, Georgia. It brought together specialists from Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Turkey, as well as experts invited by the Council of Europe. Issues arising in the preparation of the new history curricula and textbooks, as well as issues regarding the standards and their implementation, were discussed at the seminar. Ian McKellar, the General Reporter (Glasgow University), presented his recommendations, underlining the need to balance local, regional and world history topics; to increase 'dialogue between the textbook and reader'; to set a multi-perspective approach; and to include controversial issues in the textbooks, among other things.<sup>10</sup>

In 2006 a research project was implemented by CIMERA, the results of which were published under the title 'History Teaching in Georgia: Representation of Minorities in Georgian History Textbooks'.<sup>11</sup>

In 2008, the project 'Contemporary History Textbooks in the South Caucasus' was realised under the initiative of the Czech Republic's Association for Internal Affairs, with a collection of articles published under the same title later that year.<sup>12</sup>

From 2008 to 2010, the EUROCLIO project 'Tolerance Building through History Education in Georgia' was implemented. As part of this, the teaching tool 'How We Lived Together in Georgia in the 20th Century' was published for the 10th to 12th grades of secondary school (15- to 17-year-olds).<sup>13</sup>

Other international initiatives aimed at overcoming conflicting narratives and creating a common history textbook for the South Caucasus. The Tbilisi Initiative is the most well-known among them. The idea was proposed by the Georgian Ministry of Education at the above-mentioned seminar in 1997 and further supported and financed by the Council of Europe. Although the project's main goal was not fulfilled, the participants gained substantial experience in collaboration. At the same time, the working process revealed problems that required careful attention.

From 2003, a radical shift from ethnic to civic nationalism could be observed in Georgia. The political elite began to cite the country's ethnic and cultural diversity as the source of its power. 'Diversity is our strength' became

the main message of political discourse. In general, setting the principles of education (history education in this case) is the prerogative of the state; consequently, the narrative set by political discourse was propagated through secondary school textbooks.

The Law of Education adopted in April 2005 reflected the challenge of civic integration. The reform in the teaching of history involved the following goals: establishing a multi-perspective approach; presenting history as an interpretation; overcoming traditional national/ethnic discourse; shaping civic consciousness (inclusion of ethnic minorities in the history of Georgia). Particular emphasis went to the view that 'the material should be presented from various different points of view. This contributes to the formation of critical thinking and assists in overcoming stereotypes. School should support diversity through raising levels of respect towards religious, linguistic and ethnic differences'.<sup>14</sup>

From 2005 onwards, textbooks created in accordance with the National Standard had to be submitted to the Centre for National Curricula<sup>15</sup> for approval. Several textbooks may be approved for each grade. One of the approved textbooks is translated into the other languages of instruction (defined by law): Azeri, Armenian and Russian. Schools are entitled to select a textbook from the list of those approved by the Centre.

Third-generation textbooks represent the first attempt to overcome an ethnocentric vision of history, although they do demonstrate some deficiencies. The form of material provided remains one of the most contentious issues: the authors' narrative has practically disappeared, being substituted by fragments of primary sources with brief comments. The textbook authors considered this to be the most appropriate way to represent different perspectives, contributing to the formation of critical thinking and the perception of history as an interpretation of the past. But this approach is hotly debated by Georgian historians. Their claims are not unfounded: In some cases, the sources are not selected carefully enough and there is a danger of the historical process becoming fragmented. At the same time, this new type of textbook requires high levels of professionalism from teachers; this is not a traditional textbook with a narrative that students learn by rote, while a teacher simply checks that the material has been memorised.

## Documentation

Referring to the past and yet creating parallel histories, Georgians and Abkhazians were seeking to justify territorial claims. They were competing for the same historical resources and accusing each other of 'taking away history'.

According to the Georgian grand narrative, in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, Abkhazians 'were Georgians, like Svans, Kakhs and others' residing in the territory of Georgia:

The alien, non-Georgian Abkhazians appear considerably later ... From the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries and especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the population in Georgia sharply decreased, nomadic tribes from the North Caucasus started to settle in this territory. At this time, compact settlements of Alan-Ossetians began to emerge in the mountainous part of Inner Kartli, and the representatives of the Circassian-Adyghe ethnic group started to appear in the north-west part—Abkhazia. They were called 'Abkhazians' by our ancestors, and according to Georgian law, were foreigners; migrants of the third generation were considered to be the native/indigenous (not aboriginal) people. They called themselves 'Apsua' and this is their name today as well ... Apsua were formed as a nation in this territory, here they have formed their culture, identity. They have a right to administrative-cultural autonomy within the framework of the Georgian state, but they do not have a right to Georgian land.<sup>16</sup>

The same issue is represented differently in the Abkhazian narrative:

The very first time Abkhazians are mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions of the 12th century B.C. it is under the name 'Abeshla'. 'Apsils' and 'Abazgians' are mentioned in the ancient Greek and Roman sources of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. Their genetic linkage with the Abkhazian people is proved by the ethnonyms 'Apsua' (what the 'Abkhazians' call themselves), 'Abaza' (what the Abazians, a group related to Abkhazians, call themselves), 'Obezis' in Russian sources and 'Abkhazs' in the Georgian chronicles. Abkhazians call their motherland 'Apsni'.<sup>17</sup>

By the end of the rule of Leon I, the Abkhazian principality had grown to become the Abkhazian kingdom ... This was the route of Abkhazia towards early feudal statehood. The history of Abkhazian statehood is generally counted from that time.<sup>18</sup>

The history of 1918–21 diverges radically in Georgian and Abkhazian narratives:

By March 1918, some Abkhazian (Apsua) leaders had already expressed their separatist aspirations ... The government of Georgia was ready to grant wide self-governance, even political autonomy, to the multi-ethnic population of this region ... It turned out to be impossible to solve this conflict by peaceful means. The Popular Guard under the command of General Mazniashvili launched an attack and defeated the separatist brigades.<sup>19</sup>

This is the story as presented in the Georgian narrative. The Abkhazian narrative reads thus:

In June 1918, violating all agreements, the army of the newly declared Democratic Republic of Georgia, under the direct military support of imperial Germany, occupied the territory of Abkhazia. The politics of the Menshevik government of Georgia angered the multi-national population of Abkhazia; this paved the way for the imposition of Soviet rule on 4 March 1921. The new regime was perceived as a liberation from the repression and military intervention of the Republic of Georgia.<sup>20</sup>

The policy of 'Georgianisation' promoted by Stalin and Beria, aimed at the demographic and cultural assimilation of Abkhazians, became the central target of Abkhazian nationalism. The Georgian political centre and ethnic Georgian leaders of the Kremlin were represented as the main oppressors and victimisers. Georgians were blamed for 'taking away Abkhazians' memory'.

The Georgian and South Ossetian narratives are no less contradictory. The uprising of Ossetians in northern Georgia in 1919 was interpreted as a popular revolt against the Menshevik oppressors in Soviet historiography:

The Ossetian working people, alongside the working class of Georgia, waged an uncompromising war against the local feudal lords, profiteers and Menshevik officials ... Under the direction of the regional committee of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks), the Ossetian Bolsheviks started to prepare the mass revolt ... The Menshevik government decided to punish the working people of Ossetia and sent numerous brigades of the Popular Guard to South Ossetia.<sup>21</sup>

In the post-Soviet period, Georgian historians viewed this as a subversive act and as a prelude to Sovietisation in 1921:

In spring 1918, Bolsheviks attached a political overtone to the agrarian movement in the gorge of the river Liakhvi and directed it against the government of Georgia. The government of the Republic of Georgia sent troops to the conflict zone. The military units of Koniashvili and Jugheli captured Tskhinvali; nevertheless, the anti-Georgian movement of separatist Ossetians lasted for a long time.<sup>22</sup>

The Ossetian national narrative presented the above-mentioned event as an attempt by the Georgian government to conduct genocide against the Ossetian people:

The confrontation between the Georgian government and the National Committee of South Ossetia started. Military intervention became the main

instrument for the realisation of the idea of united and undivided Georgia. The Georgian punitive squads took control over key points of potential resistance. The hopes and dreams of the South Ossetian people of political self-determination were connected to Soviet Russia and to the possibility of joining the new Russian state ... The Georgian-Russian treaty of 7 May 1920 gave a free hand to the Georgian chastisers to carry out the extermination and genocide of the Ossetian people.<sup>23</sup>

As for the official political discourse, a number of researchers highlight the exclusivist nationalist rhetoric of the national government of Zviad Gamsakhurdia (1991–92) as aggravating tensions between different ethnic groups and triggering their secessionist and anti-centrist tendencies. Still, this assessment misses the speeches and appeals of Gamsakhurdia demonstrating his carefulness towards the national minorities residing in the territory of Georgia. The marking of ‘others’ by stressing difference and Georgian supremacy was aimed not at the humiliation of the ‘others’ but rather at forming a positive self-image, increasing self-esteem and strengthening identity; it did, however, pose a threat to the multi-ethnic state under formation.

In an article by Gamsakhurdia with the remarkable title ‘The Spiritual Mission of Georgia’,<sup>24</sup> published in 1990, he discussed the topic of indigenes and the status of the settlers and ‘newcomers’. At the same time, in his inaugural speech (1991), Gamsakhurdia noted: ‘It is important to stress that at the most critical moment the Georgian people enjoyed the support of the great majority of the non-Georgian population. Georgians will never forget this’.<sup>25</sup>

In one of his public speeches, Gamsakhurdia declared:

A special law should be enacted which will limit the uncontrolled migration and the demographic expansion of the alien nations to Georgia. Meanwhile, the rights of national minorities should not be neglected, who are legally residing in the territory of Georgia and who contribute to the struggle of the Georgian nation for freedom and independence.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, Gamsakhurdia underlined the special rights of the titular nation.<sup>27</sup>

Realising the danger of marginalising the ethnic minorities, Gamsakhurdia tried to clarify his definition of the ‘other’. In the address ‘To the Armenian Population of Javakheti’, he stated:

I am particularly concerned with the fact that when we are talking about ‘aliens’, Armenians feel themselves to be the aliens. This is not the right point of view.

Under the term ‘aliens’ we refer to the people who illegally settled in our territory, illegally gained their property and come with vague pretences against us.<sup>28</sup>

Starting in 2006, the third generation of post-Soviet history textbooks was expanded. Some steps were taken to overcome the ethnocentric narrative. The new textbooks present Georgia as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, shaped over centuries. Special sections are devoted to the issue of Georgia’s national composition, with brief accounts explaining how different ethnic groups settled in Georgia. Textbooks focus extensively on the issue of ethnic minorities in present-day Georgia. The overwhelming tone of the narrative is positive. Ethnic and religious stereotypes have been removed from the textbooks to a greater or lesser degree. The attempt to plant a multi-perspective approach is not an unsuccessful one.

At the same time, the idea of history as an interpretation of facts has still received scant recognition or acceptance by school teachers or academics. ‘History is history! We have to write the real history [as it was], and nothing else!’<sup>29</sup>—This is the perception still dominant among historians. Most history teachers strongly believe in a sole real history; the discovery of the true history could even lead us to the solution of the conflicts, they argue. ‘History is comprised of facts. How could we say that something did not happen? There could not be an alternative opinion’<sup>30</sup>—this phrase fully reflects the attitude of the majority of teachers towards the ‘right way’ of history teaching.

## Conclusion

Summing up, it could be stated that ‘history wars’ and debates over the methodology of history teaching in post-Soviet Georgia were heightened by the ethnic conflicts of the 1990s and the formation of post-conflict traumatic memory. No remarkable changes in the Georgian grand narrative have been observed since then, either in terms of attaining methodological pluralism or in overcoming the confrontation with the Abkhazian and South Ossetian counter-narratives. Due to the existing political reality and the absence of dialogue among Georgian, Abkhazian and Ossetian historians, there is little prospect for a swift solution to this problem. History textbooks for secondary schools, however, have turned out to be more flexible in terms of adopting new methodological approaches as well as giving up their ethnocentric vision of history.

In the 2012/2013 academic year, the new history textbooks approved by the National Centre for the Development of the Quality of Education were intro-



duced for the 7th to 12th grades of secondary school (ages 12 to 17). However, at a glance, it is clear that the authors have returned to the old style of presenting materials. Unfortunately, the right balance still has not been found between the authors' narrative and teaching materials aimed at stimulating critical and independent thinking by pupils. Changes are currently expected in the educational sphere, including the system of preparation, evaluation and publication of textbooks. Thus, the prospects for the immediate future are somewhat difficult to predict. Hopefully, experience gained during the past few years will contribute to the comprehension of existing problems and serve as a basis for the further advancement of history education in Georgia.

## Notes

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4. I. Gundare, 'The Teaching of History in Georgia. With Special Focus on the Armenian and Azeri Minorities and Their Representation in Georgian History Textbooks'. In *History Teaching in Georgia: Representation of Minorities in Georgian History Textbooks*, ed. L. Gigineishvili and I. Gundare (Geneva: CIMERA, 2007), 32.
5. For example, see A. Bendianishvili, საქართველოს ისტორია, 1801–1921 [The History of Georgia—sak'art'velos istoria, 1801–1921] (Tbilisi: Ganatleba, 1999); I. Antelava, ed., საქართველოს ისტორია უძველესი დროიდან დღემდე [The History of Georgia from Ancient times to the Present Day—sak'art'velos istoria udzvelesi droidan dg'emde] (Tbilisi: Samshoblo, 1996); L. Sanikidze, საქართველოს ისტორია თვალის ერთი გადავლებით [Glimpse of the History of Georgia—sak'art'velos istoria tvalis erti gadavlebit] (Tbilisi: Samshoblo, 1994); R. Grdzeldze, საქართველოს პოლიტიკური პარტიების ისტორია [History of the Political Parties of Georgia—sak'art'velos politikuri partiebis istoria] (Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University Press, 1995).

6. Speeches and interviews on these issues were published in Georgian newspapers of that time.
7. P. Lomashvili and S. Vardosanidze, ეროვნული საგანმანათლებლო სტანდარტი საქართველოს ისტორიაში [National Educational Standard in History of Georgia—erovnuli saganmanat'leblo standarti sak'art'velos istoriaši] (Tbilisi, 1997), 5.
8. Ibid., 31.
9. For example: O. Reisner, 'What Can and Should We Learn from Georgian History? Observations of Someone who was Trained in the Western Tradition of Science', *International Textbook Research* 20, no. 4 (1998): 409–424; N. Mamukelashvili, 'Neue Geschichtsbücher in Georgien', *International Textbook Research* 20, no. 4 (1998): 450–460; N. Chikovani, 'The Problem of the Common Past in Multiethnic Societies: The Case of Georgian History Textbooks', *International Textbook Research* 30, no. 4 (2008): 797–810; N. Chikovani, 'Narrativ edinogo Kavkaza: popytki preodolenija konfliktnoj pamjati [Narrative of the United Caucasus: Attempts of Overcoming Conflicting Memory]'. In *Многоликая Клио: бои за историю на постсоветском пространстве*, ed. V. A. Shnirelman et al. (Braunschweig: Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung, 2010), 99–112; K. Kakitashvili, 'Реконструкция прошлого в абхазских и грузинских учебниках истории [Reconstruction of the Past in the Abkhazian and Georgian School History Textbooks]'. In *Многоликая Клио: бои за историю на постсоветском пространстве*, ed. V. A. Shnirelman et al. (Braunschweig: Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung, 2010), 75–99.
10. Regional seminar on 'The Reform of History Teaching in Secondary Schools', report, Strasbourg, 10 September 1998, CC-ED/HIST (98) 49: 30–31.
11. L. Gigineishvili and I. Gundare, eds., *History Teaching in Georgia: Representation of Minorities in Georgian History Textbooks* (Geneva: CIMERA, 2007).
12. L. Vesely, ed., *Contemporary History Textbooks in the South Caucasus* (Prague: Association for International Affairs, 2008).
13. *How We Lived Together in Georgia in the 20th Century* (Tbilisi, 2010).
14. P. Lomashvili and S. Vardosanidze, ეროვნული საგანმანათლებლო სტანდარტი საქართველოს ისტორიაში [National Educational Standard in History of Georgia] (Tbilisi, 1997), 35.
15. Since 2011 it has been called the National Centre for the Development of the Quality of Education.
16. R. Metreveli, ed., *საქართველოს ისტორია ოთხ ტომად (უძველესი დროიდან მე-20 საუკუნის ბოლომდე)* [History of Georgia in Four Volumes: From Ancient Times to the End of the 20th Century], vol. 2, *საქართველო მე-4 საუკუნიდან მე-13 საუკუნემდე*. რედ. როინ მეტრეველი. [Georgia from the 4th to the 13th Century] (Tbilisi: Palitra L, 2012), 193–194.

17. O. Bgajba and S. Lakoba, *Istorija Abkhazii, s drevneishich vremen do nashich dnei. Uchebnik dlja 10–11 klasov* (Sukhumi: Ministerstvo obrazovanija Respubliki Abkhazija, 2006), 364.
18. Ibid., 121.
19. M. Natmeladze, *Sak'art'velos istoria ot'x tomad (udzvelesi droidan me-20 saukunis bolomde)* [History of Georgia in Four Volumes: From Ancient Times to the End of the 20th Century], vol. 4, *sak'art'velo me-19-20 saukuneebši* [Georgia in the 19th and 20th Centuries] (Tbilisi: Palitra L, 2012), 222.
20. O. Bgajba and S. Lakoba, *Istorija Abkhazii*, 368.
21. *საქართველოს ისტორიის ნარკვევები 8 ტომად* [Essays on the History of Georgia in 8 volumes], Vol. 6 (Tbilisi: sabcota sakartvelo, 1972), 678–679.
22. *საქართველოს ისტორია ოთხ ტომად* [History of Georgia in Four Volumes], vol. 4, 223.
23. 'Juri Gagloiti i dr. Iz istorii Jujnoi Osetii', last modified 5 May 2012, accessed 1 June 2017, <http://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=27878/>.
24. Z. Gamsakhurdia, *Sak'art'velos sulieri misia* [Spiritual Mission of Georgia] (Tbilisi: ganatleba, 1990).
25. *Sak'art'velos prezidentebis sainauguratsio sitk'vebi 1991–2004* [Inaugural Speeches of the Presidents of Georgia 1991–2004] (Tbilisi, 2007), 7.
26. 'Zviad gamsakhurdias gamosvla 10 noembers, 1990 [Speech of Zviad Gamsakhurdia on 10 November 1990]', *Akhali sakartvelo* 4 (16 November 1990).
27. Ibid.
28. 'Zviad gamsakhurdias mimartva javakhet'is somnekh mosakhleobas [Address of Zviad Gamsakhurdia to the Armenian Population of Javakheti]', *sakartvelos respublika* 57/77 (23 March 1991).
29. I. Gundare, 'The Teaching of History in Georgia', 34.
30. Ibid.

## Further Reading

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- Chikovani, N. 'The Georgian Historical Narrative: From Pre-Soviet to Post-Soviet Nationalism'. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways Toward Terrorism and Genocide* 5, no. 2 (2012): 107–115.
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# 19

## Federal Republic of Germany

Falk Pingel

### Introduction

Prior to German reunification, the systems governing the production and distribution of textbooks in the two German states were radically different. In West Germany, education, and consequently textbook approval, was a matter for the country's federal states. Textbooks were produced by private publishing companies, which were responsible for hiring authors, and sold on the free market. Approval of textbooks for use in schools was granted by the education ministries of each federal state, which generally based their decisions on assessments drawn up by experienced teachers. Any matters of conflict that arose were usually dealt with between the state ministry and the publisher of the book on the basis of the expert assessments, and thus resolved without ever reaching the public domain. Ministerial monitoring with regard to textbooks was focused primarily on ensuring that the books were age-appropriate, complied with the relevant curricula and did not contain any material that was in contravention of the West German constitution and the fundamental values it expressed. The main textbook-related issue which gave rise to debate in the public arena revolved around what became known as the *Grundwertedebatte*, a discussion centring on which values could or should be accepted as those fundamental to West German society as it was and had become; the depiction of the East-West conflict was a key element of this debate.<sup>1</sup> The set of principles known as the *Beutelsbacher Konsens*, which was promulgated in 1976, made the depiction and discussion, from a number of opposing perspectives, of issues with controversial status in society integral to the teaching of historical and political topics in the classroom and in textbooks, and it remains in

place to this day.<sup>2</sup> What we might these days call multiperspectivity was thus theoretically immanent in the teaching of difficult social issues, which took the potential heat out of fraught topics and focussed conflicts around specific matters. This latter development was further influenced by the fact that across West Germany several textbook series produced by competing publishers held approved-for-use status at any one time, while textbooks for individual German states frequently diverged from one another on controversial issues. That said, we should add that textbook authors, who have traditionally been practising teachers at schools or on the academic staff of teaching colleges (rather than universities), generally followed, at least until well into the 1960s, a rather mainstream brand of thinking oriented towards classroom practice, and hence rarely included politically explosive content in their works.

In the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the school system was centrally organised and controlled; responsibility for defining curricular content, teaching and learning methods and textbook approval procedures rested in the hands of the Ministry for the People's Education, which commissioned textbooks from state-controlled institutions such as individual chairs of historical methodology at universities and the GDR's Academy of Educational Science. Disputes over the party line on interpretations of issues and events were generally discussed, and decisions made, within the political framework and in advance of curricula and textbooks being formally commissioned. Fundamental, publicly expressed criticism of depictions in textbooks which had been produced in compliance with the Ministry's political stipulations was not permitted and, where it was expressed, had to be formulated in a highly indirect manner. It was by no means unheard of for disagreements to arise between the publisher and the academic and political institutions involved, as in the case of the conflict over whether the idea of Germany's 'historical heritage' should be broached in schools, and if so in what manner.<sup>3</sup>

## Historical Background

In 1970s West Germany, political shifts and new paradigms in the social sciences, urged forward by the momentum of the student protests of 1968, brought about changes in curricula and teaching materials, some of them intensely radical, which sparked controversy across society and gave rise to heated debates which were taken up by federal state parliaments. The controversies revolved less around individual textbooks than around the political stipulations issued by the education ministries of individual states, which the authors of the textbooks concerned had followed.<sup>4</sup> Alongside the question of

a hypothetical German reunification and relations between East and West, and directly linked to these, a debate arose over the acceptance or rejection of the German-Polish textbook recommendations which had been published in 1976 by the German-Polish Textbook Commission.<sup>5</sup> In order to reach a consensus on a shared fundamental position in the context of the changes in East-West relations, the education ministers of the West German *Länder* agreed upon a resolution entitled 'The Issue of Germany in School Teaching',<sup>6</sup> dated 23 November 1978; after reunification, an attempt to revise this resolution would become the subject of a highly polarised debate.

Debate was likewise inspired by a paradigm shift in the depiction of the GDR which took place in many textbooks during the 1970s. The previously dominant paradigm, which presented the country in largely negative terms as a dictatorship of the ruling party, characterised by repression and economic backwardness and whose population was relentlessly spied on, was replaced by a 'comparison of systems' rooted in social science theory and practice which effectively based itself on an acceptance of the GDR as a state and was intended to enable students to understand to a degree the loyalty and adaptability which many citizens of East Germany had come to feel and practise for their country. This change in content was accompanied by a methodological shift, with a focus on sources and a multiperspective approach successively edging out the traditional narrative style of previous depictions.<sup>7</sup>

The stark oppositions in the depiction of the GDR in textbooks became less marked during the 1980s, so that at the time of German reunification upholding the existing compromises on reforms to textbook content and methodology was a priority. The textbook approval processes which had been in place in the former West Germany continued to apply to reunited Germany, with relatively few changes, although they have become notably more liberal since the 1980s. Some German federal states only commission assessments when textbooks are criticised by third parties, with education ministries otherwise relying upon publishers' assurances that they have complied with curricula and adhered to fundamental values. The peaceful de-escalation of the antagonism which dominated the Cold War era has clearly substantially reduced the potential for conflict in historical and political education in Germany.

## A Debate—But Not a Scandal

The process of unification in the German education system largely followed the pattern seen in all other areas of public life, which was that the West German system was adopted across the reunified nation. The months following

the opening of the inner German border saw GDR history books disappear from East German classrooms, to be replaced by textbooks in widespread use in the West. After reunification, textbook authors from the GDR were either removed from their positions, left the field or attempted to adapt to and continue their careers under the new conditions. Some of the former GDR's most eminent historians and theoreticians of historical methodology, who had been involved in writing or assessing East Germany's history textbooks, soon gave voice to their disappointment at the fact that the new approaches they had propagated on the content and methodology of history teaching had not been taken up in practice; this, however, did not give rise to any controversy over the writing of history for schools. Academic publications in the field which sought to move in a new direction after the end of the GDR, but did not wish to simply adopt the educational theories, content selection and patterns of interpretation dominant in West Germany, remained isolated cases without long-term impact.<sup>8</sup> In the immediate aftermath of the border opening, public discourse on education was dominated for approximately the first year after reunification by adversarial debate and new momentum for the future coupled with accusations, rebuttals and occasional despair.<sup>9</sup> These elements of the discourse were not, however, reflected in a controversy relating to any particular textbook, not least because new textbooks had not yet come onto the market.

West German textbook publishers responded to the unexpected opening of Germany's borders and subsequent reunification with a notable degree of caution. Designing and producing new textbooks on recent history would be time-consuming and was further complicated by a curriculum situation that was still uncertain in the former East German states and had remained generally unchanged in what had been West Germany; publishers therefore largely restricted themselves to making minor corrections, issuing supplements to their existing textbooks and producing additional teaching materials. The education ministers of some *Länder* attempted to draw up new guidelines for textbook publishers in the spirit of the 1978 resolution by the Standing Conference of education ministers of the *Länder* on the issue of divided Germany. The attempt ultimately failed in 1995, due in equal measure to divergent ideas on what the content should be and concerns over prescribing to schools a binding interpretation of recent and current German history. The education ministries of the East German *Länder* in particular criticised the draft guidelines for what they considered to be their one-sided West German perspective on the GDR.<sup>10</sup> Had the guidelines been formally accepted, it would likely have prompted a politically motivated debate on textbooks; the decision not to pursue this project helped keep the situation open-ended and



created less insecurity and confusion for teachers than was frequently reported in the press.<sup>11</sup>

A fundamental debate on teaching in schools, and textbooks, did not commence until the second half of the 1990s, when new textbook series had been produced and published which, when looking back on the twentieth century, viewed East Germany's and Eastern Europe's 'real socialism' as more than a mere footnote, yet clearly a phase that was now over and done with. Discussion was targeted less at reunification and its consequences than at the image of the GDR which now appeared in German textbooks.<sup>12</sup> This image manifested and continues to manifest itself in two distinct ways. One approach, focusing on presenting a history of experience and everyday life, centres on people's actions and perceptions, both on ways of behaving which entailed adapting to the system in various ways and those which expressed attitudes of protest and refusal to submit to the state's authority. The fundamentally different systems that were in place in East and West are of course discussed in textbooks taking this approach. The second type of depiction of the GDR, however, focuses a great deal more closely on this issue and systematically emphasises the state's dictatorial nature, the system of observation and repression of its people it operated and its fundamental dependence on the Soviet Union. Analyses of those new textbooks that appeared in the second half of the 1990s have made the critical point that most of them discuss the GDR's system of oppression in a rather cursory manner and fail, as does their depiction of the history of the everyday, to do justice to the extent to which it infiltrated every aspect of everyday life in East Germany.<sup>13</sup> The substance of this critique was taken up in 2006 by the then Federal Commissioner for the Stasi records, Marianne Birthler, whose department subsequently offered special events and materials for teachers with the aim of providing them with detailed information on the Stasi and its impact on people's everyday lives in the GDR.

Textbook and curriculum development now faces the potentially politically explosive question of comparison between the two German dictatorships of the twentieth century. As the GDR follows the National Socialist period in the curriculum, comparison will suggest itself in students' minds even where it is not conducted explicitly in the classroom. After 1990, totalitarianism reasserted its significance as an academic term,<sup>14</sup> without textbook authors having placed it at the structural centre of depictions of these periods; instead, they tended to make a rather critical use of the term and avoided equating National Socialism with the 'real socialism' of the GDR. Textbook authors' caution in this regard was doubtless one of the factors which prevented the outbreak of a potentially bitter controversy at the time. That said, empirical studies on the extent of young people's knowledge of recent and contemporary history have

uncovered a lack of ability to infer clear differences between the political systems in operation in the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany, the GDR and Germany under National Socialism. These shocking findings led the academics involved to call for greater emphasis in history teaching on the differences between the political systems of Germany's twentieth-century history, in order to improve awareness among young people of what democracy means in relation to their country's history as well as in the present.<sup>15</sup> If such calls can be understood as criticism at all, it was directed at the practice of teaching in Germany's schools and not at its textbooks, many of which give due coverage to content of which student knowledge has been found to be lacking.

## Conclusion

The debate over the depiction of the GDR in textbooks and on the consequences of reunification took place primarily in academic and educational circles, despite having initially been sparked by reports in popular media. Textbook authors' awareness of difficult issues in the presentation of the GDR in their works was heightened by a number of factors, including this wide-ranging debate; extensive collections of materials brought together by the commission of inquiry on the process of coming to terms with the history and the implications of the GDR's dictatorship in reunified Germany; and sets of supplementary materials for schools compiled by academic historians and history educationalists, principally in the period immediately following reunification. The federal structure of cultural and educational policy in Germany, which facilitated from the outset the acceptability of differences in the emphases in the depiction of the GDR from state to state, with the most notable contrasts apparent between western and eastern states, reduced the extent to which the process of educational reunification was dominated by viewpoints from the West. No textbooks contained depictions of East Germany characterised by nostalgia for the GDR or by attempts to legitimise the former system of socialist rule, neither did any summarily negate the difficult situation of people living under the socialist dictatorship or issue sweeping condemnations of the GDR's population. While those charged with evaluating textbooks aired criticisms of one-sided representations of partial aspects of the topic and the degree of emphasis placed on specific issues, they did not consider any of the books studied to be completely unusable.

## Notes

1. G. Stein, 'Schulbuchzulassung—kritisch betrachtet. Zur Legitimation einer bildungspolitischen Entscheidung im curricularen Bereich'. In *Zur Legitimationsproblematik bildungspolitischer Entscheidungen*, ed. S. Jenkier and G. Stein, 157–205 (Saarbrücken: Univ. und Schulbuchverl., 1976); G. Stein, ed., *Schulbuch-Schelte als Politikum und Herausforderung wissenschaftlicher Schulbucharbeit* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1979). There is a discussion of a case of controversy over judgements made by assessors in J. Rohlfes, 'Die staatliche Prüfung und Zulassung von Schulbüchern: ein notwendiges Ärgernis?', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 33 (1982): 10, 599–608.
2. B. Sutor, 'Politische Bildung im Streit um die "intellektuelle Gründung" der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Kontroversen der siebziger und achtziger Jahre', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B 45 (2002), accessed 22 May 2017, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/26627/politische-bildung-im-streit-um-die-intellektuelle-gruendung-der-bundesrepublik-deutschland>.
3. H. C. Mätzing, 'Geschichte im Zeichen des historischen Materialismus. Untersuchungen zu Geschichtswissenschaft und Geschichtsunterricht in der DDR', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 22 (2002): 4, 463–473; H. C. Mätzing, *Geschichte im Zeichen des Historischen Sozialismus* (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1999).
4. See, for example, F. Minssen, 'Legitimationsprobleme in der Gesellschaftslehre. Zum Streit um die hessischen "Rahmenrichtlinien"', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B 41 (1973): 3–38.
5. W. Jacobmeyer, ed., *Die deutsch-polnischen Schulbuchempfehlungen in der öffentlichen Diskussion der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Eine Dokumentation* (Braunschweig: Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 1979).
6. *Die Deutsche Frage im Unterricht*. Resolution by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, 23 November 1978.
7. H. Süßmuth, *Geschichtsdidaktische Positionen: Bestandsaufnahme und Neuorientierung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1980).
8. F. Neuhaus, *Geschichte im Umbruch: Geschichtspolitik, Geschichtsunterricht und Geschichtsbewußtsein in der DDR und den neuen Bundesländern 1983–1993* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1998); H. Süßmuth, ed., *Geschichtsunterricht im vereinten Deutschland: erweiterte Dokumentation der Tagung Geschichtsunterricht in Deutschland, 22–25 Oktober 1990*, 2 vols. (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1991); S. Biskupek, *Transformationsprozesse in der politischen Bildung. Von der Staatsbürgerkunde in der DDR zum Politikunterricht in den neuen Bundesländern* (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag, 2002).
9. "Riesiger Haß staut sich auf." Die Wende hat die Lehrer in Deutschland-Ost zutiefst verunsichert', *Der Spiegel* 7 (1990): 72–75; historians from East and

West Germany look back at reform attempts on both sides during the 1970s and the years 1989–1990 in W. Hasberg and M. Seidenfuß, eds., *Reform—Erfahrung—Innovation. Biografische Erfahrungen in der Region. Ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte der Geschichtsdidaktik* (Münster: LIT, 2015).

10. The former education minister of the German state of Lower Saxony, Rolf Wernstedt, who had initiated the attempted revision of the guidelines emerging from the resolution, considered the decisive question here to be that of the significance which should be accorded to the everyday experiences and lived lives of East German citizens as opposed to that accorded to the oppression visited upon the population by the SED-ruled state. R. Wernstedt, 'Erziehungsziele in der DDR und BRD vor und nach der Wiedervereinigung'. In *Konferenz 'Auswirkungen der Wiedervereinigung auf die Geschichts- und Sozialkundeerziehung: Das deutsche Beispiel in koreanischer Perspektive', 2.-6. Juli im Georg-Eckert-Institut in Braunschweig*, 251–256 (Braunschweig: Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 2009), 256 (Korean/German).
11. S. Etzold, 'Ein deutsches Requiem. Im Jahre 6 nach der Einheit wissen die Lehrer immer noch nicht, wie sie die Geschichte unterrichten sollen. Denn die Kultusminister sind unfähig zur politischen Vorgabe', *Die Zeit*, 25 October 1996, 56; see also 'Was Schüler in Ost und West aus der deutschen Geschichte lernen sollen. Aus dem Entwurf "Darstellung Deutschlands im Unterricht", der unter den Kultusministerien Streit auslöste', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 9 October 1995, 9.
12. A conflict between two textbook authors over the depiction of the GDR is detailed in J. Rohlfes, 'Literaturbericht: Geschichtsdidaktik—Geschichtsunterricht', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 43 (1992): 307–336 and H. Prokasky, 'Wie frei können und dürfen Schulbücher sein?', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 43 (1992): 231–234. On issues surrounding textbook approval procedures in general, see *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 49 (1998): 3.
13. G. Buchstab, ed., *Geschichte der DDR und deutsche Einheit. Analyse von Lehrplänen und Unterrichtswerken für Geschichte und Sozialkunde* (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag, 1999); H. C. Mätzing, *Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS) in aktuellen Geschichts- und Politikbüchern (Juli 2006). Expertise im Auftrag des Ministeriums für Bildung, Jugend und Sport des Landes Brandenburg* (Braunschweig: Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, 2006); H. C. Mätzing, 'Fehlannonce? Die Stasi in aktuellen Geschichtsschulbüchern', *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 60, no. 1 (2009): 4–17. Mätzing's chief complaint is that the victims of political persecution in the GDR 'do not [get] a voice' (14); she recommended textbooks emphasising the impact of the Stasi's practices on its victims. A detailed textbook analysis is offered in S. Handro, 'Arbeit am kollektiven Gedächtnis: "1989" in Schulgeschichtsbüchern'. In *Aufarbeitung der Aufarbeitung. Die*

- DDR im geschichtskulturellen Diskurs*, ed. S. Handro and T. Schaarschmidt (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag, 2011), 84–107. In an assessment of textbooks, the consumer rights and product testing association Stiftung Warentest raised criticisms about issues including ‘clusters of errors and distortions in the chapters on the history of the GDR’ and ‘over-simplification of the depiction of life [in the GDR] in many books’. Stiftung Warentest, ed., ‘Schulbücher, 27 September 2007, Zusammenfassung’, accessed 22 May 2017, <http://www.test.de/Schulbuecher-Schlechtes-Zeugnis-1577822-2577822>. The test’s findings were not uncontroversial and unleashed a debate; see K. H. Pohl, “‘Die ‘Stiftung Warentest’ und die deutschen Schulgeschichtsbücher: ein exemplarisches Beispiel für einen misslungenen Test’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 60 (2009): 32–37; H. Brackemann, ‘Schulbücher im Test: Aufgaben und Arbeit der Stiftung Warentest; eine Erwiderung auf Karl Heinrich Pohl’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 60 (2009): 42–44.
14. G. Heydemann, ‘Die DDR-Vergangenheit im Spiegel des NS-Regimes? Zur Theorie und Methodologie des empirischen Diktaturvergleichs’, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung/International Textbook Research* 22 (2000), 407–416.
  15. K. Schroeder and M. Deutz-Schroeder, *Soziales Paradies oder Stasi-Staat. Das DDR-Bild von Schülern—ein Ost-West-Vergleich* (Stamsried: Verlag Ernst Vögel, 2008); K. Schroeder et al., *Später Sieg der Diktaturen? Zeitgeschichtliche Kenntnisse und Urteile von Jugendlichen* (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 2012); critical discussion of the findings of these studies, some of which have a distinctly bizarre ring, and of the conclusions drawn from them can be found in B. von Borries, ‘Zwischen Katastrophenmeldungen und Alltagsernüchterungen? Empirische Studien und pragmatische Überlegungen zur Verarbeitung der DDR-(BRD-)Geschichte’. In *Aufarbeitung der Aufarbeitung*, ed. S. Handro and T. Schaarschmidt, 121–139 (Schwalbach/Ts.: Wochenschau Verlag, 2011). Von Borries points out that school students’ ideas of historical events and periods, perhaps particularly in relation to the GDR, are more strongly influenced by discussions within their families than by teaching materials used in schools.

## Further Reading

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# 20

## Greece

Hercules (Iraklis) Millas

### Introduction—The Milieu of the Debate<sup>1</sup>

In Greece, history is public property and recurrent appeals to it abound. History as the facts of the past or history as the study of those facts finds its way into both political rhetoric and everyday discussions. Furthermore, references and allusions to historical events are used to support or refute positions on a broad range of issues extending from foreign and domestic policies and cultural debates to practical everyday matters. History is everywhere and many groups and individuals claim the right to an authoritative view on history's truths.

The exceptionally high popularity of history currently and the way in which it is used are closely connected with history's particular role as a basic component in the foundation of the Greek nation state and the formation of the national consciousness of its citizens. This phenomenon is at the heart of the different uses of history by the state and dominant groups, as well as the rise of a new nationalism during the 1990s.

History was also used to foster a strong national identity and in turn to strengthen citizens' loyalty and allegiance to the nation state during the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. The Ottoman domination over many Greek populations and the limitation of national borders also intensified the same processes of national identification.

The two key issues in current debates are manifest in both external and internal policies, including education policies. These debates are over basic components of Greek national identity and their position in the dominant historical culture: first, the nation's biography as a construction of the national



self and its relationship with otherness, and second, the inseparability of the Orthodox religion from national identity.<sup>2</sup> The Greek state, including the institutions tasked with historical preservation and education, codifies the Orthodox religion<sup>3</sup> as intrinsic to Greek national identity and any attempt to renegotiate this identification causes public debates and controversies.

Characteristic of this link between Hellenism and Orthodox religion is that during the first decades of the modern Greek state after 1830, history education was perceived on two axes which were not distinctly separated: classical/secular and religious/Christian. In the years 1870–1894, some major changes occurred, and Orthodox Christianity was taught as a ‘religious’ subject with separate textbooks. However, until recently history education in Greece has in one way or another been associated with and influenced by the Greek Church, which sees itself as the authority which has protected and preserved the Greek language and Greek ethnic identity through the ages and against Ottoman rule (*Tourkokratia*, or Turkish rule). This contested view, which is mainly endorsed by conservative political groups, became widely known after 1880 as ‘Helleno-Christianity’, a term taken from the multi-volume treatise of K. Paparrigopoulos,<sup>4</sup> the historian who laid the foundations for the grand national narrative. According to this thesis, the continuity of the Greek nation, from antiquity until today, has been achieved by the links between ‘Greek Byzantium’ and Christian Orthodoxy. Education and religion are so closely connected that even today these two subjects are taken care of jointly by the ‘Ministry of Education and Religion’.

The tension between secular and religious approaches to history teaching comes to the fore every time the official paradigm is disputed. The issue is contentious because it is seen as directly connected to national identity. Issues such as the continuity of the nation, the role of the clergy and the character of ‘our’ nation, particularly vis-à-vis the ‘other’ (the Turk) are highly contentious topics which raise strong feeling among many sections of Greek society.

## Historical Background

After the end of the military junta (1967–1974), there were efforts to produce history textbooks which were not markedly ethnocentric but were more liberal and open to different evaluations. The first attempt was by the historian Leften Stavrianos in 1984. His textbook (*History of Humankind*) [*Istoria tou Anthopinou Genous*], which was prepared for the first class of lyceum (upper secondary or high school), included passages on Darwin’s theory of evolution. This was believed to be an offence to the Greek Orthodox Church and to col-

lective religious beliefs, and in 1985 a campaign was launched aimed at its withdrawal. This book was finally withdrawn in 1990.

In 1985 a second attempt was initiated by the historian Professor Vassilis Kremydas in his textbook (Modern and Contemporary History, Greek, European, Global) [*Istoria Neoteri—Syhroni, elliniki, europaiki kai pagkosmia*]. The book presented Greek history in the broader historical frame of European and world history and did not include national myths and stereotypes. The book was strongly criticised as anti-national and anti-clerical. It was finally withdrawn in 1991.<sup>5</sup>

A third effort was made in 2002 by a new group of historians under the leadership of Giorgos Kokkinos; the result was Modern and Contemporary World, 1815–2000 [*Istoria tou Neoterou kai Syhronou Kosmou*]. This time it was the right-wing organisation *Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston* (EOKA, or National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters) which objected. The textbook's critical presentation of EOKA was viewed as an insult to the struggle for liberation by the Greek Cypriots and as an attempt to instigate excuses for the Turkish occupation of Cyprus. The book was withdrawn before the school year even began.

## The Debate over the Sixth Grade History Textbook

The debates on history textbooks and related matters, as well as the agents involved in the dispute, are influenced by the historical context sketched above, although nowadays the conflict has its own reference points, arguments and dynamics. A good example to help illustrate the Greek social, political and educational environment for history textbooks is the history textbook for the sixth grade prepared by a body of experts headed by Maria Repoussi.<sup>6</sup> It first came onto the agenda at the end of 2005; it was debated for a couple of years and still remains a 'negative example' for some. The background is quite complex; there are various protagonists, theses and arguments as well as policies and personal motives involved in this controversy.

### Protagonists

The main protagonist is the state which, in this case, is officially represented by the Ministry of Education. The Pedagogical Institute which acts on behalf of the Ministry is authorised to examine and approve or reject the textbooks

written by the assigned specialists. These two bodies are not necessarily in harmony when they judge and assess schoolbooks because the minister, a politician concerned with the next parliamentary elections, takes into consideration the views and reactions of the other protagonists.

An unofficial but important protagonist is the Church of Greece, which traditionally has a say in many public issues and can also influence its flock during parliamentary elections. The Church is sensitive not only to issues directly connected to its legacy, such as the historical role of the clergy during the Ottoman period and the revolution of 1821, but on matters of identity too. According to the grand national Greek narrative, the Church saved the nation by being the agent that, during what was known by some as the dark age of bondage imposed by the Turks, took on the mission of educating the youth in 'secret schools' and suffered martyrdoms for backing the war of liberation. The clergy also appear as the protector of the official national identity, 'Helleno-Christianity'. Any textbook that is not in line with the above beliefs is viewed with suspicion and as a threat to the Church.

Politically motivated groups and individuals from the extreme right and the extreme left of the political spectrum constitute the third agent in this conflict. The nationalist Network 21 (*Diktio 21*) is one example. Periodicals such as *Arthin* are another. The Greek political parties, too, have a say on history textbooks, some concerned about losing votes, others expressing ideological worries. There are various internet sites which reproduce the conservative arguments against any effort to produce a more modern approach to history teaching.

On the other side, there is a group of academics and journalists who approve and support the textbook and who constitute the fourth group. This is not a large group but it is influential and prestigious. Its members have proven to be active and productive and to have strong arguments and connections worldwide. There are many columnists who have openly criticised the hesitant ministry and the conservative groups.

## Arguments

The writers of the textbook in question responded to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and tried to produce a book that was different from the textbooks previously prepared by the Pedagogical Institute as a single compulsory textbook for each grade. In accordance with the new curriculum (*Odigos gia ti didaskalia ton filologikon mathimaton, sxoliko etos 2001-2002*, OEDB, 2002), this enterprise was an attempt to modernise and democratise the Greek education system. This new textbook advanced a modern theoretical

framework, new content and innovative teaching methods. It was not based on information to be memorised as before, but instead supported a disciplined enquiring environment, it did not include myths and stereotypes of the 'other' and it highlighted the history and everyday lives of women and children. The whole enterprise aimed to develop a historical consciousness. The textbook supported a laboratory-style active learning environment with diverse historical sources.

The opposition to the textbook started even before its circulation in September 2006 and the objections were not directed towards its theoretical or teaching methods but almost exclusively towards its content. The Church and its supporters, with its fervent archbishop Christodoulos (now deceased), were against this textbook because the clergy were not exalted as they believed they ought to be. The textbook in fact did not include issues that the Church could have opposed, but nor did it highlight incidents such as the martyrdom of the Patriarch (hanged by the Ottomans at the beginning of the Greek Revolution of 1821) or the role of the clergy as teachers of the nation, and the Church's view that the priests who participated in the revolution were purposely silenced. The writers of the book actually made a concession on this issue, since contrary to what the Church claims there is evidence that they opposed the revolution. The criticism of the Church went beyond the textbook's content. The writers were accused of having acted with ill intentions and of wanting to degrade the Church, Greekness and Greek identity. The criticism went beyond the writers of the book and reached the Minister of Education (and Religion), Marietta Yannakou, who ardently supported the new book for some time.

The right- and left-wing nationalist opposition objected by developing conspiracy theories: they claimed the United States, the European Union and 'imperialists' wishing to secure a Greek-Turkish rapprochement—for their own interests, of course—were directing Greece to make concessions towards Turkey, distorting Greece's sacred history. For this purpose, the critics claimed the Ottoman Empire was not presented as negatively as it should have been and Turkish vulgarity and the suffering of the Greeks were omitted. According to these critics of the textbook, the younger generation is not taught about the heroism of the Greeks either, for reasons not clearly stated. The Communist Party used similar rhetoric to express their opinion that globalisation goals operated against Greek national identity in this textbook. Another criticism voiced by some leftist groups was that the book avoided class analysis and the role of the masses. The book was perceived by the left-wing opposition as somehow related to a conspiracy of Western capitalists and European Union circles, trying to enforce globalisation and endangering the national identity of the Greeks. The conspiracy theory also included reference to local forces who

submitted to the powers enforcing a Greco-Turkish rapprochement, undermining national interests.

The textbook was introduced to and used in schools in 2006. The same year, a website named Antibaro launched a petition demanding the book's withdrawal from schools. At the same time, a large body of historians, teachers and journalists circulated a petition of 500 signatures in support of the textbook. Representatives of history journals such as *Ta Istorika*, *Historein*, *Mnimon*, *Elliniki Epitheorisi Politikis Epistimis* and *Sighona Themata* sided with the textbook writers at a press conference in Athens on 6 March 2007. On 25 March, the anniversary of the 1821 Revolution, the right-wing organisation Chrysi Avgi (Golden Dawn) burned the book in public. Before the general elections of September 2007, the minister Marietta Giannakou promised an improved version of the book. After the elections, however, the setting had changed. Giannakou was not re-elected and the new leadership abolished the book.

## Documentation of the Debate

Apart from the content of the arguments against the textbook, the language used in this controversy reveals the tension that accompanies the issue. The rhetoric of the Church against the book proved particularly reactionary and anti-Western. In a press release from the Archbishopric of Athens and Wider Greece entitled 'For the sake of Greek-Turkish friendship the truth is sacrificed', the head of the Greek Church, Archbishop Christodoulos, expressed the following views:

The Greeks face the danger of losing their national consciousness ... There is an effort to re-write our history in order to demolish the foundations upon which we base our national consciousness ... This book [for the sixth grade] contains unacceptable passages ... We yield and abolish everything due to political expediencies ... No European power can force us to forget what we are. Why should we, the Greeks, not respect the richness of our history?<sup>7</sup>

Archbishop Christodoulos also made other remarks, mostly from the altar after the sermon: 'Globalisation does not produce civilisation but it is only a model that is targeted to develop a worldwide market'.<sup>8</sup> 'The purpose is the de-Christianisation of the state and turning it to a shapeless unit without cultural tradition ... They silence the importance of the Church by distorting the truth'.<sup>9</sup> The spokesman for Archbishop Timotheos Anthis also declared in an interview with a newspaper that the positive role of the Church during the Greek Revolution of 1821 was not clearly shown in the textbook.<sup>10</sup>

The dean of Athens University, Georgios Babiniotis, sided with the Church during a ceremony where he was awarded a prize by the Archbishopric: 'Helleno-Christianity is not a slogan, it is a reality ... In the sixth grade textbook the contribution of the Church in the Greek Revolution of 1821 is completely omitted. Thousands of priests that shed their blood are erased with a single move'. The dean also praised the historical contribution of the so-called 'secret school'.<sup>11</sup>

These views were challenged by academics and columnists. According to the historian Vassilis Kremydas,

it is promising that the Archbishop does not insist any more on the issue of the secret school. It seems he has been persuaded that it never existed. It is time now to accept that [the leadership of the Church in the Greek Revolution] did not exist either. On the contrary, the Archbishop should be thankful to the writers of the book that they did not write that the official Church of the time was against the Revolution and that the Patriarch threatened with excommunication the small number of the priests that took part in it.<sup>12</sup>

The columnist Paschos Madravelis wrote: 'There were priests who were active in favour of the Ottoman bondage because they were afraid of western Enlightenment, a fear which still exists. All this may be omitted from the textbooks for primary education but not from the secondary. If the Archbishop wants the truth these facts should also be included in the textbooks'.<sup>13</sup>

The official newspaper of the Greek Communists, *Rizospastis*, on the other hand, highlighted the supposedly negative 'class character' of the book. It refers to a passage of the book where the military dictatorships which followed periods of mass unrest are narrated: 'The economic crises cause workers and civil servants to lose their jobs and many react by demonstrations and strikes. Many democratic regimes collapse under this pressure. Dictatorships take over'. The paper concludes: 'They mean that the workers' movement is responsible for the dictatorships'.<sup>14</sup> The paper is also against what it considers dubious powers that back up textbooks like this one: 'All these supposedly progressive efforts are supported by modern Euro-fans who also support another four-volume book on the History of the Balkans, which has been sponsored directly by the State Department of the USA, the foreign ministry of Germany, the Soros Foundation and other similar supposedly goodwill institutions ... As for the writer of the book, M. Repoussi ... [she] suggests that the student should approach a historical event by himself and with the help of the teacher should gradually construct the historical narrative ... That is to say, each student will write his own history!'<sup>15</sup>

The member of the far-right party LAOS, Popular Orthodox Rally [LAOS, *Laikos Orthodoxos Synagermos*] and candidate for parliament Ioanni

Giannakena declared: 'First they tried to introduce the teaching of Turkish to our schools. And now the Ministry of Education has decided to erase whatever harms the Greek-Turkish friendship. The textbook caused reactions in Greece and in Cyprus'.<sup>16</sup> *Hrisi Avgi*, a journal of the extreme right, explained why its members publicly burned the textbook during a demonstration: 'We believe that it is a *hybris* [hubris] not to let children learn about the hanging of the Patriarch Grigorios V and the sacrilege of this body by the Jews of Istanbul, it is a *hybris* to call the massacre of Izmir [by the Turks] a "congestion"'.<sup>17</sup> Many television and radio programmes and many newspapers supported the nationalistic stereotypes and the national myths, taking a position against the historians and writers of the textbook. The Academy of Athens, too, responding to a question put by the minister, demanded extensive changes to the philosophy of the book.

Eventually Repoussi's name was turned to a verb, Repoussisise, to mean something like 'distorting history to please the Other'. Hysteria reached a point where the tabloids invaded the private lives of the writers, especially of the female members of the team. The academic community was unable to follow this phase of the debate.

There were, naturally, voices in favour of the book, too. The Minister of Education declared that she would not bow to political pressure from the centre-left, centre-right, the radical left or the extreme right. The end result was not favourable for the textbook, but a different approach to history teaching was officially and decisively supported for the first time. As mentioned above, academics circulated petitions in favour of the book. The renowned liberal politician Andreas Andrianopoulos characterised the book as 'a sound portrayal of history, without exaggerations, myths and that which is opposed by fanatic nationalists'.<sup>18</sup> The controversy surrounding the textbook triggered a new academic interest that reached areas beyond textbooks and teaching: the widespread reaction itself started to be studied as a social phenomenon associated with Greek national identity and nationalism. The subject is seen as a case study worth further investigation, even outside Greece. In addition to studies in Greek universities, the textbook in question and the tumult created attracted academic interest from abroad, too.<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

The quality of history teaching was the concern of the textbook writers. On the other hand, the textbook was viewed simply as a pretext to launch an attack against presumed opponents in order to preserve well-established views, practices, prejudices and interests. For some, the image of the clergy and the



prestige of right-wing ideology and narrative were jeopardised. The Ministry of Education succumbed to the threats of some voters. The objections were formulated as if the whole dispute was a disagreement on national identity and social interest. As for the harsh, aggressive and accusatory style used by the opponents of the textbook, one cannot but suspect it originates from a need to compensate for their feeble arguments.

## Notes

1. For the milieu of the debates on history education in Greece and on the Greek historical culture in general, see M. Repoussi, 'History Education in Greece'. In *Facing, Mapping, Bridging Diversity: Foundation of a European Discourse on History Education*, ed. E. Erdmann and W. Hasberg (Erlangen: Wochenschau Verlag, 2011), 329–370.
2. See Paschalis Kitromilides, *Nationalism and Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe* (Vermont: Variorum, 1994).
3. See Daphne Halikiopoulou, *Patterns of Secularization: Church, State and Nation in Greece and the Republic of Ireland* (London: Ashgate, 2011).
4. K. Paparrigopoulos, *Istoria tou Ellinikou Ethnous* [History of the Greek Nation] (Athens: N. Passaris, 1860–74).
5. See Maria Repoussi, 'Politics Questions History Education: Debates on Greek History Textbooks', *Yearbook of International Society for History Didactics* (2006/2007): 99–110.
6. M. Repoussi et al., *Istoria St. Dimotikou, Sta Neotera kai Synchrona Chronia* [History for the 6th Grade, In Recent and Modern Years] (Athens: Ypurgeio Paideias kai Thiskeymaton, Paidagogikó Institutouto, 2006).
7. Official press release of Archbishopric of Athens and Wider Greece, Christodoulos, on 10 December 2006. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are by the author.
8. Archbishop Christodoulos, Thessaloniki, 23 May 2007.
9. *Ta Nea*, 18 September 2006.
10. *Ta Nea*, 12 September 2006.
11. 'May 7, 2006', accessed 2 June 2017, [http://www.ecclesia.gr/greek/holy-synod/holysynod.asp?id=721&what\\_sub=d\\_typou](http://www.ecclesia.gr/greek/holy-synod/holysynod.asp?id=721&what_sub=d_typou).
12. *Ta Nea*, 7 October 2006.
13. *Kathimerini*, 12 February 2007.
14. *Rizospastis*, 10 September 2006.
15. *Rizospastis*, 30 January 2007.
16. '2 September 2006', accessed 21 June 2016, <http://www.e-grammes.gr/article.php?id=2239>.
17. *Hrisi Avgi*, 24 March 2007.

18. 'Andréas Andrianópoulos', accessed 2 June 2016, <http://www.andrianopoulos.gr/0010000878/%CF%83%CF%87%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B1.html>.
19. See J. Broeders, 'The Greeks fought heroically'. *A history of Greek history textbooks. Master's thesis in the field of political history*. Nijmegen: Radboud University, 2008.

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# 21

## India

Michael Gottlob

### Introduction

In the political life of modern India, the struggle over the interpretation of the past plays a major role. The findings of archaeological excavations and historical research dealing with ancient monuments and artefacts or with old legends and customs often ignite fierce debate. Sometimes contentious questions about history are even made issues of in election campaigns.

This is remarkable insofar as Indians over the centuries were seen by observers and travellers from abroad as a people without history or historical consciousness. There was a widespread perception that the past was interpreted through myth, not in the form of critical reflection and methodical research. There seemed to be little interest in the remains of earlier times. But in the last decades, history has moved towards the centre of public attention in India, and historical arguments are used in order to substantiate political claims. There are often fundamental confrontations: self-declared defenders of national culture and identity complain about a distortion of the Indian past by an allegedly Westernised historical guild, while for members of the latter it is the autonomy of history as a discipline which is in danger. In this context, curricula and textbooks too have become objects of profound dispute.

## Historical Background (Communalism, Nationalism and Secularism in Indian Historiography)

The current controversy about the view of Indian history goes back to colonial times and much of its virulence is due to the demand—not yet met according to some—to correct a distorted, Western interpretation of the past and replace it with a truly Indian one. It was the Bengali novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who, in a critical review of British accounts, formulated the agenda of a truly Bengali history towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Central to it was the Hindu tradition considered to be threatened by foreign, especially Muslim invaders.

From this, the idea of Indian history as Hindu history emerged with its counterpart, the self-understanding of South Asian Muslims as a separate nation with a distinctive history. These forms of ‘communalism’ in Indian historiography were challenged during the freedom struggle by the ‘secularists’ of the Indian National Congress (INC) who celebrated India’s composite culture as a particular achievement and viewed the Indian nation as rooted in multiple traditions.

With the partition of India at the time of independence in 1947, the Two-Nation Theory asserted itself: British India was succeeded by the states of India and Pakistan. But in the new Republic of India, under the hegemony of the Congress Party, the secular reading of history became dominant and was reflected in school textbooks as well as in the Constitution. Nevertheless, opposition parties such as Jana Sangh and, later, the Bharatiya Janata Party, adhered firmly to the idea of a Hindu nation and Hindu history.

The antagonism between secularist and communalist readings of Indian history became an object of public debate whenever there was a change of power from the Congress Party to a Hindu nationalist majority and the new government began to enforce its interpretation of the past on institutions of research and teaching. Precautions had actually been taken against the temptation of direct political interference in structuring curricula and textbook writing. In 1961, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was founded with the purpose of assisting and advising the Central and State Governments on matters related to school education. The NCERT introduced model textbooks, written by renowned scholars, in order to avoid the dissemination of conflict-laden legends, stereotypes and distorted facts. The teaching of history was supposed to be linked to the progress of scientific research.

However, it is precisely these model textbooks that were considered by right-wing critics and opposition parties to be vehicles for promoting a specific political ideology. Consequently, after the election victory of the Janata coalition (dominated by the Jana Sangh) in 1977, it was not long before the new government, led by Morarji Desai, announced the withdrawal from circulation of some of the NCERT textbooks, including Romila Thapar's *Medieval India* (1967), Bipan Chandra's *Modern India* (1970) and *Freedom Struggle*, written by Amales Tripathi, Barun De and Bipan Chandra (1972). The authors were criticised for their allegedly over-indulgent depiction of Muslim conquerors and their cruelties in India, a lack of enthusiasm for the heroic defenders of Hinduism and also for negative remarks about nationalistic leaders such as B.G. Tilak and Sri Aurobindo. Moreover, the emphasis on social and economic questions at the expense of the religious factor meant that the authors were suspected of being Marxists.

The short duration of the Janata government (1977–79) brought the first attempt at altering the collective view of the past at least in an administrative sense. But the conflict broke out again when the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), together with their partners in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), won the parliamentary elections of 1998. Their way back to power had been marked by intense use of history mixed up with mythology. The campaign for a temple at the alleged birthplace of the Hindu god Rama (the 'Ramjanmabhoomi') in Ayodhya, culminating in the destruction of the Babri Mosque in December 1992, was intended to undo a historical wrong and assert the idea of India as a Hindu nation.<sup>2</sup>

## **The Debate (Curriculum for the Hindu Nation: The Textbook Controversy, 2000–2004)**

In November 2000, the NDA government presented a new National Curriculum Framework for School Education, which laid particular stress on valuing education. The aim was 'to restore and sustain eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of the people, their moral and spiritual growth enabling them to realise the treasure within'.<sup>3</sup>

A first impression of how the general learning objectives were to determine the practice of history teaching could be gained in October 2001 when the NCERT ordered the deletion of certain 'objectionable' passages in the textbooks in use at the time, anticipating their complete replacement later on. The measure affected books by Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma, Satish Chandra, Arjun and

Indira Arjun Dev, some of which had already come under attack during the earlier controversy at the end of the 1970s. The deleted passages related to issues such as Brahmins eating beef in early India, economic interests of priests, the emergence of the caste system, the practice of untouchability and so on.<sup>4</sup>

All these passages described well-documented facts which were substantiated by the authors who then only found out about the deletions from media reports. But according to Murli Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development, it was not only a question of facts but also of feelings, especially those of religious minorities like Sikhs and Jains: 'As the language used with respect to Guru Teg Bahadur, Mahavir and the Jat community in the NCERT history books was derogatory, the said portions have been removed from the textbooks'.<sup>5</sup>

The concern for the sentiments of Sikhs and Jains, of course, was in striking contrast to the simultaneous representation of Muslims as foreigners and invaders; the feelings of the Sikhs and Jains apparently didn't count. Nor did the feelings of the Dalits ('untouchables'), who, being consumers of meat, were exposed to the contempt of Brahmins. It was evident that the values to be taught and sentiments to be respected were those of the Hindus (or adherents of other 'Indian' religions) and especially those of the upper castes.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that neither the authors of the censored books nor any committee of professional historians had been consulted prior to the interference in the texts was alarming for many observers. It shed doubts on the postulated linkage between textbook production and scientific research and was even felt as an attack on the historical discipline itself. Advocates of the textbook revision, for their part, argued against ideological implications in the earlier books and pointed to the political patronage of secular and left-leaning historians who allegedly practised their craft in a partisan manner. In the downplaying of the destruction of temples at the hands of Muslims and the neglect of Hindu resistance against foreign invaders, they saw a distortion of facts that had to be corrected.

The inevitable selectivity of all historical representations, however, is not taken into account here. No reason is given as to why the conflict between Hindus and Muslims should be emphasised while the conflict between sects, castes and classes within the communities should be suppressed or overlooked. The prominent role of the conflict between Hindus and Muslims follows on directly from the concept of Hindu nationalism, in which the two communities face each other irreconcilably as foes.

Secularist historians seek to relate the conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, which they do not deny, to diverging political, social and cultural

interests. And secular historians take the historical experience of religious tolerance—practised especially under the rule of Emperors Ashoka (c. 304–232 BCE) and Akbar (1542–1605 CE)—as an indication of the historians’ ability to resolve conflicts. Moreover, scientific research, according to the historians’ convictions, criticises tradition. Instead of submitting to allegedly eternal and sacrosanct values of a specific religion, secularists are oriented towards wider, overarching, universal principles by which differences, both within and between religious communities, can be incorporated. This openness of tradition is only reluctantly conceded by communalists. Their aversion to tradition is often directed against the academic guild as a whole, sometimes even against methods of research.<sup>7</sup> The legitimacy of modern historiography is questioned due to the increasing importance of ancient values. And in fact, while there are hardly any acknowledged scholars to be found among the proponents of the ‘Hindu view of history’, for secularists the conflict was about the freedom and autonomy of Hindu-oriented history or the antagonism between science and religion, reason and myth. A case in point is the legal action taken by historians and activists against the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework in 2002 and what was suspected to be an imposition of religion as a school subject. The Supreme Court, however, adopted the government’s position that their plans were aimed at education about religion, not religious education.

When the new books were finally published in November 2002, what was noted first was the poor quality of the texts and the numerous factual errors they contained. This resulted in revised editions being published soon after. In terms of content, the books do not present the sort of ‘Hindu history’ that one can find in the indoctrinating teaching materials of schools run by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).<sup>8</sup> It is more in the subtle form of underlying assumptions, emphases and omissions, factual inaccuracies and imbalances or unproven statements that they continue the ‘correction’ of Indian history, which had been initiated with the deletions of passages from the earlier books.

The cow regains her sacred place in Vedic society; her injury or killing was criminalised (p. 89).<sup>9</sup> The caste system appears to be inscribed in Indian culture and society from time immemorial and to possess an unquestionable legitimacy (p. 90). The widely contested thesis about the Harappan or Indus civilisation coinciding with the South Asian Vedic culture of the Aryans (p. 88), which highlights the difference between indigenous and foreign religions, is uncritically accepted in the textbook. Almost exclusive importance is given to Hindu religious practices and revival movements at the cost of other religious traditions and of modernising trends that are also a part of India’s composite culture.



Yet the lifetime of the books was short. In May 2004, the election of a new Parliament brought the Congress Party back to power, which, with their partners in the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), had announced the revision and correction of teaching materials as part of their Common Minimum Programme.<sup>10</sup> After an ad hoc panel of historians had presented their report on the current NCERT textbooks in June 2004, the new administration initiated a process of ‘reviewing curricula and moving towards more child-friendly textbooks’. As an immediate measure, the NCERT circulated a ‘Note to school teachers’, in which factual inaccuracies, imbalances and biases of the books were corrected or commented on.<sup>11</sup>

## Documentation (Authentic Values versus Professional Standards)

The new National Curriculum Framework for School Education met with much criticism and a heated debate unfolded—in the national daily newspapers and magazines rather than in academic journals.

NCERT director J.S. Rajput, in a response to his critics, sought to substantiate what was actually at stake and why, in his opinion, the curriculum provoked such a harsh reaction from the Left:

The use of the words ‘culture’, ‘heritage’ and ‘religion’ has given rise to serious apprehensions among some intellectuals who proclaim themselves the torch-bearers of secularism and expect everyone to follow them blindly. To them anyone who uses these terms must be an agent of saffronisation. They do not care about the credentials and contributions of individuals and institutions. Their own interests are uppermost in their minds, leading to illogical and irrational interpretation of facts and figures. They are afraid that a mere acquaintance with religions, if provided through school education, would lead to disastrous results ... The mere mention of the word ‘religion’, its acquaintance to the future citizens of the country, perturbs those who have no appreciation for the Indian psyche and ethos.<sup>12</sup>

While arguing ‘for value inculcation through education’, Rajput at the same time accused his antagonists of promoting irrationality. Secularist historians like Romila Thapar also insisted there was a profound divide between the two positions, going well beyond the mere difference of viewpoints or perspectives: ‘the confrontation is not between Leftist and Rightist historians but between professional historians and politicians sympathetic to the Hindutva way of thinking. And those who are at the policy-making levels of NCERT echo the politicians’.<sup>13</sup> Yet behind the confrontation between history

and politics, there is an even more fundamental question, namely that of the postulated primacy of a scientific approach to the past: 'What is really at stake in the current row over history textbooks is the right of the professional historian to assert the pre-eminence of history over myth and fantasy'.<sup>14</sup>

Neeladri Bhattacharya too made it clear that the conflict is not just about facts and their representation.

When we are told that Aryans were actually the original inhabitants of India, or that the Indus Valley civilization is post-Aryan, or that the Indus people domesticated horses, and that cows were never slaughtered in ancient India, we need to recognize that these claims represent something more than minor disputes over factual details of our past, something more than a conflict over reading and representing evidence. When community sentiments of pain and hurt become the ground on which we rework our past, when we rewrite history to cleanse it of all that we seek to disown, then we are witnessing a practice of rewriting that is disturbingly problematic.<sup>15</sup>

Continuing, Bhattacharya states that there is nothing wrong about the urge towards rewriting history, which is 'undoubtedly necessary. It is an act that infuses history writing with life and energy. But it is not a project that can be given over to those who seek to destroy the very conditions of its possibility. The political moves ... do not reveal a will to explore new horizons. They are declarations of a war against academic history itself, against the craft of the historian, against the practices that authenticate historical knowledge'.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion (An Ongoing Debate)

The textbook controversy, being a main component of the fight for ideological hegemony in India, did not end in 2004. It continued at regional and local level, with alternating topics or emphases.<sup>17</sup> There was also an offshoot of the debate among the Indian diaspora in the USA. Two Hindu nationalist organisations, the Vedic Foundation of Austin, Texas, which is closely linked to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad,<sup>18</sup> and the Hindu Education Foundation of California, a US affiliate of the RSS, asked for a 'correction' of American textbooks with regard to the representation of Indian history. The protest against an allegedly unfair and inaccurate depiction of Hinduism, in particular, regarding remarks about the caste system and the status of women, led to a public debate lasting months in 2005 and 2006. This involved various groups of Indian immigrants, Dalit and women's organisations and also historians from India. The California Board of Education eventually accepted only very few of the 382 proposed changes.<sup>19</sup>

At the national level in India, the debate has calmed down since 2004. It seemed that in the aftermath of the last confrontation the public argument about the teaching of history became more reasoned. The practice of setting political targets for historical education was met increasingly with critique, resulting in the production of a new series of textbooks, which started to appear in 2005. Here, the focus on specific contents has been largely replaced by an emphasis on cognitive skills, thus helping students develop a critical attitude.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, after the parliamentary elections in May 2014 returned the Bharatiya Janata Party to power, there has been a fear among historians that research, writing and teaching of history in India will again come under threat.<sup>21</sup> There have been, and still are, in mainstream media as well as in Hindutva circles, calls to reinterpret Indian history on the basis of ancient mythology and bring it into line with the concept of India as a Hindu nation. Appointments of personnel for key government-funded institutions such as the Indian Council of Historical Research appear to be evidence of this trend. Members of the Indian History Congress (the largest professional body of Indian historians) who gathered in New Delhi for their annual meeting in December 2014 warned against any attempt to inculcate a 'misleading and divisive brand of history among pupils in our schools'.<sup>22</sup> Two years later, in its 77th annual session, held at Thiruvananthapuram, more than a thousand delegates from across India adopted a resolution opposing attempts to stifle scholarly works and disseminate 'fantasies' about ancient Indian history.<sup>23</sup>

The formulation of a new national curriculum framework or education policy has, however, been delayed. In October 2015, a committee headed by T.S.R. Subramanian, with J.S. Rajput as one of its members, was entrusted by the government with drafting the New Education Policy of 2016. The Report of the 'Committee for [the] Evolution of the New Education Policy' was presented in April 2016. In December 2016, the Ministry of Human Resource Development announced that a new committee for the same purpose was to be set up in the near future.

## Notes

1. B. Chatterjee, 'Bangalar Itihas Sambandhe Kayekti Katha [A few words about the history of Bengal]', in *Bankim Rachanavali*, vol. 2, ed. J. C. Bagal (Calcutta: Sahitya Samsad, 1965), 336–340.
2. According to Hindu fundamentalist propaganda, the sixteenth-century Babri Mosque had been constructed on the ruins of an ancient Rama temple, destroyed by Muslims.

3. Quoted in S. U. Khan, 'On the verge of saffronisation?', *The Hindu*, 5 June 2001.
4. Some of the passages are quoted in S. Shahin, 'India sanitizing its past', *Asia Times Online*, 8 December 2001, accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/CL08Df01.html>.
5. Reported in *The Hindu*, 4 December 2001. According to Joshi, a number of religious organisations had demanded the deletions because the passages hurt the sentiments of their communities. As a solution, he and other politicians suggested that textbooks in future be submitted to religious authorities for examination before publication.
6. Some years later, a controversy broke out over a cartoon in a political science textbook showing the historic Dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar in a manner which allegedly offended the feelings of Dalits. See 'Ambedkar Cartoon Controversy', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26 May 2012.
7. See N. S. Rajaram, *The Politics of History: Aryan Invasion Theory and the Subversion of Scholarship* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1995), 143ff.
8. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Organisation), founded in 1925, is at the centre of a large network of Hindu nationalist organisations with the BJP as its political wing. About 40,000 Vidya Bharati schools or Saraswati Shishu Mandirs (Temples of the Goddess Saraswati) are said to operate in India. See *The Economic Times*, 2 January 2015, accessed 24 May 2017, [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-01-02/news/57611578\\_1\\_convent-schools-rss-rashtriya-swayamsevak-sangh](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-01-02/news/57611578_1_convent-schools-rss-rashtriya-swayamsevak-sangh).
9. The samples are taken from the Social Science textbook for class VI, quoted in K. Roy, 'What happened to Confucianism?'. In *Rewriting History* (= *Seminar* 522), ed. N. Bhattacharya (New Delhi: Singh, 2003), 67–72.
10. The new government was determined, so it was stated, 'to remove the communalisation of the school syllabus that has taken place in the past five years', Common Minimum Programme, reprinted in *The Hindu*, 28 May 2004.
11. NCERT, *Learning History Without Burden. A Note to School Teachers*, June 2004, accessed 6 March 2011, <http://www.ncert.nic.in/NCERTS/1.pdf>.
12. J. S. Rajput, 'Drawing up a curriculum', *Frontline*, 13 October 2001. The term 'saffronisation', used by critics of Hindu nationalism, alludes to the saffron robes worn by Hindu sannyasis.
13. R. Thapar, 'Propaganda as history won't sell', *The Hindustan Times*, 9 December 2001.
14. R. Thapar, 'History vs Propaganda', *The Times of India*, 10 December 2001.
15. N. Bhattacharya, *Rewriting History*.
16. N. Bhattacharya, *Rewriting History*.
17. For an example of how Indian federal states are involved in the textbook controversy, see B. K. Banerjee, 'West Bengal Textbooks and the Indian Textbook Controversy', *International Textbook Research* 29 (2007): 355–374. On the rewriting of textbooks in BJP-governed states such as Rajasthan and Gujarat,

see M. Krishnan, 'Rewriting textbooks in India, a hidden agenda?', *Deutsche Welle*, 10 October 2015, accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.dw.com/en/rewriting-textbooks-in-india-a-hidden-agenda/a-18799080>; R. Goswami, 'Rajasthan to rewrite history books: Maharana Pratap defeated Akbar in Haldighati', *Hindustan Times*, 9 March 2017, accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rajasthan-to-rewrite-history-books-maharana-pratap-defeated-akbar-in-haldighati/story-XCSutwgOCKjkPez-LaENf4J.html>.

18. 'World Council of Hindus', the major organisation behind the Ayodhya campaign of the 1990s.
19. For the controversy about the teaching of Indian history in American schools, see S. Padmanabhan, 'Debate on Indian History: Revising Textbooks in California', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6 May 2006, 1761–1763.
20. For an assessment, see S. Sarkar, 'A new kind of history textbook', *The Hindu*, 17 April 2006, accessed 24 May 2017, <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-new-kind-of-history-textbook/article3148391.ece>.
21. See R. Thapar, 'History repeats itself', *The Hindu*, 11 July 2014.
22. 'Text of Resolutions adopted at the Indian History Congress December 2014', *South Asia Citizens Web*, 9 January 2015, accessed 14 January 2015, <http://www.sacw.net/article10368.html>.
23. S. Jnaneswaran, 'The Indian History Congress and its Cultural Intervention', *Mainstream Weekly*, 12 February 2017, accessed 13 March 2017, <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article6960.html>.

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# 22

## Iceland

Thorsteinn Helgason

### Introduction

To understand when and how history has come under fire in Iceland, the reader has to bear in mind some of Iceland's fundamental characteristics with respect to geography, demography and history. The country is situated in the North Atlantic, a three-hour flight from the Scandinavian countries to which it is culturally and historically most closely related. It has a population of approximately 320,000, which is the size of a small city in Europe. This does not, however, mean that the behaviour of the islanders resembles that of a European town. Iceland has been a sovereign nation state since 1918, with a distinct and fairly homogenous culture, and its inhabitants are, in the somewhat mocking and exaggerated words of one scholar, 'perhaps the purest and most nationalist people in the world'.<sup>1</sup>

Though Iceland is a nation state, its small size puts limits on the education system. Choice between curriculum materials is limited compared to bigger European states. Usually there is only one textbook for each school subject and grade, sometimes two, and they have to last for one or two decades, or even longer. However, the same trends and currents in education and politics present in neighbouring countries can be discerned in Iceland, although sometimes with something of a time lag.

## Historical Background

Iceland had a home education system (as did Sweden) until the late nineteenth century. History textbooks for school education appeared after 1880, with a common division between national history on one hand and the 'history of humankind' on the other. The nationalistic model had not been fully formulated in these first textbooks but was soon refined in two subsequent history textbooks that were to last for decades to come. The most notorious of these was *History of Iceland for Children* by Jónas Jónsson of Hrífla (his home-*stead*), intended for primary education.<sup>2</sup> This textbook has all the hallmarks of a solid nationalistic account: a golden age during the mediaeval period followed by the loss of independence and centuries of degradation, and finally a resurrection led by the heroes of the independence struggle. The nation appears as a homogenous and united flock, while foreigners, mainly the Danes, are depicted as evil. More or less fictional figures from mediaeval sagas, together with literary and political personalities of all eras, populate the scene. The book was written during a sensitive period when separation from Denmark was heavily debated, and it was clearly an argument *for* separation.

Full political independence, after four and a half centuries as a dependency of Denmark, was achieved with the proclamation of a republic in 1944. Nationalism was still rampant, and Jónas Jónsson's textbook survived, partly because of the vivid narration and partly because nationalistic sentiments were repeatedly re-ignited, as in the conflict over an American base during the Cold War and several fisheries disputes (the so-called Cod Wars) with Britain. However, a textbook written with the strong rhetoric of the independence struggle began to look awkward in the eyes of intellectuals with a more global view. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers, students and parents may have been quite comfortable with it and other curricular materials that had a somewhat weaker national ethos.

## The Debate

From the late 1960s, the winds of modernisation swept through the Icelandic education system. A Social Studies Project (SSP) was designed, which replaced the separate subjects of history and geography. The national master narrative was dispensed with. This proved to be too much for the traditionalists, who waged a real history war in the media, in parliament and in public meetings during the winter of 1983–1984. The SSP was subsequently abandoned as a result of measures taken by the government, and the critics regained their



seamless and linear national history, albeit with a more tempered national discourse and an added aspect of social and cultural history.

By the turn of the century, the time was considered appropriate for a total revision of the national curriculum in elementary and secondary schools. In the intervening years, the world had changed, both locally and globally. The Cold War was over and social discourse had changed direction, 'critical thinking' had become mainstream and globalisation was all-encompassing. The curriculum was meant to have a certain 'international dimension', which in this case meant more consideration of the Nordic countries, Europe at large and North America, in that order.<sup>3</sup> National history and world history were to be intertwined as much as possible.

The national curriculum of 1999 paved the way for a whole range of new textbooks and other materials. The approach to curriculum and textbook writing could be described as pluralistic: thematic approaches were presented alongside historic documentary novels, and political history on the macro level was mixed with microhistorical passages and cultural history. No coherent series was published containing a chronological overview of national history. The national myths and heroes were not abandoned but rather cautiously deconstructed, and some were kept intact. Lessons had been learnt from the defeat of the Social Studies Project.

Where the pluralistic road has led is not clear, since no research or survey has been conducted to assess its results. However, the editors at the National Centre for Educational Materials, the state-run publishing house, having listened to teachers at meetings and presentations, decided there was a need for a traditional chronological overview of national history. A three-part series was published entitled *Saga Island*, with the Icelandic state emblem on its spine.<sup>4</sup> Was this canonised national history restored all over again? In a way it was. The critical and problematising tone of the pluralistic textbooks has faded away, and there is little influence of research findings that have either refuted or cast doubt on the main ideas and details of the story. What is left is a narrative of 'common knowledge', which used to be a part of collective memory but is now lacking the national ethos.

There was a reaction to this return to the national narrative, not because it was limited to the nation but because it seemed to be limited to only one of the sexes. Searching the index of the first volume of *Saga Island*, a critic counted forty men but not a single woman. 'This finding is incredible and totally unacceptable in our time', he wrote.<sup>5</sup> The Centre for Gender Equality followed this up by ordering a report on the 'gender presence' in history textbooks for intermediate schools.<sup>6</sup> The findings revealed a considerable gender imbalance in the curriculum materials in history, with the new *Saga Island*

being the most gender-biased. The question is, then, whether national history is bound to be gender-biased. A researcher of the formative years of Icelandic nationalism came to this conclusion: 'The construction of Icelandic identity by tying together the national image and a masculine image, and the presentation of the true nature of the nation as being one of a masculine nature, is expressed in various forms in the ideology of Icelandic nationalism'.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, the masculine constitution of nationalism is no invention of Icelandic textbook writers. However, the criticism of gender bias in the textbooks was serious, not least because the textbooks stood in stark contrast to modern Icelandic society, which values gender equality highly. The annual *Global Gender Gap Index* published by the World Economic Forum has put Iceland at the top of the world's countries for gender equality from 2009 to 2012, closely followed by the other Nordic countries.<sup>8</sup> Textbooks dealing with gender imbalance in previous centuries do not have to be gender-biased themselves.

The National Centre for Educational Materials reacted by revising parts of the *Saga Island* series, including some women while still maintaining the main storyline. In addition, the Centre published textbooks which combined national and world history (translated and adapted from Norwegian) and launched a series of thematic units about the family, technology and youth culture.

Textbooks and history education in general may lag behind societal development but they can also rush ahead of the general public. A gap has been observed in recent years between the scholarly community and society at large. Scholars have scrutinised Icelandic nationalism in itself, and history has been broadened in research and writing to include social and cultural history, gender and memory studies. At the same time, general discourse, among politicians and in the media, on historical and national issues does not appear to have followed suit. Very few teachers in elementary schools have specialised in history, so the revision of history has only constituted a small part of their training by the time they stand before the class with a history textbook in hand, revised or not. Their main concern may be the structure and legibility of the texts. In secondary schools, the situation is different, although the education of the majority of teachers may still be coloured by the old paradigms, which may not even be put into words.

Historian Guðmundur Hálfðanarson has used Pierre Bourdieu's idea of *doxa* to describe tacit knowledge that is taken for granted and which everybody knows. New knowledge may be rejected if it contradicts the foundations of collective memory:

[T]he historical consciousness of the Icelanders, as cultivated in textbooks on Icelandic history over the bulk of the last century, was in many ways a child of its time and needed revision. In spite of the efforts of several scholars, the ideas of Icelanders about the past still seem to bear the hallmarks of the historical vision of the independence struggle, which has its origin in justifying the dispute with Denmark. On the basis of it, a certain suspicion towards foreigners and foreign powers is prevalent since the Icelandic government tends to regard unlimited sovereignty as the most valuable resource of Iceland.<sup>9</sup>

If these traits are part of the ‘deep memory’<sup>10</sup> of the inhabitants of Iceland, that memory was tested in the turmoil of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The century started with staggering economic growth together with a wave of liberalisation and privatisation. This was followed by an unprecedented banking and financial expansion abroad. This apparent financial genius was explained by some with reference to the Viking spirit and the stubborn independence inherent in the settlers of Iceland in the ninth century that had at last found its appropriate outlet and status within the global community. The matrix of national history seemed to fit. This view was voiced by many leading figures in Icelandic society: in 2006, President of Iceland Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson said:

It is interesting to consider the question of how elements in our culture and history have played a part in our overseas ventures, how qualities we have inherited from our ancestors give us, perhaps, an advantage in the international arena and how perceptions and habits that for centuries set their stamp on our society have proven valuable assets for today’s achievers on the international stage.

In fact, we can even argue that, in a certain way, the Age of Settlement was the beginning of this whole process, with the Icelandic Commonwealth providing us with models that stimulated our appetite for achievement.<sup>11</sup>

Pride famously comes before a fall and in late 2008 the overheated banking system totally collapsed, leaving huge domestic and international debts in its wake, general distrust of institutions and authority and a damaged national identity. Had the common reading of history, in schools and elsewhere, been somewhat skewed? The image of a nation united against foreign domination through the centuries now seemed even more naïve than before. Even worse, there was not so much demand for the island and its culture, neither for its domination nor its exploitation. The United States, which had taken care of the military defence of Iceland since the Second World War, had lost interest. Only the Nordic countries and the International Monetary Fund came to the rescue to prevent a financial standstill. At the same time, membership of the

European Union was put on the agenda, although it has been highly controversial.<sup>12</sup>

If the qualities of the ancestors could explain the achievements of the business Vikings in 2006, what qualities accounted for the collapse of the banking system in Iceland in the autumn of 2008 and the fact that expansion 'in the international arena' came to a complete halt? National history in most nations tends to be presented, in public speeches as well as in textbooks, as special and different, while the role of common elements such as, in this case, the general development of capitalism are downplayed. So the President also revised his theories and provided new lessons to be learned:

The sixth lesson involves the consequences of losing our memory of history and believing, as most of us did over the last 20–30 years, that somehow the Western world had found a magic formula for eternal non-stop growth, forgetting that the essence of capitalism is cyclical; there will be failures and collapses and the system will restore its balance in due course.<sup>13</sup>

Other revisions of cultural policy are underway in Iceland, mainly as a result of immigration. Ideas travel freely to Iceland and Icelanders more or less agree with their Nordic neighbours on social issues and values, although some internal differences can be detected.<sup>14</sup> Previously people had not travelled as much to the country as they have done in recent years, due to the relative distance and strict regulations. Iceland has now accepted the free flow of people from Europe, and immigration has increased drastically in the last few years. Anthropologist Kristín Loftsdóttir observed in 2007:

The education system in Iceland has recently had to deal with increased diversity, in terms of accepting both pupils without any knowledge of Icelandic and pupils with a different historical background to the majority of the population. It is estimated that 3% of children in Icelandic schools have a language other than Icelandic as their native language. (Hagstofa Íslands 2004)<sup>15</sup>

This percentage reached 5.7 in 2011 and has been increasing every year since.

## Conclusion

Writing and teaching history in this state of flux is no easy task. There may be three different paths to choose between: first, ignoring the turmoil and recounting instead the national story 'as it really was', which obviously means blindly following the highest bidder; second, redefining a 'solid' tradition of

an insular narrative; or, third, reappraising the whole story, taking nothing for granted and having the students face and create alternatives and possibilities in interactions of the past and present. The preoccupation with national history may even have to be altered in order to pay more attention to other levels, both local and global, and the interaction between those different levels. The hindrances on this path consist of a mixture of national pride and the fear of being lost as a small entity in the ocean of global history.

## Notes

1. G. Baldacchino, 'The Brain Rotation and Brain Diffusion Strategies of Small Islanders: Considering "Movement" in lieu of "Place"', *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 4, no. 1 (2006): 143–154; here, 144.
2. J. Jónsson, *Íslandssaga handa börnum I-II* (Reykjavík: Félagsprentsmiðjan, 1915/16). Unless otherwise specified, all translations my own.
3. Menntamálaráðuneytið, 'Markmið samfélagsgreina í grunnskólum og framhaldsskólum', *Reykjavík* (1998): 18–19.
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# 23

## Israel

Eyal Naveh

### Introduction

Research has demonstrated that politicians and state officials view curricula and textbooks as an effective and valuable mechanism of transferring knowledge, identity, ethics and national pride from generation to generation.<sup>1</sup> In Israel, a state that perceives itself as a renewed, sovereign manifestation of the Jewish people, the history curriculum, more than any other, has served as an instrument to construct a desired Jewish-Israeli identity. The curriculum has relied on and reinforced an ethnocentric paradigm of writing and teaching history, explaining the present and shaping the future through selective interpretations of the past. Under such a history curriculum, the historical conflict with the Palestinians challenges conventional assumptions and consequently produces professional disputes and public debates.

### Historical Background

The history curriculum and its textbooks reflect the Zionist narrative, which can be viewed according to what James V. Wertsch termed the ‘schematic narrative template’.<sup>2</sup> According to this master narrative, the Jewish people began their historical journey in the ancient Land of Israel, where they first became a nation and an independent political entity and to which they returned after many, many years of exile to take up where they had left off. The Jewish-Israeli narrative assumes a normative dimension by portraying the Zionist movement as a modern, Western, democratic, national liberation movement, wag-



ing a justified struggle for national revival and liberation. This struggle, it asserts, culminated in the creation of the state of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, albeit situated in a hostile and non-democratic region. Therefore, Israel is still under existential threat from its neighbouring countries and other groups around the world, which reject the very legitimacy of a Jewish state in the Middle East. In general, this narrative portrays the Arabs as an obstacle to the Jewish revival process. They are seen in the context of the Muslim civilisation as premodern, backward, undemocratic and united in their hatred towards the modern, progressive and democratic Jewish-Israeli society.

This narrative of the Jewish nation's return from exile to sovereignty was generally accepted without criticism as the basis for history education from the early 1950s until the mid-1990s. A few educators and academics called into question the emphasis on such nationalist messages, claiming that national history of this kind might lead to a 'distortion of the history of the peoples with whom the [Jewish] nation came into conflict'.<sup>3</sup> Some intellectuals and educators even posed the question of whether, and to what extent, the Arab position should be presented and young people confronted with their 'truth'.<sup>4</sup> Although these early critical notes challenged the conventional narrative, the Arab presentation of the citizens of Israel and the Palestinians in the territories remained, until the late 1990s, indefinable and negligible in the curricula and textbooks. Their narratives were practically overlooked in the developing Israeli historical chronicle.

## The Debates: From Uproar to Repression

In the 1990s, the situation was officially amended. A new history curriculum was initiated that reflected recent trends in historical research, including the opening of archives and the disclosure of historical information. These developments required an update to the frame of reference in the field of history education. The new curriculum committee publicly declared in the introduction to the curriculum that the goal of history education is 'to foster an awareness of the need to examine all information critically; and to cultivate the student's ability to understand the positions of those different from him or her'.<sup>5</sup> The apparent intention to use history lessons to promote a more open and critical approach is evident from the inclusion of topics that were absent in previous curricula, such as 'Relations between Israel and the Palestinians'.

Textbooks based on the new curriculum were introduced to middle schools between 1996 and 2000, and, beginning in 1999, triggered disputes and a public uproar. Most of these debates concerned the textbooks' treatment of

the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A ninth-grade book mentioned the forced evacuation of Palestinians from their villages during the 1948 war and challenged the 'few against the many' Israeli legacy. The book also considered the consequences of the Six Day War from both an Israeli and Palestinian perspective, generating anger from many right-wing groups and veteran Zionists. The public debate of 1999 continued into 2000; it was a media event that turned into a political dispute and ultimately led the Minister of Education at the time to ban one of the three new history textbooks for middle schools. This controversy sent a signal to officials in the education ministry to be wary of the infiltration of 'post-Zionism'—synonymous with anti-Zionism to these opponents—from academia into the primary and secondary education system.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of the 1999–2000 debates over the middle school history books, members of the curriculum committee decided that middle school pupils should be confined to the study of history until 1939. Thus, the history of World War II and the Holocaust, the last period of the British Mandate, the War of Independence, the creation of the State of Israel and the state's first 50 years were to be dealt with only at high school level.

The new high school curriculum aimed to deal seriously with many issues related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the section on the British Mandate (1920–1945), an entire chapter was devoted to the confrontation between the Jewish and Arab national movements, its discussion guided by how the conflict moulded the national identities of both ethnic groups that lived in the land. In the section that focused on the struggle for and creation of the State of Israel (1945–1949), the Palestinian refugee problem was fully addressed and analysed. A major section of the curriculum dealt with the history of Israel in the Middle East from 1949 to 1995, encompassing various topics related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict such as the creation and abolition of the military regime that ruled over the Arab citizens of Israel; the massacre in the Arab village of Kfar Kasem; the re-emergence of the Palestinian issue following the 1967 war; the Intifada and the Oslo Accords; the rise of radical Islam; and the changing relationship between Israel and the Arab world from 1979 to 1995. A chapter titled 'Minorities in Israel: Arabs, Druze, and Cherkessk' dealt with non-Jewish national, ethnic and religious groups and intended to educate students about their way of life, identity and dilemma of being a minority in a Jewish state.<sup>7</sup> Compared to former curricula, the new approach seemed like evidence of a real revolution: from denial and silence to a sincere attempt to face the issues.

However, when teachers were given the new curriculum, they expressed the common concern that the quantity of topics was overwhelming, rendering it impossible to cover within the number of hours that schools are allotted for

teaching history. Consequently, a professional team from the ministry, headed by the general history inspector, decided to adjust the curriculum to these time constraints by removing certain topics. As a result, almost none of the above-mentioned issues that dealt with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made the cut.

In the abridged version of the curriculum, the section on the British Mandate dealt only with the rising tension between Jews and Arabs (not Palestinians specifically) and the impact it had on the development of the Jewish defence forces. It focused on the Arab rejection of the UN partition plan; the attack on Israel by Arab states and the efforts to stop the invasion; and the turning point and victory of Israel over the invading powers. It ended with the armistice agreements and with the emergence of the refugee problem.

The major section dealing with the history of Israel in the Middle East between 1949 and 1995 began with topics such as 'De-colonisation in the Middle East', 'Unity and Split in the Arab World' and 'The Impact of the Creation of Israel on Other Countries in the Region and on Jews in those Countries'. It followed with chapters that focused on Israel, such as 'Unresolved Problems of the Independence War', 'The Sinai Operation: Origins and Results', 'The Six Day War and its Impact', 'The Yom Kippur War and its Results' and 'The Peace Agreements between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Jordan'. Issues that originally appeared in the new curriculum, such as the military regime, conflict with the PLO, the First Lebanon War, the first Intifada, or the Oslo Accords, disappeared. In the section on domestic issues in Israeli society, the chapter on non-Jewish minorities in Israel was removed altogether.

In general, despite the official declaration, the high school curriculum that was implemented left almost no place for any serious discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Palestinians appeared in the curriculum as opponents of the Jews, the people who rejected the Partition Plan and thus became refugees during the War of Independence. They emerged not as agents of history but rather as objects that obstruct the development of the Israeli state and society and, consequently, pay the price.

I was personally involved in the subsequent process of curriculum transformation; together with two colleagues, I wrote the textbook *Nationalism in Israel and among the Nations: Building a State in the Middle East*, published in 2009. We insisted on including some of the omitted topics in our book and introduced multiple angles when dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, we devoted about 15 per cent of the chapter on the events of 1948 to the emergence of the refugee problem, also calling it by its Palestinian name, the *Nakba* (the catastrophe), and gave different interpretations from

two Israeli historians of the events that resulted in the Palestinian flight from the land. We also concluded with an authentic document from an expelled Palestinian family from Jaffa that expressed the family's suffering and grief. In the chapter on Israel in the context of the Middle East, we wrote about the military regime and its impact on the Palestinian citizens of Israel, and we discussed the Kfar Kasem massacre. We also accounted for the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement and wrote a section on the First Lebanon War, a conflict motivated by the Palestinian presence there. In this context, we discussed the massacre in Sabra and Shatila and the Israeli reaction to it. In the chapter that dealt with Arab-Israeli relations in the 1980s and 1990s, we discussed the first Intifada, the Madrid talks and the Oslo Accords. We also wrote a section on the Rabin assassination and its aftermath.<sup>8</sup>

When we sent the manuscript to the education ministry, we naturally expected some objections from the anonymous readers on the approval committee. Following long negotiations, the readers accepted our claims yet asked us to shorten some of the sections on the above topics, which we did. On the whole, we were content when the book, despite its inclusion of these topics, was approved. However, our 'victory' in this matter was somewhat illusory and premature. Since these topics are not part of the required curriculum, they are not covered in the final, mandatory state examinations. Thus, while they appear in the textbook, it is unlikely that teachers cover them.

The inclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the official history curriculum and its practical omission from the actual study of history in high school, however incongruous, managed to repress the debate around this issue and thwart an angry outburst. It is the inherent tension in the conflicting goals of history education that underlies these contradictory attitudes. On the one hand, an open and pluralistic democracy seeks to promote history education in order to encourage the analysis of multiple perspectives and critical thinking, even towards problematic events of the past that do not always concur with the national master narrative. On the other hand, history education corresponds with the tradition of writing and teaching national history as a means of constructing and inculcating a hegemonic, collective and patriotic national identity. Undoubtedly, academic and public discourse in Israel has been open to many historical interpretations and to a critical view towards the traditional national discourse. Yet the effort to give school history classes opportunities to grapple with complex viewpoints that do not have unequivocal answers may impair the official goal of utilising history education as a means of enhancing the patriotism of the young generation. Thus, to be faithful to the conflicting aims of history education, the officials at the ministry

adopted a policy of apparent inclusion and practical omission in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

From a practical angle, most of the omitted topics have the disadvantage of being either new (never mentioned in previous curricula) or controversial. Teachers and ministry officials are generally reluctant to embrace changes that require them to learn new material; it is much easier to repeat old material in order to prepare students for the state exams. It is also much simpler to conceptualise history as a clear list of past events than to deal with dilemmas. From a functional point of view, it is less demanding to test a student's ability to memorise events than their ability to analyse many perspectives and to express an argument based on those perspectives.

There is also a very common educational assumption that basic historical knowledge constitutes 'objective fact'. The claim is that young pupils should first learn these facts in school and only later, upon entering institutions of higher education, discuss multi-perceptivity and dilemmas. Therefore, most textbooks tend to be very factual in their content and assertive in their tone, as if they convey the ultimate truth of the past. Topics that cast doubt on this predominant assumption tend to be ignored.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems that the motivations behind the omissions are, first and foremost, political and bureaucratic. Ministry officials don't want to find themselves, again, in the midst of political turmoil, as they did in 1999 and 2000 when the new middle school textbooks and curriculum were introduced. A serious discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an open invitation to such an uproar and may challenge the position and status of those officials who determine the content of the curricula and textbooks. Furthermore, a genuine and serious discussion of the conflict might shatter some of the hegemonic norms about the righteousness of the Zionist cause and dampen the overall celebratory nature of traditional history education, which praises the Zionist narrative and views it as the only way to inculcate pride and patriotism in the younger generation.

## **The Description of the Debate: Subduing the Repressed**

Despite the efforts to avoid real discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the revised curriculum and new textbooks, the Palestinian catastrophe that resulted from the war of 1948, known as the Nakba, is a disputed topic in Israel in general and has permeated the field of history education. The Israeli-

Palestinian conflict is still underway, creating fear and anxiety on both sides. Still insecure in its existence and identity, Israeli society is not yet ready to cope with the problematic chapters in its past. This insecurity has been abetted in the last decade by the aftermath of the second Intifada, the growing global criticism of the occupation, and the rising voices calling for a delegitimisation of Israel's very existence as a Jewish state. Against this backdrop, from an official point of view, history education should serve to reinforce Israel's legitimacy rather than potentially weaken it.

Given this atmosphere of insecurity and fear, right-wing parties, which constitute the majority of the Israeli parliament, initiated a resolution to outlaw the commemoration of the Nakba in Israel. They succeeded in passing a law that forbids the use of public funds to commemorate the event, compounding the political pressure to stay away from any serious discussion of the Palestinian Nakba, lest it lead to recognition of the event and its consequences.<sup>10</sup>

This political context may explain the Ministry of Education's reaction to a textbook that discussed the Nakba from a Palestinian as well as an Israeli perspective. In 2009, *Nationalism: Building a State in the Middle East*, one of the three new books approved by the ministry, was removed from shelves a few weeks after its publication following an essay that appeared in the liberal newspaper *Haaretz* on 29 July 2009. The article happily informed the public that, for the first time, a textbook had presented, alongside the Israeli version of the war of 1948, the Palestinian version of 'Ethnic Cleansing'.<sup>11</sup>

The book asks the following question: What caused the 1948 mass departure of Palestinians from the area: Escape or expulsion? It provides three documents for study: The first document supports the official Israeli argument of a voluntary Arab departure, initiated by Arab leadership despite the efforts of Jewish leadership to avoid it. The second lists several diverse and multifaceted explanations of the Palestinian evacuation and the emergence of the refugee problem, given by Benny Morris, a well-known Israeli historian. But, in addition to the conventional explanations that fit the Israeli master narrative, the book also included a Palestinian document written by Walid Khalidi, a prominent Palestinian historian, that states: 'Thirteen operations had been carried out ... this was a historic opportunity [for the Jews] to cleanse Palestine of Arabs and to put an end to the Arab presence merely by its liquidation'. The students are then asked the following questions: '(1) According to each source, who is responsible for the creation of the refugee problem? (2) How can we link the position and identity of the writer to his arguments? (3) Give your explanation in relation to the three arguments that appeared in the documents'.<sup>12</sup>

The inclusion of the Palestinian source incited the fury of many politicians, public figures and officials in the ministry. The publisher yielded to pressure from the Ministry of Education to recall the book and reprinted it without the controversial document. The publisher expressed that he had made a mistake, that the public reaction was understandable, and that he agreed an Israeli textbook should reflect the consensus rather than highlight conflicts and disputes.<sup>13</sup> The removal was followed by a relatively minor public reaction: some academics protested, some post-Zionist organisations complained, and some Arab individuals and organisations expressed their opposition. But overall, the ministry was able to impose its demands with significant support.<sup>14</sup> A subsequent attempt to introduce a Palestinian narrative of the conflict alongside the Israeli narrative in the standard curriculum was banned by top ministry officials.<sup>15</sup>

In sum, despite the inclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the history curriculum, the debate over the legitimacy of this subject and, consequently, the education ministry's efforts to hinder any serious study of the conflict, demonstrate that Israel is not yet ready to deal critically with this issue in its official education system. Nevertheless, it is hard to suppress the issue altogether because it is simply there. The conflict is part of Israeli existence and is, of course, dealt with in other contexts: journalism, media, film, theatre, politics and the economy. Unfortunately, by creating the illusion that it is not part of the nation's history education through its practical omission from the official curriculum, ministry officials have left the topic to be discussed, used and sometimes misused by other agents in society.

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received international acclaim and many prizes. However, both Palestinian and Israeli authorities forbade its inclusion in their respective education systems. For the debate over this issue, see, for example, Or Kashti, 'Misrad Hachinuch Hora Letichon Lehafsik Lelamed et Hagirsa Ha'arvit Lasichsuch Letsad Hgirsra Hatsiyonit [The Ministry of Education ordered a high-school to stop teaching the Arab version of the conflict next to the Zionist version]', *Haaretz*, 27 September 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/news/education/1.1222748/>; Zvi Zameret, 'Historia Lo Kehavyata', [History not as it really is], *Haaretz*, 25 October 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/articles-and-opinions/1.1226691/>; Moshe Arens, 'Ein Narrativ, Yesh Emet Historit [There is no narrative, there is a historical truth]', *Haaretz*, 3 November 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/articles-and-opinions/1.1228115/>; Dov Ben-Meir, 'Siluf Histori Eino Narrativ [Historical distortion is not a narrative]', *Ynet*, 7 November 2010, <http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3980256,00.html>; Nili Keren, 'Bema'aleh Hamadregot Hayordot [At the top of the descending stairs]', *Haaretz*, 1 November 2010, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/articles-and-opinions/1.1227811/>.

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# 24

## Italy

Luigi Cajani

### Introduction

Between 1996 and 2001, Italy experienced three great controversies on history education, the first and second concerning contemporary history and the last world history. All these debates took place in the context of a long process of general reform of Italian schools; those controversies that were related to contemporary history in particular were influenced by the profound political crisis which occurred at the same time in Italy, bringing about the end of a party system which had ruled the political landscape for decades. Since the early 1990s, some parties, such as *Democrazia Cristiana* (Christian Democracy) and the *Partito socialista italiano* (Italian Socialist Party), have become defunct, while others, like the *Partito comunista italiano* (Italian Communist Party) and the neo-fascist *Movimento sociale italiano* (Italian Social Movement), have undergone far-reaching changes. The last of these, which had for decades represented only a small minority and occupied a marginalised position in the Italian parliament, considerably increased its share of the vote in the election of 1994, in which it re-emerged as the *Alleanza nazionale* (National Alliance); in consequence, it subsequently entered government for the first time, in coalition with a brand new centre-right party, *Forza Italia*, under the leadership of Silvio Berlusconi. In this new social landscape, a ‘history war’ broke out due to the challenge posed by the new political right wing, striving for full legitimisation, to the hitherto prevailing anti-fascist political and cultural paradigm represented by Catholics, liberals and leftists. With the help of some historians and journalists, the new right attempted to force a revision of the

negative judgement on Italian Fascism and consequently of the positive judgement on the anti-fascist *Resistenza*. It rejected the embeddedness of the Italian republic's identity in anti-fascism and the *Resistenza* and called for this identity to be based in future on a new patriotism in which the military of the *Repubblica Sociale Italiana* of 1943–1945, Mussolini's last government, which fought the *Resistenza* with particular ferocity, was also to have its share.

One of the battlegrounds of this struggle for legitimacy was, inevitably, history teaching in schools. As the conservative historian and philosopher Dino Cofrancesco wrote in 2000, '80% of our history textbooks do not contribute at all to the increase of national peace, i.e. the development of common values which are the best resource of western democracies'.<sup>1</sup>

## Historical Background

The controversies on contemporary history in Italy date back to the end of the Second World War. During the Allied occupation of Italy between 1943 and 1947, the Allied Control Commission undertook the defascistisation of all public structures, including schools. Textbooks were thus screened in order to expunge Fascist ideology from them; in the case of history textbooks, the pages dealing with the period after the end of the First World War were removed, having evidently been written in praise of Mussolini's regime. This removal of contemporary history was meant to be a provisional measure in advance of the reception of new textbooks which were to be written by Italian authors from a democratic point of view; in fact, however, contemporary history remained officially excluded from schools for many years. In 1947, the centrist *Democrazia Cristiana*, the major political party at the time, broke off its alliance with the Communist and Socialist parties, which it had maintained during the years of the *Resistenza* against Fascism. One of the consequences of this political change was the continuation of an effective silence on contemporary history in schools: *Democrazia Cristiana* did not wish to emphasise the role played in the *Resistenza* by the leftist parties, which had been its principal protagonists. These parties, by contrast, insisted on the necessity of teaching precisely this part of history in order to educate young people to commit to democracy and prevent the resurgence of Fascism. This situation gave rise to a period of about 15 years during which contemporary history remained absent from history curricula, even if some textbook authors included it, due to the fact that the ministerial approval processes for textbooks introduced by the Fascist regime<sup>2</sup> had been abolished after the war and textbook authors thus enjoyed full freedom.<sup>3</sup> This situation came to an end in

1960, with the success within *Democrazia Cristiana* of a political trend in favour of collaboration with the Socialist party. Thus, between 1960 and 1963, new history curricula were issued for all types of school that included contemporary history and explicitly mentioned the *Resistenza*. Nevertheless, the teaching of contemporary history remained problematic: in general, rightist teachers preferred not to dwell on it, because they considered that the short time that had elapsed since the events necessarily led to political bias, which schools had the duty to avoid; leftist teachers, by contrast, viewed Italy's most recent history as essential knowledge for the education of future citizens. An additional difficulty for all teachers was posed by the fact that the syllabus for the final year of both lower and upper secondary schools covered the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and thus encompassed such a plethora of material that finding time to teach recent history, specifically Fascism and the Second World War and its aftermath, proved a challenge.

## Debates

### Contemporary History I

In 1996, Minister of Education Luigi Berlinguer, who was part of a centre-left government, announced that the history syllabus of the final year of each of the three levels of schooling in Italy<sup>4</sup> was to be devoted solely to the study of the twentieth century, with the aim of improving knowledge of contemporary history among young people. This decision provoked heated debate, with right-wing commentators perceiving a danger of political bias in the teaching of contemporary history. An influential conservative journalist, Indro Montanelli, wrote: 'Are there any history textbooks for contemporary history which one can consider well balanced and neutral? I know of none'.<sup>5</sup> Another right-wing journalist, Marcello Veneziani, accused more recent history textbooks of being appropriate in tone to the Soviet Union or Maoist China.<sup>6</sup> On the opposite side of the debate, the author and politician Vittorio Foa stressed the importance of the study of contemporary history to young people's education: '[They] must learn [about] this century in order to understand the relationship between the memory of the past and the future of their lives'.<sup>7</sup> The historian Giovanni De Luna reminded the participants in the debate that the danger of bias was not quintessential to contemporary history, but was a risk equally run in the study of Athens and Sparta.<sup>8</sup> Minister Berlinguer was not dissuaded by criticism and soon issued a decree for the

reform process of the history syllabus as announced.<sup>9</sup> The reform was subject in the years that followed to various amendments according to the way the political wind was blowing: in 2004, Letizia Moratti, education minister of a centre-right government, re-introduced the period since Napoleon<sup>10</sup> to history teaching in the final year of primary school, and three years later, with a centre-left government once again in power, Minister Giuseppe Fioroni re-established the exclusive study of the twentieth century in this year.<sup>11</sup> Since then, the place of the twentieth century in Italian schools seems to have become robustly established. The next minister of education, Mariastella Gelmini, although part of a centre-right government, left the exclusive teaching of the twentieth century in place in the final year of secondary education when she reformed it in 2010,<sup>12</sup> as did her successor Francesco Profumo, part of a technocratic government, in a subsequent revision of syllabuses for primary schools.<sup>13</sup>

## Contemporary History II

A particularly fierce controversy on contemporary history broke out in 2000. On 8 November of that year, the council of the region of Lazio, whose president was Francesco Storace of the *Alleanza Nazionale* party, passed a motion claiming that many history textbooks for upper secondary schools falsified or ignored certain chapters of Italian history. According to the motion, the biased attitude of their authors ‘artificially feeds a generational clash which has lasted too many years and hinders the reconstruction of a national identity common to all Italians and the achievement of a sense of true national peace’.<sup>14</sup> The motion also denounced the absence of a national control authority on textbooks and called upon the council to establish a commission for this purpose and to support authors to write new textbooks to be disseminated regionally. The motion referred to a pamphlet recently published by the *Azione studentesca*, a student organisation affiliated with *Alleanza Nazionale*, which charged many history textbooks with a leftist bias, in particular where they discuss the *Resistenza*, the *foibe* murders perpetrated by Yugoslavians against Italians at the end of the Second World War, Stalin, terrorism in Italy in the 1970s and Berlusconi’s political career.<sup>15</sup>

Immediately following the publication of the motion, other regional councils under centre-right rule followed the initiative, which Berlusconi welcomed, asserting that ‘our children will no longer be obliged to study history textbooks with Marxist distortions’.<sup>16</sup> The initiative unleashed a wave of fierce negative reactions on the part not only of left-wing politicians but also of



historians and educators, outraged by the idea of introducing controls on textbooks and defending the anti-fascist paradigm which inspired the history textbooks then in use in Italy. During a parliamentary debate, Giuliano Amato, premier of the centre-left Italian government, reaffirmed the fundamental right to freedom of research and teaching under Article 33 of the Italian constitution and asserted that the commission proposed by the motion was a form of dissuasive censorship which could have ‘as [its] effect a conformism most dangerous to the necessary dialectic of freedom among authors, between teachers and authors, and between teachers and pupils’.<sup>17</sup> Parliamentary elections were approaching, and Berlusconi, worried about the possible negative impact of this controversy, decided to stop the initiative, which was thus not implemented by the regional councils. After the victory of the centre-right coalition in the elections of 13 May 2001, Fabio Garagnani, a member of parliament for *Forza Italia*, proposed a law on the ‘objectivity’ of history textbooks, without specifying which authority should be tasked with screening them.<sup>18</sup> This proposal roused vehement protest once again among historians, teachers and politicians from the left, but also caused a degree of embarrassment in the government. Valentina Aprea, of the same party as Garagnani and under-secretary of education, declared during the debate in the cultural committee of the *Camera dei Deputati* that even if she appreciated the spirit of the proposal, she would advise against passing it in order to avoid discord.<sup>19</sup> Marco Follini, secretary of the *Unione dei Democratici Cristiani e di Centro* (Union of Christian and Centre Democrats), a party allied with *Forza Italia*, denounced the proposal as ‘gigantic tomfoolery’.<sup>20</sup> Other prominent politicians of the centre-right coalition, including the education minister, kept silence on the matter or distanced themselves from the proposal. Despite this less than enthusiastic response from his own political side, Garagnani insisted on having his proposal voted upon by the committee;<sup>21</sup> after this, however, the proposal was never tabled for discussion in parliament and was eventually forgotten.

## World History

During the first months of 2001, a controversy broke out on the teaching of world history, an issue which had not only an academic but also a political dimension. Tullio De Mauro, minister of education in the centre-left government of the day, a prominent linguist and university professor, nominated a commission of approximately 250 members with the task of writing new educational curricula for all school subjects. The subcommission in charge of the

history, geography and social science syllabuses for primary schools (years 1–7) included educators, geographers, sociologists, philosophers, economists and a small group of historians, who proposed that world history should replace the Eurocentric model which up to then had shaped history teaching in Italy. The proposed history syllabus was based on a chronologically ordered framework of the history of humanity, into which the histories of successively smaller-scale areas (macro-regional to national to local) were inserted. Europe and the Mediterranean were no longer the sole centres of the narrative, and sub-Saharan Africa, India, China, Japan, the Americas and Australasia were also studied in parallel from the Palaeolithic era onwards. This proposal was almost unanimously accepted by the rest of the commission, but met with strong criticism from historians outside after the corresponding syllabus' first draft was publicised in the media. The fundamental argument of its detractors was that teaching world history denied by its very nature what in their opinion should be the fundamental role of history teaching: the shaping of a collective identity. Rosario Villari, author of a successful history textbook series, stated:

The study of history is intimately linked with the need for an in-depth understanding of the identity of one's own civilisation and of the nation and the civil community to which one belongs.<sup>22</sup>

A similar viewpoint can be found in a manifesto signed by a group of 33 historians, who called for history teaching to afford a central role to Italian and European history and to give pre-eminence to these civilisations:

[W]e emphatically call for a general re-definition of the syllabus for the primary [school] cycle, in order to avoid the danger that the world-scale view of the historical process, whose necessity we do not deny, might compromise the full appreciation of Italian and European identity, and belittle the differences in values and achievements [between these civilisations and others].<sup>23</sup>

Some historians drew up an alternative history syllabus, absolutely traditional in its content and emphasising the claim to primacy of Italy and of Christianity:

One must recognise ... [history as] a central pillar of both primary and secondary education in relation to their general educational objectives, especially in a country like Italy, where the development of a Christian and ecclesiastical tradition upon the roots of the classical world has guaranteed a continuous historical process that is unique in the world.<sup>24</sup>

These historians additionally viewed the role and importance of Europe as diminished by the expansion of the historical horizon to the rest of the world:

[T]he pretension that we should extend the study of history to a worldwide scale, so that the history of Europe and that of the other continents would be set on the same level ... is simply wishful thinking.<sup>25</sup>

Although criticism dominated the debate, some support for the world history syllabus came from schools and from some Italian historians.<sup>26</sup> Eventually, Minister De Mauro decided to approve this history syllabus and included it in the reform decree for primary schools.<sup>27</sup> However, the decree never came into force, because of the electoral victory of the centre-right coalition headed by Silvio Berlusconi on 13 May 2001. The abolition of the centre-left government's entire education reform had been one of the issues on which the election had been fought. Immediately after the victory, Rocco Buttiglione, one of the intellectuals close to the winning coalition, explicitly attacked the teaching of world history: 'Young people must not learn universal history, but above all the history of their own country. Chasing an abstract cosmopolitanism will make them bored. They must understand the culture they are born into'.<sup>28</sup>

Thus the new minister of education, Letizia Moratti, cancelled the previous reform and undertook another in which the history syllabus for the first stage of education emphasised the values of Italian national identity in the context of Europe.<sup>29</sup>

Alongside the political and educational grounds for the rejection of the teaching of world history, there was another reason, typical of the Italian historiographical culture of the time, as the historian Giuseppe Ricuperati has pointed out. While recognising that the programme drawn up by the De Mauro Commission represented an 'interesting and worthy endeavour',<sup>30</sup> he noted that it was perceived by the historians who opposed it as 'a threat to the identity of the discipline [of history]'<sup>31</sup> because 'not only is there a lack of a real tradition of world history in Italian research, but the "transnational" historical perspective is also very recent'.<sup>32</sup>

In the history syllabus for the first stage of schooling issued by the next minister of education, Giuseppe Fioroni, and drawn up by a small committee of historians, the world history structure of the De Mauro programme was lost, the focus being on Europe with only a reference to India and China; this notwithstanding, the rejection of history education as a tool for creating collective identities was maintained:

In recent times ... the issue of the past, and especially that of memory, identity and roots, has strongly influenced public and media discourses on history. In this context, the command of critical tools of the social and historical sciences enables [us] to prevent the exploitation and misuse of history.<sup>33</sup>

With the revision of this syllabus in 2012 by Minister Profumo, the main concept of Fioroni's syllabus, the rejection of the use of history education to forge collective identity, was again fully preserved, and even formulated in the words of the passage cited immediately above, but the references to non-European countries it had previously contained, which had been scarce indeed, disappeared. The history syllabus for upper secondary schools, which had been issued in 2010 by Minister Gelmini, neither affirmed nor rejected the use of history education for the purpose of identity-building, but simply ignored it, and the world history framework was entirely absent. The content was Eurocentric, with only a general recommendation to take a look outside Europe from time to time:

It is useful and desirable to pay attention during the educational process to civilisations different from the western one, giving due space, for instance, to the Indian civilisation at the time of the conquests of Alexander the Great; to the Chinese civilisation at the time of the Roman Empire; to the American cultures before Columbus; to the non-European countries conquered by European colonialism during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in order to achieve a knowledge of the comprehensive framework of relationships among the various civilisations during the twentieth century.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusion

The programmes issued in 2012 for primary schools brought an end to this long process of education reform in Italy. Concerning history education, the main outcome is the more significant place allotted to the twentieth century. The attempt to replace the Eurocentric approach with a world history framework has failed; an outcome of that debate, however, has been the rejection of the use of history education for the purpose of forging a common identity, at least in primary schooling, while secondary education continues to maintain a neutral and knowledge-oriented stance. Finally, all attempts to introduce a form of administrative control over history textbooks have failed completely in the face of resistance aiming at the protection of freedom of teaching, made not only by left-wing politicians and intellectuals but above all by stakeholders in the Italian school system.

## Notes

1. D. Cofrancesco, 'Ma non può esistere una Storia Assoluta', *Il Secolo XIX*, 11 November 2000. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are by the author.
2. J. Charnitzky, *Die Schulpolitik des faschistischen Regimes in Italien (1922–1943)* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1994), 319–334.
3. Today, textbooks are selected and adopted by a committee of teachers at each school; parent representatives are involved at primary and lower secondary schools and both parents and pupils at upper secondary schools. Decreto Presidente della Repubblica 31 maggio 1974, n. 416: 'Istituzione e riordinamento di organi collegiali della scuola materna, elementare, secondaria ed artistica', *Gazzetta Ufficiale* 239, 13 September 1974, Supplemento Ordinario.
4. The Italian school system was at this time organised into three levels: five years of primary school (*scuola elementare*) followed by three years of lower secondary school (*scuola media*), both compulsory, and a third level of upper secondary school, lasting from three to five years according to which course was taken, either vocational education (*istituti professionali*) or humanities or science (*liceo classico* and *liceo scientifico*).
5. I. Montanelli, 'La stanza di Montanelli', *Corriere della Sera*, 5 October 1996.
6. M. Veneziani, 'Novecento', *Epoca*, 18 October 1996.
7. M. Ajello, 'Cari ragazzi, finalmente scoprirete un secolo. Il vostro', *Il Messaggero*, 1 October 1996.
8. F. Erbani, 'Tv e giornali il racconto infinito', *la Repubblica*, 3 October 1996.
9. Decreto del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione n. 682, 'Modifiche delle disposizioni relative alla suddivisione annuale del programma di Storia', 4 November 1996.
10. Decreto legislativo 19 febbraio 2004, n. 59, 'Definizione delle norme generali relative alla scuola dell'infanzia e al primo ciclo dell'istruzione, a norma dell'articolo 1 della legge 28 marzo 2003, n. 53', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 51, 2 March 2004, Supplemento ordinario n. 31. At this point, after a reform to the school system, primary school now included both the previous *scuola elementare* and *scuola media*.
11. Decreto del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione 31 Luglio 2007, 'Indicazioni per la scuola d'infanzia e del primo ciclo di istruzione. Indicazioni per il curriculum', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 228, 1 October 2007, Supplemento ordinario n. 198.
12. Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, Decreto 7 ottobre 2010, n. 211, 'Schema di regolamento recante "Indicazioni nazionali riguardanti gli obiettivi specifici di apprendimento concernenti le attività e gli insegnamenti compresi nei piani degli studi previsti per i percorsi liceali di cui all'articolo 10, comma 3, del decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 15 marzo 2010, n. 89, in relazione all'articolo 2, commi 1 e 3, del medesimo

- regolamento”, *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 291, 14 December 2010, Supplemento ordinario n. 275/L.
13. Ministero dell’Istruzione, dell’Università e della Ricerca, Decreto 16 novembre 2012, n. 254, ‘Regolamento recante indicazioni nazionali per il curriculum della scuola dell’infanzia e del primo ciclo d’istruzione, a norma dell’articolo 1, comma 4, del decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 20 marzo 2009, n. 89’, *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 30, 5 February 2013.
  14. Consiglio Regionale del Lazio, VII Legislatura, *Seduta n. 15, 8 novembre 2000*, resoconto stenografico.
  15. ‘Ecco i libri di storia accusati di faziosità’, *la Repubblica*, 10 November 2000; F. Chiocci, ‘Così gli studenti imparano una storia manipolata’, *il Giornale*, 11 November 2000.
  16. W. Valli, ‘Berlusconi sulla scuola “No ai testi marxisti”’, *la Repubblica*, 13 November 2000.
  17. Camera dei Deputati, XIII Legislatura, *Seduta n. 811, 15 novembre 2000*, Resoconto stenografico dell’Assemblea.
  18. Camera dei Deputati, XIV Legislatura, Progetto di legge n. 2991: Proposta di legge d’iniziativa del deputato Garagnani, *Disposizioni per l’insegnamento della storia nelle scuole di ogni ordine e grado, presentata il 9 luglio 2002*.
  19. Camera dei Deputati, XIV Legislatura, VII Commissione permanente (Cultura, scienza e istruzione), *Resoconto della seduta del 16 ottobre 2002*.
  20. ‘Libri di storia, la risoluzione è irricevibile’, *Corriere della Sera*, 12 December 2002.
  21. Camera dei Deputati, XIV Legislatura, VII Commissione permanente (Cultura, scienza e istruzione), *Resoconto della seduta dell’11 dicembre 2002*.
  22. P. Conti, ‘Villari: caro ministro, ecco perché la tua riforma è sbagliata’, *Corriere della Sera*, 13 February 2001.
  23. This manifesto was published in *Corriere della Sera* on 25 February 2001; its signatories were Gaetano Arfè, Girolamo Arnaldi, Francesco Barbagallo, Giuseppe Barone, Giovanni Belardelli, Luciano Canfora, Giorgio Chittolini, Giorgio Cracco, Franco Della Peruta, Mario Del Treppo, Angelo d’Orsi, Massimo Firpo, Giuseppe Galasso, Ernesto Galli della Loggia, Carlo Ghisalberti, Aurelio Lepre, Paolo Macry, Francesco Malgeri, Luigi Masella, Francesco Perfetti, Giuliano Procacci, Paolo Prodi, Gabriella Rossetti, Alfonso Scirocco, Giuseppe Sergi, Marco Tangheroni, Nicola Tranfaglia, Francesco Traniello, Gian Maria Varanini, Pasquale Villani, Rosario Villari, Cinzio Violante and Giovanni Vitolo: ‘Manifesto dei 33 storici’, accessed 5 June 2017, <http://www.sissco.it/articoli/la-storia-contemporanea-nelle-scuole-superiori-1345/la-riforma-dei-cicli-e-la-storia-1346/insegnamento-della-storia-e-identita-europea-1383/>.
  24. G. Arnaldi, P. Bevilacqua, M. Firpo, C. D. Fonseca, N. Tranfaglia and G. Vitolo, ‘Progetto per l’insegnamento della storia nella scuola di base e in quella superiore’, *Lineatempo* 1 (2001): 106.

25. Ibid., 108.
26. 'Storia: un documento in difesa di De Mauro "Non riportiamo i programmi agli anni '80"', *Corriere della Sera*, 27 February 2001.
27. 'Regolamento, recante norme in materia di curricoli della scuola di base, ai sensi dell'articolo 8 del decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 8 marzo 1999, n. 275' and the 'Indirizzi per l'attuazione del curricolo'. In *I curricoli della scuola di base. Testi e commenti*, G. Cerini and I. Fiorin (Napoli: Tecnodid Editrice, 2001).
28. 'Buttiglione: così rivisiterò la storia. "Bisogna liberarla dalle incrostazioni marxiste"', *La Stampa*, 16 May 2001.
29. Decreto legislativo 19 febbraio 2004, n. 59, 'Definizione delle norme generali relative alla scuola dell'infanzia e al primo ciclo dell'istruzione, a norma dell'articolo 1 della legge 28 marzo 2003, n. 53', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, n. 51, 2 March 2004.
30. G. Ricuperati, 'A proposito di "Whose History?", e di uso pubblico della storia. Lo scontro sui piani di studio negli Stati Uniti (e in Italia)', *Rivista storica italiana* CXV (2003), 771.
31. Ibid., 772.
32. Ibid.
33. Decreto del Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione 31 Luglio 2007.
34. Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, 'Decreto 211, 7 October 2010: Schema di regolamento recante "Indicazioni nazionali riguardanti gli obiettivi specifici di apprendimento concernenti le attività e gli insegnamenti compresi nei piani degli studi previsti per i percorsi liceali di cui all'articolo 10, comma 3, del decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 15 marzo 2010, n. 89, in relazione all'articolo 2, commi 1 e 3, del medesimo regolamento"', *Gazzetta Ufficiale*, 291, no. 14 (December 2010), Supplemento ordinario 275/L, 205.

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# 25

## Japan

Sven Saaler

### Introduction

Controversies over the history textbooks used in Japanese schools occupy an important place in post-war Japanese politics and society. This issue is one of several highly politicised areas where questions of war responsibility, war crimes and the legacies of colonial rule are being contested. Controversies over war memorials and appropriate ways of commemorating the war dead (the debate about the role of the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo is the most prominent example), the debate over apologies for the nation's war record, war crimes and lawsuits addressing historical injustices are further aspects of post-war Japan's struggle to come to terms with its colonial and wartime past.

All these issues have received a great deal of attention from researchers, particularly since the 1980s. On the basis of the substantial body of literature now available, I will introduce the historical background to these ongoing controversies in the first section of this chapter. In the main section of the chapter, I will set out the major themes and chief participants in the debates since the 1990s. The section on documentation introduces some key texts that illustrate the current Japanese debates over what constitutes history education and its relationship with Japan's attempts at reconciliation with its East Asian neighbours.

## Historical Background

Controversies over history textbooks and history education were a subject of discussion in Japan before World War II, but the issue was magnified by the measures undertaken by US authorities during the occupation of Japan following the war (1945–1952). During this period, history textbooks were entirely rewritten, and pre-war militaristic and chauvinistic rhetoric, including terms such as the ‘Greater East Asian War’ and the ‘Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere’, were banned by the US authorities.

In more recent years, conservative circles in Japan made repeated attempts to ‘re-nationalise’ history textbooks—that is, to imbue them with a stronger sense of nationhood and make them better suited to the task of instilling national pride in Japan’s youth. Conservatives claim that the textbooks currently used in Japanese schools still reflect the policies and values of the foreign occupation authorities and thus are ‘masochistic’ in character. By this, these critics mean that current textbooks are overly critical of Japan’s wartime conduct and are thereby hindering young Japanese from developing a ‘healthy nationalism’.<sup>1</sup>

These ongoing attacks by conservative groups, aimed at replacing the current content of history textbooks with something more appropriate or ‘bright’, have triggered a series of heated debates on both the domestic and international fronts. In the 1960s, the textbook debate in Japan escalated as attempts were made to re-nationalise the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, a campaign that was widely criticised as a first step towards the reestablishment of State Shinto, a religion considered to be a pillar of pre-war ultra-nationalism and militarism. In addition, a small but vocal group of intellectuals added their weight to the attempt to rehabilitate Japan’s wartime policies and conduct. The publication of Hayashi Fusao’s infamous ‘In Affirmation of the Greater East Asian War’ in the 1960s (first as a series of articles in the influential magazine *Chūō Kōron* [1963–1965] and later as a book) marked the initial climax of post-war efforts by conservative revisionists aimed at relativising war responsibility and establishing an ‘affirmative’ view of Japan’s war past.

Further, as part of the process of textbook approval from the 1960s onwards, the conservative bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education examined (in fact, censored) textbooks and, in some cases, denied approval for texts exhibiting a critical approach to Japan’s wartime past. One outstanding example was the textbook written by the historian Ienaga Saburō. In response to the ministry’s refusal to approve the book, Ienaga filed several lawsuits against the Japanese state, claiming that the ministry’s action was a violation of the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of expression and had caused him psychological

distress. Ienaga's lawsuits dragged on for over three decades and established themselves as landmarks in the Japanese textbook controversy up to the 1990s.

Following a brief but turbulent prelude in 1982, when a massive controversy over school textbooks broke out between Japan on one side and China and South Korea on the other, the debate became increasingly internationalised during the 1990s. From that point in time onward, and until quite recently, the history textbook controversy increased in intensity and several civil society organisations came to play an important part in the discussions.

## Developments since 1996

The primary trigger for the most recent history textbook controversies was the foundation of a conservative group of historical revisionists, the so-called *Atarashii Rekishi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru-kai* (新しい歴史教科書をつくる会, generally known as *Tsukuru-kai*, or the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform). The foundation of this group in 1996 marked a new stage in the Japanese history textbook controversy and brought a heightened degree of intensity to the debate.

As a consequence of the internationalisation of the controversy since 1982, by the early 1990s the contents of Japanese textbooks had undergone considerable change. Protests from China and Korea in 1982 forced the Japanese government to introduce new guidelines requiring publishers to reflect in history textbooks the need for reconciliation with Japan's neighbours, the victims of Japanese aggression in the 1930s and 1940s. This Neighbouring Nations Clause (近隣諸国条項, *kinrin shokoku jōkō*; see the documentation section for details) resulted in the inclusion in Japanese textbooks of controversial chapters on Japan's wartime past, such as the Nanjing massacre of 1937, the history of the infamous Unit 731 which conducted experiments on human subjects for the development of biological and chemical weapons, and the so-called 'military comfort women', women from a number of Asian countries forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military.

In reaction to these changes, conservatives initiated a campaign against what they labelled the 'masochistic' (i.e. self-critical) view of history (自虐史観, *jigyaku shikan*) that these texts represented. Conservative groups started to advocate a history education that would once again give pupils pride in their nation and country and replace the 'masochistic' interpretation of history propagated by the revised publications with a 'bright' master narrative. Tokyo University Professor of Education Fujioka Nobukatsu was one of the forerunners of what has developed into a movement lobbying for historical revision-

ism. Along with the German literature scholar Nishio Kanji, a number of public intellectuals, the popular manga writer Kobayashi Yoshinori and prominent businesspeople (who financed the movement's activities), Fujioka founded the *Tsukuru-kai* in 1996. This organisation has become the most prominent arm of the movement for historical revisionism, receiving a great deal of attention in the media, particularly in the late 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first century.

The leading theme of the nation-centred narrative of historical revisionism championed by the *Tsukuru-kai* is the re-interpretation of the Asia-Pacific War (1931–1945) as a 'glorious' war, a war of self-defence or a war undertaken to liberate Asia from Western imperialism, rather than in any sense a war of aggression. In promoting this narrative, the *Tsukuru-kai* appropriated earlier voices that had advocated a more 'positive' view of Japan's role in World War II. For example, according to a statement issued in 1995 by the 'History Examination Committee', a group within the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), 'The Greater East Asian War was a glorious and international contribution, a sacrifice without precedent in the history of mankind ... The Japanese are a righteous people'.<sup>2</sup> The so-called 'dark' chapters of modern Japanese history, such as the Nanjing massacre, Unit 731, or the 'military comfort women', had no place in the 'glorious' picture created by this kind of narrative. As its foundation statement reveals, the *Tsukuru-kai* pushed such historical revisionism a step further; its goal was to eliminate all references to Japan's alleged wartime atrocities from history textbooks, with the larger objective of replacing the 'masochistic view of history' that produces only contempt for one's own country with a 'historical education based on a healthy nationalism'<sup>3</sup> (see also the documentation section).

When, in the autumn of 2000, the *Tsukuru-kai* submitted textbooks for the middle school level (grades 7–9, or ages 12–15) in history and civic education for examination by the Ministry of Education, few observers expected these texts to receive approval. However, despite their many deficiencies, the *Tsukuru-kai's* textbooks eventually passed the examination, a decision which predictably resulted in uproar, both at home and abroad, and led to the organisation of a citizens' movement dedicated to preventing the society's textbooks from being adopted for use in the classroom.

While individual schools are able to choose their textbooks for high school level (years 10–12) from titles approved by the ministry, responsibility for the selection of textbooks for middle schools and primary schools lies in the hands of regional selection boards. These boards are established as advisory bodies by the education committees of local municipalities. Primary and middle schools are moulded by a combination of bureaucratic decision-making and citizen

participation, with the regional selection boards being heavily influenced by the administrative structure and political make-up of the prefecture involved. In most cases, members of the regional selection boards view all the textbooks submitted and then organise research subcommittees which consider the recommendations put forward by the schools as well as by experts. The research committees also consult school principals and teachers. On the basis of this information and the experts' opinions, the members of the selection board recommend between one and three titles. The board then either chooses a textbook from these recommendations or confirms the recommendation put forward by the subcommittee.<sup>4</sup>

During the 2001 selection process, only one small municipality adopted the *Tsukuru-kai*'s history textbook. A nationwide movement, organised and coordinated by networks of citizens' groups such as the Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 (子供と教科書ネット21, Kodomo to Kyōkasho Zenkoku Net 21) and supported by the Centre for the Documentation of School Textbooks (教科書情報資料センター, Kyōkasho Jōhō Shiryō Sentaa) and the Printers' Union (出版労連, Shuppan Rōren), protested vocally against the adoption of the *Tsukuru-kai* text and succeeded in preventing its adoption in a large number of municipalities. This civil society movement has continued to oppose the activities of the *Tsukuru-kai* at every turn. Its broad constituency ranges from moderate conservatives to progressive liberals and from leftist citizen groups to the Japanese Communist Party. They are united in the common fear that the resurgence of what they see as an ethnocentric and xenophobic nationalism would harm Japan's relations with its Asian neighbours and the country's reputation worldwide.

The same pattern was repeated during the textbook adoption processes in 2005, 2009, 2011 and 2015; each time the *Tsukuru-kai* failed to secure a significant market share for its textbook. In 2001, only 500 copies (0.039 per cent of the market) of its textbooks found their way into Japanese schools, and in 2005 the total was still only around 5000 copies (0.4 per cent), although in that year the *Tsukuru-kai* succeeded in having its text adopted by Suginami, a city in the Tokyo Prefecture with a population of 560,000. However, in 2009, Suginami chose an alternative textbook, and in early 2015 the national market share enjoyed by the *Tsukuru-kai*'s history textbook remains well below one per cent.

As the *Tsukuru-kai* failed to realise its objectives, its membership began to decline and internal struggles escalated. In 2006, the society split into two when a rival 'Society for the Revival of Japanese Education' (日本教育再生機構, Nippon Kyōiku Saisei Kikō) was founded under the leadership of Yagi

Hidetsugu, a former *Tsukuru-kai* president. One year later, this new group founded its own 'Society for the Improvement of Textbooks' (教科書改善の会, *Kyōkasho Kaizen no Kai*) to carry its revisionist agenda into the classroom. The Society for the Revival of Japanese Education is disparaging of the *Tsukuru-kai* and has criticised other textbooks as 'anti-Japanese' and 'masochistic'.<sup>5</sup> The history textbook drafted by the Society for the Improvement of Textbooks, published by Ikuhōsha, was adopted by the cities of Yokohama and Osaka and a number of other municipalities in 2011 and 2016. As of spring 2017, it claims a market share of 6.3 per cent (approx. 75,000 copies).<sup>6</sup> The recent revision of the textbook approval process and the watering down of the Neighbouring Nations Clause under the administration of Shinzō Abe (since 2012)<sup>7</sup> seem to be slowly but surely allowing revisionist textbooks to gain ground in Japan's education system.

Although the *Tsukuru-kai* frequently complains that the internationalisation of the textbook controversy constitutes 'foreign intervention' in Japanese domestic affairs, resistance against the neo-conservative narrative embodied in the society's textbooks has also been growing domestically. In recent years, the prefecture of Okinawa, the only part of the Japanese mainland on which major combat took place during World War II, has become a centre of resistance against whitewashed narratives of the war. During the fighting in Okinawa from April to June 1945, civilians were reportedly ordered to commit suicide rather than surrender to the invading US forces. In 2007, the Ministry of Education informed publishers that all reference to military coercion with regard to these mass suicides was to be deleted from textbooks and claimed that there was insufficient evidence to support the claim of mass suicides ordered by the military authorities. As a result, a demonstration was organised in Ginowan City in Okinawa in which as many as 110,000 citizens participated. Eventually the ministry withdrew its request for removal of the references.

There is no doubt that the diverse, and growing, protest movement against the *Tsukuru-kai*, *Kyōkasho Kaizen no Kai* and their textbooks has resulted in some major setbacks for revisionist approaches to history teaching in Japan. Further, there is also a bright side to the intensification of these controversies, as they have led to the formation of a number of transnational research projects, some multi-disciplinary and others focused more narrowly on history textbooks, which have proved to be very fruitful. Some of these projects have led to the publication of teaching materials by Japanese-Korean and Chinese-Japanese-Korean working groups, including the trilateral textbook *A History That Opens the Future* (2005) and the two-volume *A New History of East Asia* published by the same trilateral committee.<sup>8</sup> Given the strong interdepen-



dence of East Asian economies, it seems likely that this kind of approach will become more widespread in the foreseeable future.

## Documentation

After it had become known in 1982 that the Japanese Ministry of Education had pressured publishers not to depict Japan's war in China in the 1930s as an act of 'aggression', vociferous protests erupted in China and also in Korea. Seeking to limit the damage caused, the Japanese government, in August 1982, issued what is known as the Miyazawa Statement, saying that 'from the perspective of building friendship and goodwill with neighbouring countries, Japan will pay due attention to these criticisms and make corrections at the Government's responsibility' [sic].<sup>9</sup> The so-called Neighbouring Nations Clause (近隣諸国条項, *kinrin shokoku jōkō*) is still one of the criteria underlying the ministerial process of examination (*kentei*) of Japanese history textbooks. The most recent version of these guidelines reads as follows:

Criteria for the Examination of Textbooks for High Schools  
(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology)  
Announcement no. 166, 9 September 2009  
1 Selection, treatment and organisation

- (1) There must not be any definitive statements or presentation of one-sided views concerning historical events with no agreed interpretation.
- (2) When addressing historical events in the modern period relating to [Japan's] Asian neighbours, sufficient consideration should be given to the question of international understanding and international cooperation.
- (3) When books, sources, etc. are being quoted, credible material whose interpretation is not in question must be used, and it must be implemented impartially. When quoting from historical sources and legal documents, the original texts should be respected.
- (4) Regarding the chronology of Japanese history, in the case of significant dates the Japanese regnal year system (*gengō*) and the Western calendar should both be used.<sup>10</sup>

Although educational guidelines of this kind do not in themselves encourage critical engagement with historical sources and multiple interpretations of events, personalities and documents, article (2) led to massive changes in the content of Japanese textbooks—primarily regarding the increasing inclusion of chapters relating to Japan's wartime conduct, war responsibility and war crimes.

These changes in turn were criticised by conservative historical revisionists who, as we have seen, dismissed the new textbooks as products of a 'masochistic' view of history and started their own campaign to reverse these changes and produce their own textbooks. This reaction was spearheaded by the Tsukuru-kai which, on its website, defines the following objectives as its *raison d'être*:

From ancient times, Japanese soil has bred civilisation and produced unique traditions. In every age, Japan has kept pace with the advance of civilisation throughout the globe, and advanced steadily throughout history.

When in the era of imperialism the Euro-American nations aimed at swallowing East Asia, Japan emerged as a power on the world stage by reviving its own traditions and harmonising them with the ways of Western European civilisation.

However, this was also a violent time that involved tension and friction with other countries. Today Japan is the safest and wealthiest [country] in the world, the product of the persistent efforts of our fathers and mothers and their ancestors.

However, historical education in the post-war period has neglected the culture and traditions that the Japanese are duty bound to pass on to following generations, involving a shameful loss of national pride. Especially in the field of modern history, the Japanese are treated like criminals who must continue apologising [for the past] for generations to come. Following the end of the Cold War, this masochistic tendency only increased, and in current history textbooks propaganda disseminated by our former enemies is included and treated as if it were the truth. There is no other country in the world where history education is taught in such a way ...

Our textbook enables children to take pride and responsibility in being Japanese and to contribute to world peace and prosperity.<sup>11</sup>

As we have seen from the above, the movement for historical revisionism has lost much of its initial impetus as a citizens' movement. However, the appointment as prime minister of Shinzō Abe, a leading figure in the movement for historical revisionism,<sup>12</sup> led to an escalation of the debate in late 2012 and on his re-election in December 2014. Prime Minister Abe declared the 'overcoming of the post-war regime', a reference to the measures introduced by the occupation authorities immediately after the war, as one of his central objectives. While the reform of the Japanese Constitution is at the heart of Abe's ambitions, his cabinet has also begun to revise the textbook examination criteria, downgrading the importance of the Neighbouring Nations Clause and emphasising that, in their teaching, Japanese schools should focus on the

Japanese government's view; the implicit message here being that the Neighbouring Nations Clause encourages teachers to place 'undue' emphasis on the perspectives of other nations.

In late 2013, the Textbook Authorisation Research Council of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology summarised a number of amendments it considered should be made to the textbook examination guidelines.

Improvements to Textbook Examination (Conclusions of the Textbook Authorisation Research Council, 20 December 2013)

(1) Amendments to Textbook Examination Standards

To ensure that textbooks enable the teaching of a balanced view, the Textbook Reform Implementation Plan indicates that the examination standards for social studies textbooks should be revised so that the following contents are incorporated in them:

(1) When a statement is made regarding a matter on which there is no commonly accepted view, or excessive emphasis is placed on a specific view, a more balanced statement should be made in its place.

(2) In cases where there exists an official view of the government or an established precedent, statements should also be made on the basis of these.

Based on this, regarding the particular conditions of examination criteria in the field of social studies, the following reforms have been proposed and are considered appropriate:

(1) When a statement is made about a historical event with no agreed interpretation, it should be ensured that no excessive emphasis is placed on any specific aspect of that event.

(2) Regarding modern and contemporary historical events, when a statement is made regarding a matter on which there is no commonly accepted view, such as a numerical figure, it should be clearly indicated that there is no commonly accepted view and it should be expressed in a way that does not cause misunderstanding by pupils or students.

(3) In cases where an official view of the government exists through a cabinet decision or other means, or where a Supreme Court precedent exists, statements should be made on the basis of these.

Regarding (1), as indicated above, regulations concerning a 'historical event with no agreed interpretation' have been stipulated involving conditions particular to examination standards in the field of social studies. Regarding the judgment of whether or not an event is 'not agreed', this will be determined based on specialist and academic views concerning the event in question received at the time of screening the submitted textbook, as in the past.

Regarding (2), although it may be difficult to determine what should be considered a commonly accepted view in terms of its theoretical basis, this clearly

should not be done from the standpoint of a specific interpretation of history or the establishment of particular historical facts. In cases where no theory is widely accepted as a 'commonly accepted view', the statement in the textbook concerned will be judged from the viewpoint of whether it may be misunderstood by pupils or students.

Regarding (3), bearing in mind the system's purpose of encouraging the publication of a wide range of textbooks that make full use of the originality and ingenuity of private-sector authorship and editing, the aim of this is not to reject all statements based on views that differ from those of the government or from Supreme Court rulings, but rather to encourage statements that contribute to pupils or students studying many different points of view. With regard to the unified view of the government, it is appropriate that this be judged on whether it is the result of procedures such as a cabinet decision or whether it has become established to a certain degree.<sup>13</sup>

Tawara Yoshifumi from the Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21 points out that the insistence on the 'official view of the government' contradicts the Neighbouring Nations Clause. In view of this, textbook authors are essentially required to ignore the Clause when the Japanese government and the governments of other Asian countries hold conflicting views. But even in cases where (Japanese) textbook authors' views contradict an official government opinion, they would have to write in such a way as to receive ministerial approval for their book in keeping with national interests. This situation is very similar to that of pre-war Japan, where historians had to include Japanese mythology as historical fact in history textbooks, though none of them believed in the factual truth of the myths. Tawara Yoshifumi concludes:

It is natural that the government has certain views regarding political and diplomatic issues, but the possibility exists that such government views are mistaken. In a democratic society it is necessary that citizens, in whom sovereign power is vested, develop the ability to make independent judgments while learning about views that differ from those of the government. In order not to violate Article 26, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution or Article 16 of the Fundamental Law of Education (prohibition of improper control), it is necessary to ensure that textbooks do not include contents that obstruct children's growth as free and independent persons and that they do not enforce the teaching of one-sided ideas or views.<sup>14</sup>

Unimpressed with such criticism, the Abe government has declared that its long-term objective is to abolish the Neighbouring Nations Clause,<sup>15</sup> a step that would fundamentally alter the character of the textbook examination and

approval process and lead to substantial changes in the context of Japanese textbooks.

## Conclusion

In Japan, discussions about the extent to which school history textbooks should deal with the nation's war record and war crimes continue. While the ongoing need for reconciliation with Japan's neighbours requires the retention of war-related content in history textbooks, neo-national and revisionist activists continue to lobby for a greater emphasis on 'national pride' in Japanese education as a whole and in history education in particular. While the *Tsukuru-kai* textbook published in 2001 put some pressure on other publishers to reduce the war-related content of their own school texts, its poor sales have reversed this trend in recent years.

On the other side of the equation, some local governments have recently taken steps to strengthen nationalist elements in school ceremonies, such as making it mandatory to display the national flag during entrance and graduation ceremonies and sing the national anthem. These developments have put teachers under increasing pressure; in a 2012 court order, the city of Osaka decided to check whether teachers in its district were actually singing the national anthem by observing their lip movements. While this is an extreme case, the disasters that overwhelmed Japan in March 2011—the magnitude-9 earthquake in the northeast of the country, the tsunami that took almost 20,000 lives and the nuclear reactor catastrophe in Fukushima—have underlined the need, in the minds of the political elite and the government bureaucracy, to strengthen feelings of 'national solidarity'. The enforcement of national symbolism in education is seen as one solution to this perceived problem.

Whether the conservative and neo-nationalist forces will succeed in their attempt to mobilise teachers in support of their project to inculcate a stronger sense of nationhood in young Japanese by teaching a 'brighter' version of Japanese history, or whether Japan's civil society networks will be able to resist these trends, remains to be seen; after all, Japan's civil society networks are mainly critical of state-inspired attempts to foster national unity. As the documentation section illustrates, the Abe administration has increased the pressure on schools to teach a more 'nation-centred' view of history with less emphasis on aspects such as war responsibility and war crimes. However, neither Japan's civil society movement nor international networks of scholars and activists are likely to comply with these developments.

## Notes

1. See S. Saaler, 'Bad War or Good War? History and Politics in Post-war Japan'. In *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*, ed. J. Kingston (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), 137–148; S. Saaler, 'Nationalism and History in Contemporary Japan'. In *Asian Nationalisms Reconsidered*, ed. J. Kingston (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 172–185.
2. Rekishi Kentō Iinkai [History Examination Committee], ed., *Daitōa Sensō no Sōkatsu* [Summary of the Greater East Asian War] (Tokyo: Tentensha, 1995), 67.
3. Atarashii Rekiyhi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru-kai, 'Atarashii Rekiyhi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru-kai shuisho [Prospectus of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform]', accessed 21 June 2016, <http://www.tsukurukai.com/aboutus/syui-syo.html>.
4. For details see S. Saaler, *Politics, Memory and Public Opinion. The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society* (Munich: Iudicium, 2005), chapter 1; P. Cave, 'Japanese Colonialism and the Asia-Pacific War in Japan's History Textbooks: Changing Representations and their Causes', *Modern Asian Studies* 47 (2012) 2, 542–580.
5. Japanese blog, accessed 21 June 2016, <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/project-justice/e/e7fbf5562ce5574dd7ea2f8e5fffd0c5>.
6. For the exact numbers of textbooks in use in Japanese schools, see the 'Textbook Report' published by the Japanese Printers' Union: Shuppan Rōren, ed., *Kyōkasho Repōto* 59 (Tokyo: Nihon Shuppan Rōdō Kumiai Rengō-kai, 2016).
7. Y. Tawara, *The Abe Government and the 2014 Screening of Japanese Junior High School History Textbooks* (Tokyo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015); Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Tokyo Office, *The Politics of History—History in Politics. Sources relating to the History Textbook Controversy and other debates over history and memory in Japan and East Asia* (Tokyo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2014).
8. Both texts have been translated into English recently: The China-Japan-Korea Common History Text Tri-National Committee, *A History to Open the Future* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015); The China-Japan-Korea Common History Text Tri-National Committee, *A New Modern History of East Asia* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2018).
9. 'Statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kiichi Miyazawa on History Textbooks', 26 August 1982, homepage of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accessed 21 June 2016, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/postwar/state8208.html>.
10. 'Kōto Gakkō Kyōka-yo Toshō Kentei Kijun', Heisei 21nen kugatsu kokonoka Monbu Kagaku-shō Kokujī Dai166gō ['Criteria for the Examination of

- Textbooks for High Schools', Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Announcement no. 166, 9 September 2009], accessed 21 June 2016, [http://www.mext.go.jp/b\\_menu/hakusho/nc/1284728.html](http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/nc/1284728.html).
11. Atarashii Rekiyhi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru-kai, 'Atarashii Rekiyhi Kyōkasho o Tsukuru-kai shuisho [Prospectus of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform]', accessed 21 June 2016, <http://www.tsukurukai.com/aboutus/syuisyo.html>.
  12. See S. Saaler, 'Could Hosokawa Morihiro's political comeback restore sanity to Japanese Politics?' *Asia Pacific Journal*, 27 January 2013, accessed 21 June 2016, <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Sven-Saaler/4067>.
  13. Rekishi Kyōikusha Kyōgikai [History Educationalist Conference], ed., *Sukkiri wakaru Rekishi ninshiki no sōten Q&A* [Q&A—The Controversial Points of the History Consciousness Debate Made Easy] (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 2014), 136–137.
  14. Y. Tawara, *The Abe Government and the 2014 Screening of Japanese Junior High School History Textbooks* (Tokyo: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2015), 5–6.
  15. *Sankei News*, 11 April 2013, accessed 27 May 2017, <http://www.sankei.com/life/news/130411/lifl1304110013-n1.html>. Proposals to that end have been discussed in Japan's House of Councillors and in several prefectural assemblies.

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# 26

## Latvia

Daina Bleiere

### Introduction

History occupies a special place in current Latvian public discourse and politics. History is a battlefield among the different identity concepts of the contemporary Republic of Latvia, both in terms of domestic politics and relations with Russia. The loss of independence in 1940, directly followed by 50 years of the Soviet regime, has left a legacy of internal political and ethnic divisions as well as a conflicting culture of memories. The perception of history diverges significantly between ethnic Latvians and the Russian-speaking people in Latvia on two points. The first point concerns the events that occurred between June and August 1940, which led to Latvia's loss of independence. The majority of ethnic Latvians perceive the Soviet Union to have occupied Latvia in June 1940. Despite the fact that the Russian-speaking population very often agrees that the loss of independence took place under the threat of force and was a result of intervention by the Soviet Union, they object to the description of Soviet power in Latvia as occupation. The second point concerns attitudes towards the Soviet victory in the Second World War. For the Russian-speaking population, the celebration of Victory Day on 9 May is an expression of historical pride. However, for the Latvians, the end of the Second World War was simply a change of occupying regimes; although Nazi occupation ended, the Soviet one was resumed. The above-mentioned conflict of historical consciousness also runs through the system of education—that is, in discussions regarding the teaching of Latvian history in schools. The first

part of this chapter will describe the historical and political context of the problem. The second part will discuss the debate that started in 1999 involving the teaching of Latvian history. The documentation section will give some insight into the contrasting viewpoints.

## Historical Background

Discourse on history has become a focal point of the problem of national (state) identity in Latvia, as well as one of societal cohesion. It focuses mostly on the consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP) of 1939; that is, on the Latvian Republic's loss of independence and forced incorporation into the Soviet Union. It has obtained the label of occupation in Latvian political discourse and raises several questions: Was the loss of independence a result of the Soviet occupation, although there was no war between Latvia and the USSR? What was the essence of Soviet domination in Latvia? Could it still be called an occupying regime even after Latvia was formally incorporated into the Soviet Union on 5 August 1940?

It is very difficult today to deny that the establishment of Soviet military bases in the Baltic States in October 1939 and the submission of the Baltic States' governments to the Soviet ultimatum in June 1940 did not occur by mutual consent and that the latter was done under threat of force. It was certainly unprovoked aggression, and on 17 June 1940, Latvia was occupied by Soviet troops, although there was no direct use of force (except some isolated episodes, such as an assault by the Soviet military on the Latvian border post in Maslenki on 15 June 1940). Serious international legal arguments underpin this conclusion.<sup>1</sup> What is more controversial is the question of whether the state can still be considered occupied after its formal incorporation into the Soviet Union in August 1940. Estonian lawyer Lauri Mälksoo summarises the legal arguments supporting this position in his book.<sup>2</sup>

Latvian political discourse often focuses on formal meanings of words such as 'occupation', 'annexation' and 'incorporation'. However, this discussion is not only about 'the words', it is also about the basic principles on which the politics of the Republic of Latvia have been founded. The first concerns the historical continuity of the state and this, in turn, provokes the question: Is the Latvian state, which regained *de facto* independence in 1991, a legal successor to the one that declared its independence on 18 November 1918? The second principle concerns the consequences of Soviet regime policies. Should changes in ethnic composition (i.e., a dramatic increase in the Russian population of Latvia) be taken for granted, and if so, are demands to establish the

Russian language as an official language alongside Latvian justified? The same applies to questions regarding the continuation of the parallel state-sponsored Russian-language education system, and whether changes made during the occupation should be permitted to impinge on the dominant position of Latvian language and culture.

The majority of ethnic Latvians, as well as the major political parties they support, do not question the facts of the occupation or Latvia's status in connection with it. This acceptance is firmly established in Latvians' collective memory. Indeed, there are discussions and different opinions about the political consequences of this fact with regard to both domestic politics and relations with Russia.

However, it is difficult for people who settled in Latvia during the Soviet era to accept this fact, since they assume that Latvians view them as 'occupiers' and question their presence in the country, even if they are third-generation residents. Their aversion towards the word 'occupation' is also encouraged by the official position of the Russian Federation. Perhaps one reason for this position is the fear that Russia may be expected to officially apologise on behalf of the USSR and that the Baltic States may demand compensation for material and human losses resulting from the Soviet occupation. Russian official policies regarding remembrance, especially since 2005 when the victory in the Second World War became a cornerstone of strengthened Russian national pride, had great influence on Russians in Latvia. While in the 1990s these celebrations were mainly attended by elderly people—veterans of the Second World War, former Soviet military personnel and dedicated communists—who were nostalgic about the Soviet Union, in recent years the Victory Day celebration on 9 May at the Victory Monument in Riga and also the celebration of the Day of Riga's Liberation from Nazi Forces in 1944, which is marked on 13 October, have been attended by a great number of young Russians. The significance of Victory Day to local Russians was described by the local Russian newspaper *Telegraf* in 2007 as follows: 'Victory Day for Russians living in Latvia has become something more than just a day of paying tribute to the winners of the war ... Perhaps it is something like the Song Festival for Latvians. This is a day of unity, solidarity, pride for our nation and history—it is about everything that Russians have lost in these new Latvian times'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this widens the gap between Latvian and Russian communities, because for Latvians these dates are symbols of the beginning of the second Soviet occupation.

Problems concerning the occupation and an evaluation of the events of the Second World War are on everyone's minds, including those of the younger generation. A survey carried out in 2006 among senior students from 14 high

schools showed that out of 151 ethnic Latvian respondents, 68 considered the second arrival of the Red Army in 1944 to be the second occupation. The same number of students agreed that it heralded the demise of Nazism but simultaneously restored the Soviet occupation. Only nine respondents out of 149 from schools with bilingual education (i.e., former Russian-language schools) agreed that there was a second Soviet occupation.<sup>4</sup>

Another study, carried out in 2008, produced similar results. For example, in Russian-language schools, 65.1 per cent of respondents were of the opinion that in 1944/45 the Soviet Army liberated Latvia. In Latvian-language schools only 12.1 per cent of pupils interviewed shared this opinion, but 61.7 per cent considered the Soviet Army to have occupied the country.<sup>5</sup> Surely it is not unreasonable to surmise that high school students reflect the opinions that exist in their families and their ethnic environment. In addition, teachers in Russian-language schools, especially in Riga, often voiced the same opinions about the Second World War as their pupils. Some teachers admitted that Russian pupils sometimes do not attend history lessons when problems of the occupation are discussed, in order to avoid the awkward difference between what is taught at school and what is said about the matter within the family.<sup>6</sup>

Although this conflict of identities between the two communities does not manifest itself in the relationship between Latvians and Russians in everyday life, everybody feels the dividing lines in attitudes towards the past, and they are very visible during election campaigns for the parliament and municipalities, manifesting themselves in confrontations between so-called 'Latvian' and 'Russian' parties. But the attitude towards the past is only one part of the story; it is generally accompanied by demands to recognise Russian as an official language in Latvia, demonstrating the pro-Russian Federation political orientation of the 'Russian' parties.

The political bloc Harmony Centre (*Saskaņas centrs*, SC), with the social democratic party 'Harmony' (*Sociāldemokrātiskā partija 'Saskaņa'*) at its core, has become a serious political force and is supported by the majority of Russian-speaking voters, although it also attracts votes from many Latvians, especially in Eastern Latvia. One of the most widely discussed problems before and after the extraordinary parliamentary elections on 17 September 2011 was the possibility of the SC's inclusion in a future governing coalition. In this context, the question of whether the SC recognises the 'occupation' or not has become a topical issue. The SC's aspiration has been to broaden its electoral base by attracting left-wing ethnic Latvians, bearing in mind that all the influential 'Latvian' parties are of a centre-right or right-wing orientation.

However, the problem of occupation is a serious challenge for the SC. For its traditional electorate, 'occupation' is derogative but, for many Latvians, denial of occupation is proof of non-loyalty. Although the SC often manages to send different messages to Latvian and Russian audiences, under pressure from 'Latvian' parties it was compelled to formulate its attitude more explicitly. One attempt was made by the leader of the alliance, Jānis Urbanovičs, in cooperation with journalist Juris Paiders, as well as by the well-known academic and Russian political figure, Igor Jurgens. They tried to 'rewrite' the concept of occupation, claiming that the word 'occupation' does not accurately describe the events of 1939–1940 and that the proper term would be 'voluntary agreement to annexation'.<sup>7</sup> As it was evident that such an idea would not convince Latvians, during the electoral campaign in August 2011 the SC renewed its proposal, first voiced a year earlier, to accept the principle that 'there was an occupation, but we have no occupants [occupiers]'. In other words, the SC is ready to recognise the Soviet occupation and legal continuity of the Republic of Latvia, but this issue should be disengaged from the attitudes towards Soviet-era immigrants who are uncomfortable with this topic.<sup>8</sup> Although the SC received more than 28 per cent of the votes in the parliamentary elections, it remained in opposition. One of the consequences of this defeat was the rise in influence of the more radical elements within the Russian-speaking population, who demanded official status for the Russian language. In a referendum on this issue on 18 February 2012, the majority of voters (almost 75 per cent) rejected this proposal.

Russia's annexation of Crimea and the escalation of the situation in Eastern Ukraine succeeded in further polarising society. Surveys indicated that Russian policy was supported by most of Latvia's Russian-speaking population, while the attitude of ethnic Latvians was quite the opposite. Apparently as a result, the Harmony party lost the support of a section of the Latvian electorate in the parliamentary elections of 12 October 2014, although it received the largest number of deputy mandates (24 out of 100). However, it should be taken into consideration that Harmony avoided openly expressing support for Russian policy. The Latvian Russian Union (*Latvijas Krievu savienība*), which openly supported the annexation of the Crimea, received only 1.58 per cent of the national vote and subsequently could not enter parliament.

In this regard, success in bridging the divisions in society, in public and in political discourse seems to be more distant now than some years ago. Indeed, this situation exacerbates the debate on teaching the history of Latvia in schools, which has been very heated since 1999. There are two main aspects to this debate. The first is the existence of two different historical narratives, which have already been discussed above. The second examines the aims and

the role of the teaching of national history. Although this debate is narrower and mostly involves ethnic Latvians, it does in fact reflect many controversies present in the first debate.

## The Debate

The very idea that teaching the history of Latvia in general education schools is a part (and to some extent a symbol) of national independence has its roots in the development of a Latvian national consciousness, which started in the mid-1800s. Once the independence of Latvia was established, one of the first laws of the Republic of Latvia, adopted in 1919, concerned the teaching of Latvian history as a separate subject in general education schools.

The loss of the state's independence after the Soviet occupation of 1940 also changed attitudes towards the history of Latvia. History teaching in schools focused on the history of the Soviet Union, which, in turn, strongly focused on the history of Russia. The teaching of Latvian history was subjected to ideological demands. The most important task was formulated as follows:

During the lessons it is necessary to show that friendship with other peoples of the USSR—first of all, with the large Russian population—is determined by the unity of their historical destiny, their common fight against foreign intruders and exploiting classes and the influence of Russian progressive culture upon Latvian culture ... In this context ... a progressive role of the inclusion of Latvia into Russia should be especially emphasised.<sup>9</sup>

When the process of regaining independence started in the second half of the 1980s, an integral part of the national revival was a series of discussions on so-called 'blank spots' of history, discovering the 'true history of Latvia'. Numerous public discussions and publications in the media evoked great public interest. Indeed, there was also pressure on history teachers in schools to answer the demands of schoolchildren and of society in general. Although the necessity of teaching the history of Latvia was not questioned, public attention focused mostly on its content, not on the form of teaching. Due to the absence of new textbooks, materials such as press publications and in some cases pre-Second World War textbooks were widely used.

After the restoration of independence to the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Education banned Soviet textbooks from schools. In the absence of new textbooks, unaltered reprints of textbooks from the 1920s and 1930s became popular. Later, several textbooks for basic education and for second-

ary schools were written by teachers, as well as by historians from the University of Latvia (LU). Valdis Klišāns, author of history textbooks and educator, admitted that the first new textbooks were written according to Western patterns of the 1960s, using authorial text supplemented by pictures. However, modern textbooks are more advanced, modelled on more interactive patterns that became popular in the West in the 1980s.<sup>10</sup> The LU Department of History and Philosophy also organised a series of public lectures for history teachers and a separate course of lectures in Russian for teachers from schools with Russian as the language of instruction. Thus, by the mid-1990s, gaps in literature and information had been filled, and there was a sense that the history teaching reform necessitated by the change of political system was complete.<sup>11</sup>

Since the mid-1990s, history teachers have been involved in different educational programmes run by EUROCLIO, the Council of Europe and the Soros Foundation. It soon became evident that the understanding in the West and in Latvia of what the content of history lessons should be was often very different: 'sometimes one had the impression that the parties have completely different ideas about the essence of this academic subject'.<sup>12</sup> Latvian teachers were used to teaching a narrative of history. In the West, the main emphasis was put on developing skills and abilities to compare and evaluate critically. In an interview in 2005, Valdis Klišāns, an official of the State Education Content Centre at the time, pointed out that empathy and the ability to feel the spirit of a particular past situation, as well as to understand the motivation of people living in the past, is the main purpose of the methods introduced to schools during the last 20 years.<sup>13</sup>

An important step in this direction was the certification of history teaching standards in 1998, which were then embedded in the new textbooks and teaching methods. In accordance with this approach, the history of Latvia was taught as part of world history. However, as early as 1999, this approach was questioned by a group of students from the Bauska 1st Secondary School. They wrote a letter to the Minister of Education demanding that the history of Latvia be taught as a separate subject. The Minister did not support this idea, but discussion on the topic was started and soon students received support from some professional historians, as well as in wider academic circles. They were joined by the members of the Academy of Science of Latvia; at its plenary meeting on 14 May 1999, scholars adopted a resolution stating that the Academy supported the idea of organising a discussion by historians on the topic of whether the history of Latvia should be taught as an integrated subject or separately. Participants in the plenary meeting supported the second option.<sup>14</sup> This opinion was also supported at the meeting on 9 June of the Department



of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Academy of Science, although their resolution stated that while Latvian history should be a separate subject, it should be taught in connection with trends in world and European history. The main motivation for this, as explained at the meeting, was the necessity of small nations to maintain their historical consciousness.<sup>15</sup> Although not all of the professional historians supported this demand, the ones who did were in the majority and were more influential.

Soon after, some politicians joined the academics. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Science gave in to pressure and offered schools both possibilities: to teach the history of Latvia as part of world history or as a separate subject.<sup>16</sup> However, the Ministry later came to the conclusion that the integrated approach was more desirable, probably because of the position taken by the History Teachers' Association, which staunchly supported the integrated approach. Within this integrated programme, one third of academic hours were allocated to the history of Latvia. The standard of basic education, decided in 2002, stipulated that one of the eight aims of this academic subject was to foster national and European identity and the growth of responsible, tolerant and democratic national and European citizens.<sup>17</sup>

However, discussions on the desirability of teaching Latvian history as a separate subject did not stop. In November 2004, a conference on the 'History of Latvia—A Brief Episode or the Roots of a Nation?' showed that there was opposition to the integrated approach not only among academics and wider society but also among history teachers and educators in general. The Ministry of Education and Science was criticised for not responding to the demands of society. In addition, the Latvian diaspora and their organisations joined the calls to reform the teaching of history. This idea gradually started to gain support from politicians.

From 2007 to 2009, an experimental programme on teaching the history of Latvia as a separate subject was carried out in 40 schools. Schools participating in the experiment differed by type (grammar schools, high schools, vocational schools), by location (towns and rural areas), by the size of schools and classes and by the main language of instruction (Latvian or Russian). Overall, 43 teachers of history and 1600 schoolchildren were involved in the experiment. The results of the experiment did not show significant differences in knowledge between children who were taught the history of Latvia separately and children who were taught the history of Latvia as part of world history. However, some teachers were of the opinion that those who studied the history of Latvia as a separate subject were more motivated to deepen their knowledge of it.<sup>18</sup>

In some ways, the Ministry of Education had become a mediator between history teachers and their professional association on the one hand and politicians and a large part of society on the other. Political pressure increased before the parliamentary elections in 2010, especially from national conservative forces.

In 2010, a proposal was put forward to teach world history in the sixth and seventh grades and the history of Latvia in the eighth and ninth grades, although it was criticised so harshly by history teachers and the leadership of the methodological associations of history teachers from Riga that the ministry abandoned it. The main focus of their criticism was that the world history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is too complicated for pupils in the seventh grade and that existing textbooks would be difficult to use. They were also of the opinion that using this model would mean that ninth-grade children would have to repeat world history in order to understand the history of Latvia, thus further reducing the amount of academic hours allocated to the history of Latvia.<sup>19</sup> This problem was solved, at least temporarily, on 27 April 2011, when the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decision to start teaching the history of Latvia as a separate subject in year 6 in the 2011/2012 academic year.

This decision was a form of compromise between supporters and opponents of the integrated approach. Although it can be said that ethnic Latvians were mostly satisfied with this decision, many active defenders of separate teaching of the subject thought that the changes were not radical enough and that teaching the history of Latvia should be started in the sixth and seventh grade simultaneously in the 2011/2012 academic year. However, the first interviews in the mass media after the decision was passed by the Cabinet of Ministers show that, in fact, teachers' opinions regarding the pros and cons remained divided. Those teachers who were against reforming history teaching did not change their point of view. Some expressed the opinion that while the younger generation's knowledge of history is certainly not satisfactory, it is most probably because too few academic hours are allocated to history and children are expected to master too many historical facts and problems.<sup>20</sup> One serious shortcoming of the defenders of the integrated approach was that they were not able to present convincing arguments based on pedagogical premises.

During the discussion, only two options for the organisation of history teaching—integrated or separate teaching—were considered. Although other possibilities were mentioned, they were not discussed in detail. It seems that this was due, at least in part, to the underdevelopment of research into history teaching methodology in Latvia. Reference was also made to the fact that

teachers' qualifications are often not satisfactory and, despite different courses to improve their skills, many teachers are not willing or able to raise the quality of their teaching. Indeed, this is part of a complex problem of reforming education in general and is not easy to solve. However, in the above-mentioned discussions, this serious problem was not addressed.

The essence of the problem was often oversimplified by the participants in the discussion, and teaching the history of Latvia separately was presented to the public as a cure for all ills—able to solve problems such as a lack of patriotism, poor knowledge of history and the Russian-speaking population's differences in attitude towards Latvia's painful historical problems. The issue of teaching the history of Latvia in Russian-language schools was not really dealt with during the debates, and teachers from Russian-language schools did not take an active role in the discussion. But differences in attitude between Latvians and Russians were clearly evident within this topic. A public opinion poll carried out by the 'DnB NORD Latvia barometer' in 2010 showed that 53 per cent of people who communicated with their family in Latvian were in favour of a separate subject, while 34 per cent were of the opinion that the history of Latvia must be taught as an integrated part of world history. In turn, only 26 per cent of people speaking Russian in their family supported the idea of teaching the history of Latvia as a separate subject, while 54 per cent were of the opinion that it should be a part of world history.<sup>21</sup>

In 2011–2012, the problem of how and from what kind of textbooks the history of Latvia (and history in general) should be taught in schools with Russian as the language of instruction had already been touched upon by the media and politicians. Taking into account that teachers can choose from several history textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and Science for every level of education and are also able to use any other textbooks or materials, there were concerns that educators might teach any narrative they liked.<sup>22</sup> In minority schools, history is taught as a bilingual subject but teachers mostly use Latvian-language history textbooks, with the additional use of some textbooks on the history of Latvia translated into Russian.<sup>23</sup> All of these books are for primary rather than secondary schools. Data on centralised history exams for year 9 actually show that there are no significant differences between pupils from ethnic-minority schools and those from Latvian schools. However, knowledge of the facts often does not involve a deeper understanding, and research has shown that differences among pupils' interpretations of Latvian history are significantly broad.<sup>24</sup>

It should be noted that public debate on the teaching of history rather stagnated after 2012. Feedback from history teachers<sup>25</sup> has indicated that the

main problems in improving knowledge of history are teachers' qualifications, their (low) enthusiasm for the subject and a lack of development in teaching methods. The results of centralised examinations show that knowledge of history (Latvian as well as world history) remains unsatisfactory. In February 2017, some statements made by education officials signalled the probability that history teaching would be reintroduced as an integrated subject; at present this issue is being discussed in a working group that is developing revised curricular content.<sup>26</sup>

## Documentation

The debate on teaching history has been very prolonged and involved many different texts: official documents, academic research, interviews and opinions. It is also linked to the wider problem of there being two parallel narratives of Latvian history with regard to the loss of independence in 1940 and after the Second World War. It is therefore difficult to point out particular key source materials. This debate is reflected in academic disputes between historians, in history textbooks, in the opinions of politicians and in public discussions.

We can speak of several levels of controversy that influence the issues involved in teaching history in schools. The first is an academic discussion on the history of Latvia, which involves Latvian historians who are mainly from the Russian Federation. Although there are differences in the interpretation of particular events and terms, discussions are possible at this level and have recently become more intensive. The second level of academic discussion concerns the role or the perception of history in bridging or widening gaps within Latvian society, and also addresses the desirability and political effect of ethnic and political integration in society. Studies on this theme have been used, for example, to develop 'The Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Politics (2012–2018)', released by the Ministry of Culture in October 2011.<sup>27</sup> Despite differences in attitudes and approaches to particular problems, academics share a common point of view regarding the necessity of undertaking some form of action towards social consolidation, building bridges and finding common ground. Social integration policy in Latvia is facing criticism for its inefficiency; however, its necessity is clear. The third level is that of political and public discourse. At this level the prevailing impression can sometimes be that the differences are insurmountable. The Russian media frequently portrays the narrative of Latvian textbooks as biased and unreliable. Initiatives from the Latvian side to bridge gaps, such as a statement by the president

of Latvia, Andris Bērziņš, in 2012, point out that the 8 and 9 May should not be 'used to expose certain groups in society, but rather to foster reconciliation between the different ex-military factions and all those who mark these days as important and sacred'.<sup>28</sup> Ideas to commemorate the fallen on 8 May did not receive any clear reaction, either from Russian-speaking people or from Latvian nationalists. However, the Russian internet news agency regnum.ru reacted rather negatively.<sup>29</sup> For Russian radicals it is not an issue of reconciliation but simply an attempt 'to infect the younger generation with this virus of a "new interpretation of history"'.<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, in Latvia, controversies in history are considerably influenced by interstate relations with Russia as well as by statements made by Russian politicians. In 2010 and 2011 there were some signs of improvement in relations between Latvia and Russia, certainly with regard to history. One of these signs was the establishment of the Latvian-Russian commission of historians. As described by Viktor Makarov, 'A lot of effort will be required from both social groups to stop stereotyping each other, to avoid inflating perceived differences and to learn to live with the real differences'.<sup>31</sup> However, the annexation of the Crimea and Russia's support of separatists in eastern Ukraine, as well as the Kremlin's backing to further the imperial interpretation of history, have significantly impaired efforts to find agreement in the field of history.

## Conclusion

The practical results of the decision to teach the history of Latvia as a separate subject in schools will be evident in a few years. However, analysis of discussions on this topic provides evidence of the problem's importance in the development of political and historical identity in Latvia, and we should expect new discussions on the subject in the future.

Discussions on teaching the history of Latvia have had two distinctive components: political and methodological (pedagogical). At the very beginning, the political component was dominant. This was due to the importance of national history in the public consciousness and political divisions within society that are based on different historical memories. The main arguments put forward by proponents of Latvian history as a separate subject were students' poor knowledge of the facts of Latvian history and the use of historical knowledge about Latvia as a tool to instil a sense of patriotism in the younger generation.

Although the final decision was, in fact, rather a compromise between supporters and opponents of the integrated approach to teaching history, the very development of such a discussion and the active involvement of politicians and general society was proof that this problem is only part of a wider dispute. As long as there are mutually exclusive historical narratives in society, there is the potential for conflict. Indeed, these gaps can be bridged, but it may take decades and requires political goodwill on all sides.

## Notes

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3. T. Fast, 'Dve pobjedy na odnu istoriû [Two victories for one history]', *Telegraf*, 25 September 2007.
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5. V. Makarov, *20. gadsimta vēstures pretrunīgo jautājumu pasniegšana Latvijas skolās un muzejos* [Teaching controversial problems of the twentieth century history at schools and museums in Latvia] (Rīga: Sorosa fonds Latvija, 2008), accessed 21 June 2016, [http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/site/record/docs/2012/07/13/viktors\\_vesture2009.pdf](http://cilvektiesibas.org.lv/site/record/docs/2012/07/13/viktors_vesture2009.pdf).
6. V. Sprūde, 'Lai nebūtu kā buldozers pret vēsturi [Not to be like a bulldozer against history]', *Latvijas Avīze*, 17 July 2011.
7. J. Urbanovičs et al., *Nākotnes melnraksti: Latvija 1934.g.-1941.g.* [Drafts on the future: Latvia in 1934–1941] (Rīga: Izdevējs 'Baltijas forums', 2011), 444. The same authors published second and third books covering the years 1941–1947 and 1948–1955.
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10. A. Austers, 'Par vēstures izglītību Latvijas skolās [About history education at schools in Latvia]', *Jaunā Gaita* 263 (2010).
11. V. Klišāns, 'Latvijas integrācija Eiropā un vēstures mācīšana skolās [Integration of Latvia in Europe and teaching of history at schools]'. In *CLIOHnet Latvijas nacionālā konference. Latvijas Universitāte, 2003.gada maijs*, ed. A. Cimdiņa (Rīga: Latvijas Universitātes, 2004), 33–34.
12. Ibid., 34.
13. 'Dialogi.lv: Nedēļas saruna—Vēsture uz barikādēm [Dialogi.lv: Interview of the week—History on the barricades]', *delfi.lv*, 17 January 2005.
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# 27

## Lebanon

Nemer Frayha

### Introduction

The state of Lebanon was established by a large number of religious sects belonging mainly to two major faiths, Christianity and Islam. As the country's religious structure is the central aspect of its history and development, every activity or event in Lebanon, including those related to education, is usually interpreted from a religious perspective.

Over the course of the country's history, parents, political parties, religious groups, scholars and the media have variously become interested and involved in the process of writing its history textbooks. A consequence of this is the airing of arguments, controversies and debates reflecting political and religious groups' ideologies and views. Recently, concern over this issue has had negative repercussions, with academic standards on approaches to writing and teaching history encroached upon by political interests.

### Historical Background and Context

Organised schooling was introduced to Lebanese society in the seventeenth century by the European missionaries, who applied their countries' curricula. From the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, three types of schools functioned in the country simultaneously: missionary schools, Ottoman primary schools (due to the Ottoman occupation of Lebanon from 1516 to 1918) and Christian and Muslim private schools. This last type was established along religious lines, with each faith group seeking to educate and

raise its children according to its beliefs. These ideologies manifested in the curricula, textbooks and daily educational activities of these schools.

Prior to and during the French mandate period (1919–1943), many political movements and parties were founded in Lebanon with different religious orientations and conflicting views on the country's identity, geography and future. It is therefore to be expected that such views were reflected in students' education, especially in the study of Lebanese history. Christian-oriented schools emphasised the Phoenician origin of the Lebanese people and the uniqueness of Lebanese culture, which they described as 'Mediterranean', implicitly distinguishing it from Arab culture, while 'the Muslim schools used textbooks focusing on Muslim and Arab culture [and] ignoring any mention of Lebanon'.<sup>1</sup>

Surprising in some ways is the approach to history taken by the French, as evidenced in their introduction of the subject into the curriculum in the following terms: 'Countries like Syria and Lebanon should not be dispensed from offering their youngsters history education which awakens in them nationalistic feelings ... Students cannot leave school without developing feelings of solidarity with past generations, and without learning about their fatherland'.<sup>2</sup> Even though education in Lebanon was controlled by a foreign power, Lebanese schools had distinctive educational philosophies and aims, which were met through the subjects taught to students, particularly history. Here, curricula guided the learner to adopt the political and religious view of his or her community and therefore to question his or her country's identity and the category to which it 'belonged'.

This problematic situation persisted during the independence period, even though the government developed a new curriculum, implemented in 1946, which included the express objective of 'the Lebanese student know[ing] his country's history, [being] proud of its past, understand[ing] its present, and be[ing] ready for the future'.<sup>3</sup> Further, the curriculum introduced the notion of the 'Lebanese nation' as a new concept that sought to emphasise the uniqueness of Lebanese identity. Christian historians and philosophers such as Fouad Ifram Al-Bustani, Jawad Boulos, Charles Malik, Philip Hitti and Kamal Al-Hage were strong proponents of this notion. Some Muslim scholars, such as Omar Farroukh, Z. Nakash, Muhamad Maki, Adel Ismail and others refused to state that the Lebanese people could form a nation of their own; they considered them to be part of the Arab nation.

The revision of the Lebanese history curriculum between 1968 and 1971 saw the removal of the concept of a Lebanese 'nation' and 'uniqueness' due to pressure from the Pan-Arab faction.<sup>4</sup> This made the revision more political than educational in nature. The consequences of such educational ideology

confused a whole generation of young Lebanese people, making them question their country's identity, as research subsequently showed.<sup>5</sup> In 1975, soon after the amendment of the curriculum, a civil war broke out, leading young Lebanese people to fight and commit atrocities against one another. This war provided history teachers with an opportunity to express their beliefs, ideologies and interpretations of historical events by projecting the present onto the past. Others benefited from the chaotic situation by writing a series of history textbooks with biased interpretations in order to sell them to schools that welcomed such content. Such practices made this subject matter lose its value as a genuine study of the past, and history became ideological, commercial, biased and misleading.

## Debates and Documentation

### Controversies Over History Education After the National Reconciliation (1989–2011)

The 14-year civil war came to an end in 1989 with the signing of a reconciliation agreement in Al-Taef (Saudi Arabia) by the members of Lebanon's parliament, who subsequently gave the school subject of history considerable attention by calling for the issuance of one single version of each school year's history textbook and its adoption by both public and private schools.<sup>6</sup> We might ask at this point what kind of history has been taught to students between 1968 and the present. The situation may be summarised as follows: oral history is used widely and effectively.<sup>7</sup> Written history from an ideological perspective has become widespread and is currently used in schools.<sup>8</sup> Written history that takes an approach of compromise in order to please both communities in Lebanon or not to upset either one continues to be present in schools.<sup>9</sup>

The request of the deputies at Taef for the standardisation of history led to debates among scholars, educators and historians, who began organising conferences and publishing articles on the content of the textbooks to be produced for the history classroom. A number of different views on how history should be taught emerged during these discussions; we might categorise them as follows:

1. Refutation of Lebanon's particular, 'unique' status (scholars such as Suleiman Taqi al-Din, Abbas Abou Saleh or Hassan Hallak)<sup>10</sup>
2. Depiction of Lebanon as part of the Arab world (scholars such as Adel Ismail, Muhammad Ali Mousa, I. Baydoun)<sup>11</sup>

3. Depiction of Lebanon as first and foremost an independent and sovereign country (scholars such as Issam K. Khalifi or Jean Sharaf)<sup>12</sup>
4. Questioning of Lebanon's identity and statehood (scholars such as Mounir Ismail or Nakhle Wehbe)<sup>13</sup>

These scholars and historians were further divided into two factions: one that supported the idea of one unified history textbook and one that favoured multiple textbooks. The former grouping was concerned about the risk of a new textbook failing to remedy the chaotic situation of the time, while the latter was afraid of the potential this might create for a ruling religious and/or political group to force its viewpoint on the content and interpretation of history.

### **The Attempt and Failure to Write Common History Textbooks**

When work on history curricula and textbooks commenced in earnest, the diversity of ideas and arguments above came to occupy considerable space in the discussions around the issue. The Educational Center for Research and Development (ECRD)<sup>14</sup> started developing the history curriculum in 1995; its syllabus did not appear with the other curricula in 1997 but was instead published in 2000 once the problems among curriculum developers had been resolved. Eleven writing committees were formed to write textbooks covering school years 2–12. The distribution of religious affiliations within the committee membership was taken into consideration in the same way as it was on the curriculum committee: all religious communities were represented by qualified scholars. By appointing a member of each religious stakeholder group to the committees, this policy sought to avoid having any religious group object to the new textbooks.

The plan was to finish writing the textbooks for school years 2 to 6 by the start of the 2001–2002 academic year, and the other textbooks by the start of the following school year. After more than a year of work, the textbooks began to appear in print. The books for years 2 and 3 were ready for distribution to schools when an 'insider' interest group was formed with the support of the Minister of Education, A. Murad, who wished to impose his views on the textbooks regardless of the historical facts or the work of more than 45 historians, educationalists and subject teachers. The minister stopped the distribution of the textbooks and formed another committee for the development of a new curriculum based on his convictions and that of the 'interest

group', but he did not submit it to the cabinet for approval. Subsequently, a member of the 'interest group' admitted that he did not agree with the history textbook, claiming that 'Lebanon is an independent state' because the Syrians, his supporters, did not want to acknowledge the country's independence. His actions were not investigated by any authority or sanctioned by any Lebanese laws, and he was never questioned about them. The history issue was officially ignored until 2011, when Education Minister Hassan Mneimneh appointed a committee to develop another curriculum. When this curriculum was discussed in the cabinet in early 2012, various political and religious leaders objected to its content, which led to the renewed shelving of the issue.

The findings of a study conducted in 2014 on the three history curricula developed between 2000 and 2012 have shown no significant differences in their objectives and content.<sup>15</sup> Of the three, the only one approved by the government is that issued in the year 2000.<sup>16</sup> Another attempt to obtain government approval of a modified curriculum took place in 2012, but no agreement was reached.

## Contemporary Arguments and Controversies

Lebanese scholars were not willing to accept the government's actions since 2001 and have expressed their opinions by writing articles and books, holding conferences and participating in media interviews. As an example, Issam K. Khalifi fears the prospect of one single textbook because such a book would, in his view, be ideologically oriented towards serving the interests of politicians, and the teaching methods involved would not encourage critical thinking and analysis of facts. He has little hope that the subject matter in such a textbook could play a substantial part in developing students' sense of freedom or contributing to the building of a democratic education system in a society whose history has been marked by differences and disintegration.<sup>17</sup> Nakhle Wehbe, meanwhile, argues that choosing the content of a history textbook is not an innocent process but rather an intentional act aiming to satisfy the interests of those in power. He wonders whether truth can accept political deals and compromises while simultaneously presenting knowledge that is value-neutral, as historians and educators expect it to be.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, both Khalifi and Wehbe are concerned about the role of the history teacher, with its very significant impact on students' formation. They also criticise the actions of the country's minister of education in prohibiting the distribution of the new textbooks on political grounds.

According to Tony Daw, a member of the 2011 curriculum committee, 'writing history textbooks is a dilemma in Lebanon'.<sup>19</sup> Daw believes that 'the problem is not in Lebanon's history; rather it is in the mind[s] of those who write it and who imply their preconceptions in what they write'.<sup>20</sup> Being an educational practitioner, Daw believes that the inclusion of history in official examinations, as opposed to the subject being regarded as important in itself, determines the subject's inclusion in school curricula. He also expresses concern for history teachers who, in his view, suffer from the content of textbooks, teaching methods that emphasise the memorisation and repetition of dates and facts, and students' indifference towards the subject.<sup>21</sup>

We can observe from these events that the debate over history textbooks and the teaching of this subject has once again become heated. At a national conference held to discuss this problematic situation, a multiplicity of views on how to proceed emerged. The first was the publication of a single, unified textbook based on one curriculum. The proponents of this view wish learners to have the opportunity to develop a shared national memory and a common sense of citizenship. Hassan Mneimneh, the country's former Minister of Education, believes that 'there is a need for a unified history textbook now more than at any other time, since people transformed this subject matter into an ideological tool, [a] field of isolation, and a source of provocation ... [which] encourages students not to care about other citizens or make any effort to learn anything about them'.<sup>22</sup> It is difficult to argue with Mneimneh's view; many schools have abused their roles in students' citizenship education by instilling such negative attitudes in their students. Hassan Hallak shares Mneimneh's opinion and calls for both private and public schools to be obliged to adopt the unified history textbook developed by the government, adding that the committee members should be chosen from those who believe in Arab culture.<sup>23</sup> On the other side, scholars advocate the publication of a variety of textbooks based on one curriculum developed by the state. Issam K. Khalifi is a strong supporter of this idea. He expresses his concern about the potential for political authorities to manipulate a single, standard textbook by choosing its content and monitoring its teaching. Nakhle Wehbe goes further than Khalifi, accusing political authorities of transforming the writing of history textbooks into a 'commodity' by means of oppressive specifications. He is also of the view that 'the standardisation of ... history textbook[s] is a practice adopted by authoritarian regimes'.<sup>24</sup>

Some scholars participating in the conference proposed particular approaches to history teaching. Most of them criticised conventional pedagogical methods based on front-of-class 'chalk-and-talk' teaching and the uncritical instilling of facts. Their work has generated five views on how to



teach history: first, teaching history via documents. Abdallah Said proposes teaching rural history by using 'available documents in the classroom, where learners can analyse their content relating to all aspects of economic and social life in towns and villages. Such an approach would help students avoid being "victims" of implicit ideology and projecting the present onto the past.'<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Fatima Yassine supports the use of documents in teaching history, which would entail training and encouraging students to analyse and discuss them in order to draw conclusions on facts.<sup>26</sup> This approach, in this view, would make history an exciting subject, as it would involve students substantially in the process of learning their own history. The second approach involves the use of active teaching methods such as role-play, problem-solving, the inquiry method and discovery. It has received expressions of support from historians and educators who participated in the conference. Most scholars and educators believe that the predominant methodology in teaching history should change from the current 'chalk-and-talk' model to a student-centred approach. In a third position, S. Abd Masih emphasises the benefits of teaching history through an approach based on socio-structuralism. In his work, he attempts to establish a relationship between the transition to modernity and the explosion of religious wars in Lebanon. He also considers document analysis as an academic means of understanding the various political systems established in the country over the last 150 years.<sup>27</sup> A new approach was introduced by Boutros Labaki, which he formulated as 'teach[ing] Lebanese economic and social history, which would calm the fever of sectarianism among learners by enabling them to discover that economic activities among citizens create positive interaction regardless of [these citizens'] religious affiliations'.<sup>28</sup> This approach appears worth attempting due to its emphasis on people's dealings with one another within a socio-economic framework. Finally, Joanne Farchakh Bajjaly has detailed a concept of teaching history to students at an intermediate stage of their education based on visits to historical sites in the country. She planned field trips for students from schools containing homogeneous populations to sites located in areas predominantly populated by people of a different religious group. Her research records positive changes in students' attitudes towards these 'others' after making these trips for two consecutive years.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

Religious communities in Lebanon have never objected to the introduction of history as a subject in the curriculum; instead they have found in the subject a means to promote their views and beliefs in order to guarantee young peo-

ple's loyalty to their religion first and to 'their Lebanon' second. Research has evidenced the effectiveness of this approach, finding that the majority of students in their 12th year of schooling considered their first attachment to be to their families, their second to their religious community and their third to their country.<sup>30</sup> Political parties and movements have shared the interest of religious communities in history textbooks and, especially since most of them have a religious affiliation, have formed alliances of sorts with these communities. Moreover, each group has wanted any textbook to include content that merits, in their view, being taught to all students as 'correct'. When this wish was eventually granted, each group was satisfied to have 'its' young people studying what it had planned for them in this subject. As a result, generations have grown up whose members do not share common memories or national feelings or a sense of belonging to the same country; these generations have lacked a shared concept of what their country means. This situation was likewise referenced by Hassan Mneimneh, former Minister of Education, at the conference referred to above on writing and teaching Lebanese history.

The discussions and arguments that have accompanied the writing of Lebanon's history and its teaching in schools are ongoing, with increased momentum and increased confusion, and notably with a total absence of the government. What is more confusing still is the government's willingness to accept retention of the old textbooks with their shortcomings instead of taking a responsible decision to establish new textbooks in accordance with the National Pact of Al-Taef. The Lebanese government has shown its concern with history education rhetorically but has never seriously taken up this educational issue, for two main reasons. First, it considers education to be one of the last priorities on its agenda, preferring instead to focus on political affairs. Second, the government is weaker than any of the religious groupings or political parties and thus tends to acquiesce to the demands of these parties or groupings. Its recent actions show how it has backed down from many educational decisions under the pressure of clerics or political parties or powerful individuals. Such behaviour on the part of officialdom can encourage a spirit of isolation and hatred among younger generations at the expense of the national unity the government claims to support and represent.

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# 28

## Malaysia

Helen Ting Mu Hung

### Introduction

Controversies concerning history textbooks in Malaysia have surfaced sporadically since the beginning of the 1980s. However, no textbooks mobilised as much energy or were as contentious as the current edition of history textbooks in the new millennium.<sup>1</sup> These controversies are related to the convergence of several social dynamics: evolving perspectives on the orientation of academic history writing, the replacement of civics lessons with history education as a tool for nation-building, and, last but not least, the larger national context of ethnic politics.

One newly arisen aspect of historical revisionism concerns the role of left-wing personalities and movements in the independence struggle. This is indicative of a new social dynamic unleashed since the signing of the peace treaty between the Malaysian government and the Malayan Communist Party in 1989 and the end of the Cold War. The public controversies which arose in late 2011 over the 1950 Bukit Kepong incident prompted calls for a review of perspectives on the history of the independence struggle in history textbooks.

Following the independence of Malaya in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963, academics began to speak against Eurocentric historical writings. From time to time, the debate about how to produce more Malaya/Malaysia-centric historical studies elicited contentious discussions among local and foreign historians. The tone of debates among Malaysian academics became increasingly strident and nationalistic subsequent to the race riots of 1969. A notable figure in the discussion was Professor Ismail Hussein of the

University of Malaya's Department of Malay Studies, who in 1977 objected to the practice of the History Department of his university of referring to multi-ethnic Malaysia as a 'plural society', which according to him gave indigenous Malays the same status as the 'immigrant races' (i.e., the non-Malay Malaysian citizens). He asserted that Malays as the indigenous people should be regarded as the core, 'base society' of Malaysia while the 'immigrant races' were just splinter groups broken off from their respective countries of origin. His position is representative of a school of nationalist Malay academics and historians, who hold that Malaysian history should be based on a 'Malay-world' (*alam Melayu*) perspective, and that 'Malay nationalism is the basis of Malaysian nationalism'.<sup>2</sup> This increased emphasis on 'Malay elements' in the rewriting of Malaysian history has led to 'ethnic politics in which each community tries zealously to advance and protect its place within the nation's history'.<sup>3</sup>

This Malay-indigene versus non-Malay-immigrant debate in the articulation of national history in Malaysia is reflective of the larger context of ethnic politics. The peaceful but rushed process towards the independence of the Federation of Malaya meant that many contentious issues relating to the blueprint of nation-building and the identity of the nascent multi-ethnic nation state remained politically unresolved. At independence, the Malays represented barely half the population, whereas one third were Chinese and one tenth Indian. In seeking consensus on ethnically contentious issues, the English-educated, multi-ethnic political elites of the Alliance, a coalition of three race-based parties who led the independence negotiations, preferred closed-door negotiations on behalf of their respective communities. In a bid to shield themselves from the popular pressure of their vernacular grassroots communities, they resorted to the politics of ambiguity, avoiding clear articulation of their political stances on these issues. One central bone of contention was the constitutional provision, known as the Special Position of the Malays, for quotas for specific federal resources such as licences, scholarships, educational facilities and so on. While the national Alliance leaders agreed to it internally as a safeguard and a necessity for the socio-economic improvement of the Malay community, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO, the leading Malay party of the Alliance) leaders presented it in public as affirming the indigenous status of the Malay people. At the rhetorical level, this appeared to support the radical Malay opposition that pushed for the symbolic assertion of Malay political primacy in the new nation.<sup>4</sup>

After independence, these issues returned to haunt them. Prolonged inter-ethnic contention over issues such as official language, race-based quotas and education during the first decade after independence culminated in deteriorated electoral support for the Alliance in 1969. Even though the British con-



trolled the major share of the economy into the 1970s, resentment over Malay poverty was vented instead against local Chinese, who were doing relatively better. In the aftermath of the election, the race riots marked a turning point in Malaysian politics. The riots brought down the first prime minister and heralded the ascent of the radical nationalist faction within UMNO. English-medium schools were converted progressively into Malay-medium schools. A national university which teaches only in the Malay language was set up. A National Culture Policy was formulated, stating clearly that the national culture was to be based on the cultures of the indigenous population and Islam was to play an important role. Authoritarian laws were passed to stifle dissenting voices and to muzzle the mass media. Affirmative action programmes in favour of the Malays multiplied and intensified. Measures were taken to buttress Malay and UMNO political hegemony. It was in this context of Malay nationalistic assertion and minority dissension that inter-ethnic debate over historical representation took place.

An early controversy regarding history textbooks was over the historical role of a nineteenth-century Chinese leader, Kapitan Yap Ah Loy, who had generally been recognised until then as the leading founder of the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur.<sup>5</sup> Cheah notes that the Primary Four history textbook of 1977–1981 ‘was rather open and pluralistic in acknowledging the roles of Yap Ah Loy and other ethnic personalities in the development of Kuala Lumpur’, and recognised the contribution of Yap Ah Loy as ‘the most important’ among them.<sup>6</sup> In 1980, the Malay Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports suggested that Raja Abdullah, who sponsored the first tin mining operations in the Kuala Lumpur area in 1857, be recognised as the capital’s founder instead of Yap Ah Loy. This statement drew strong responses in the local Chinese press. For two weeks, articles on the contribution of Yap Ah Loy to the development of the early township of Kuala Lumpur were published in all major Chinese newspapers. Despite this, not only were history textbooks ‘rewritten to credit Raja Abdullah with Kuala Lumpur’s beginnings’,<sup>7</sup> but the question of the capital’s founder also appeared in national school examinations in 1983, which obliged the pupils to choose between Raja Abdullah and Yap Ah Loy. The contentious question was eventually withdrawn on the intervention of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the major Chinese party of the coalition government.<sup>8</sup> In the context of increased Malay political hegemony and the propagation of a Malay-dominated national identity, the responses of the Chinese community represented an expression of their ‘demands for historical recognition of Chinese contributions to their Malaysian homeland’.<sup>9</sup>

In the Malaysian secondary school curriculum, it used to be civics education that was designated for the role of nation-building and citizenship educa-

tion among school pupils. However, neither teachers nor students took it seriously, as it was not an examination subject. During a time when academic debates on the indigenisation of Malaysian history writing were ongoing, the Ministry of Education decided in 1978 that national history would be given priority over world history in secondary school history teaching.<sup>10</sup> In 1983, when a new curriculum was introduced, civics was scrapped as a subject and integrated into the teaching of history. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education interfered in a more direct way to rewrite the school history syllabus 'in accordance with its official position'.<sup>11</sup>

In August 1986, Abdullah Ahmad, a UMNO member of parliament, asserted polemically that the Malaysian political system was based on Malay dominance that had been agreed on prior to independence and could not be challenged without the threat of violence. It stirred up a storm of debates in the mass media. In addition, there was continued controversy over the Malay nationalists' assertion that the Malay be designated as the 'base society' of the Malaysian nation and the labelling of non-Malays as 'immigrants'.<sup>12</sup> In response, MCA members in Selangor state adopted a resolution in November 1986 declaring that all the three major races in Malaysia had originated outside Malaysia and that 'none had the right to proclaim itself the single "indigenous" ethnic group of the country'.<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, Malay Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim declared at the UMNO General Assembly in 1987 that history textbooks would be rewritten to stress the Malays as the indigenous people. He also made it compulsory for all secondary students to study history.<sup>14</sup> In addition, contrary to its previous practices, the ministry decided that there would be a single officially approved history textbook for each form.<sup>15</sup>

Cheah notes that the new history syllabus composed thereafter 'stated explicitly that the Malays were the original inhabitants of Malaysia and explained at great length why they had acquired "a special position" in the country'.<sup>16</sup> The new version of the government-sanctioned Form 5 textbook appeared in 1992. It stated that the 1948 constitutional agreement between the British and the local rulers acknowledged the 'special position of the Malays as the original inhabitants of this country', and that it reinstated the 'sovereignty of the Malay rulers ... as before the Second World War' (even as it also acknowledged that it was the British High Commissioner who appointed members of the Federal Legislative and Executive Councils).<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, it also struck an ethnically reconciliatory note, suggesting inter-ethnic sharing of the nation: 'The granting of citizenship based on the operation of law and registration (to non-Malays) ended the history of Malaya as solely owned by the Malays and heralded the sharing of our country. Non-

Malays can become citizens and enjoy rights as the Federal citizens of Malaya'.<sup>18</sup>

The same textbook also listed five major issues agreed among the national Alliance leaders to be presented to the Reid Constitutional Commission for the drafting of a federal constitution. One of them was the 'Malay sultanate institution', described as a 'heritage of the Malay political system' that had become a 'symbol of splendour and protection of the Malays'.<sup>19</sup> The Special Position of the Malays was explained as 'aiming to safeguard Malay rights as the original inhabitants of this country', as well as 'to promote the progress of the Malay community that was left behind in all aspects of life, so that they could reach parity with the more advanced non-Malays'.<sup>20</sup> Cheah notes perceptively that '[a]s nation-building got underway ... history became an important means to contest and determine the status and rights of each ethnic group'.<sup>21</sup>

A quantitative analysis of representations of various ethnic groups in the contents of successive versions of history textbooks demonstrated a clear trend towards incremental and excessive Malay bias. In the case of lower secondary history textbooks, the relative proportions of the representation of the Malay/Chinese/Indian/other indigenous peoples evolved from 3:1:1:0 in 1969 to 21:2:1:1 in 1979 to 40:2:1:8 in 1990 and 80:3:1:16 in 2002.<sup>22</sup> This ethnic imbalance had already led an educationist to make the following critical comment:

Recognition of the evolution of the plural society and the contribution of non-indigenous communities in Malaysia has to be re-examined with a view to providing a balanced account ... The non-Malays have come to play an important role in Malaysian affairs in the past 100 years. Their contribution has to be acknowledged and highlighted, instead of making only footnote references to their presence ... How can a people develop a sense of common historical experience and a sense of belonging to the nation if they feel alienated and marginalised and no recognition is made to their participation in the life of the country?<sup>23</sup>

Nonetheless, as the depiction in the textbooks was still relatively succinct and circumspect, and retained a certain standard of objectivity, whatever complaints were voiced during the 1990s did not stir up particular public concern. The Ministry of Education does not seem to have taken heed of Santhiram's scholarly criticism: it went on to produce a new edition of textbooks in the new millennium that injected further ideological elements.<sup>24</sup>

The next editions of textbooks were published over three consecutive years: Form 1 and Form 4 in 2002, Form 2 and Form 5 in 2003 and Form 3 in

2004. By the 1990s, the increasingly inward-looking orientation of history education meant that the Form 4 textbook on the history of world civilisations had become the only one concerned with history outside the region. While the 2002 edition of the Form 4 textbook was still about the history of civilisations, half the content was now dominated by the history of Islamic civilisation and Islamic government.<sup>25</sup> This excessive focus on Islam in the Form 4 textbook led to loud objections from the Chinese-based opposition party, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), who asked whether the drastic change had anything to do with the contentious declaration of Dr Mahathir Mohamed, the then Prime Minister, in September 2001, that Malaysia was already an Islamic state.<sup>26</sup>

The Form 5 textbook published the following year stirred up further contention, in particular over the use of the words *ketuanan Melayu* (translated variously as Malay supremacy, Malay political primacy or Malay sovereignty). The Ministry of Education tried to calm the political storm by explaining that the term was used as one of the concepts of nation-building after the Second World War, and was no longer in use after independence. DAP Secretary-General Lim Guan Eng in turn asked why such a 'discredited racial dominance concept that reduces non-Malays to second-class citizens', which had never been used in history textbooks, was being revived.<sup>27</sup>

Dissatisfaction was also expressed by parties in the governing coalition that had non-Malays as their political base. Lim Keng Yaik, the president of Parti Gerakan Rakyat and a senior cabinet minister at the time, spoke publicly in 2005 about the 'historical burden' which 'stemmed from a politically motivated view of interpreting our historical past' as an obstacle against the emergence of a united Malaysian nation. In 2006, an MCA member of parliament also voiced his opinion that the historical contribution of non-Malays to nation-building was not sufficiently acknowledged in the history textbooks.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, in anticipation of the coming periodic revision of history textbooks, MCA formed an internal committee to look into the matter and submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Education. However, no intention of compromise has been indicated by the Malay education minister on the issue.

A loose group of concerned civil society leaders was then considering the launch of a campaign to focus public attention on the matter. It was given a lease of energy when the education minister and deputy prime minister of the time, Muhyiddin Yassin, announced during the UMNO General Assembly in October 2010 that, in response to concerns raised by the delegates, a pass in history would be required from 2013 for Form 5 school leavers to obtain their school leaving certificates. In response, DAP and MCA publicly expressed their concern at the biased historical representations, urging a complete review

of the history syllabus before it was made a 'must-pass' subject.<sup>29</sup> Amidst voices of objection, a signature-gathering campaign was launched in early 2011, which called for a complete revamp of the history textbooks by representatives of civil society. Three key problems of the history textbooks highlighted in the campaign petition were numerous 'historical errors and half truths'; failure to 'reflect fairly the contribution of all communities in the development of the nation'; and the narrow perspective of the syllabus that 'fails to capture the wealth and diversity of all past and present civilizations and religions in the world and Malaysia'.<sup>30</sup>

Concerned historians and history textbook writers also raised the issue in public forums organised by different social groups. Dr Ranjit Singh Malhi, a textbook writer, urged that textbook writing should be a scholarly pursuit and not be used to promote political interests.<sup>31</sup> Professor Ramlah Adam, a historian and leading author of Form 3 and Form 5 history textbooks, was a prominent voice defending the existing textbooks, insisting that the syllabus was 'well balanced'. Speaking also as a leadership council member of Perkasa, a Malay rights group, she asserted that secondary school history textbooks seemed too Islamic and Malay-centric because 'non-Malays fail to understand Malaysia's history' and 'they do not want to accept the concept of Malay supremacy (*ketuanan Melayu*)'. Perkasa's president, Ibrahim Ali, put the blame for continued complaints on non-Malays and asserted that 'the "minorities" in the country were too demanding in wanting to assert their "rights"'.<sup>32</sup> In May 2011, a committee of academics, parents and social activists was formed to drive the campaign for a 'Truly Malaysian History'. In its exploration of alternative proposals, various initiatives such as seeking student feedback, textbook studies and criticisms by various interested parties were carried out and summarised in a memorandum which was submitted to the Ministry of Education with more than 20,000 signatures.<sup>33</sup>

In May 2011, in response to continued public debates on history education and the articulation of national history, the education minister appointed a special history curriculum committee, with Ramlah Adam as the deputy chair, to 'study the suitability of [the] existing curriculum and textbooks in terms of whether they give emphasis to unity and patriotism' and to 'determine the direction in the development of History [the] curriculum to meet current needs and future challenges'.<sup>34</sup> A historian in turn wrote to the press expressing his objections against using history education to 'nurture patriotism and loyalty to the country', voicing his concern that 'it will lead to value judgments in the narratives and affect evaluation of the facts'. He noted that this problem of the loss of objectivity and turning history into a mere 'tool for propaganda to instil nationalism' was also affecting institutions of higher learning.<sup>35</sup>

On the sidelines of the debates surrounding history education was a round of furious public exchange over the interpretation of a historical incident which took place during the communist insurgency against British colonialism. In a local party seminar in August 2011, Mohamad Sabu, the deputy president of the opposition Islamic party, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), claimed that Mat Indera, the Malay who led the communist assault on a police station in Bukit Kepong in February 1950, was a freedom fighter, because those Malay policemen who were attacked and killed were serving the British. He also dismissed the mainstream historical narratives which interpreted it otherwise as 'lies'. One week later, the UMNO-controlled newspaper *Utusan Malaysia* attacked Mohamad Sabu for 'labelling Communist terrorists as her[sic] in the Bukit Kepong tragedy'.<sup>36</sup> UMNO leaders also criticised his alleged statement, with the deputy prime minister calling him a 'traitor' who had insulted the Malay struggle in achieving independence.<sup>37</sup> In a war of words, PAS leaders urged the Cabinet to show their sincerity in recognising the nation's freedom fighters by setting up a bipartisan committee 'to rewrite ... the country's pre-independence history'.<sup>38</sup> The National Professorial Council joined the fray, declaring that the communists and left-wing groups in Malaya were not qualified to be recognised as freedom fighters, as they were traitors who had tried to replace the rule of Malay kingship under British protection with a communist republic. Speaking in the name of the council, Professor Zainal Kling also claimed that Malaya was 'never colonised', just 'protected'.<sup>39</sup> This brought the debate onto another level, and the government was subsequently obliged to take the stance that Malaya was indeed 'colonised'. In a feature article, journalists from *The Star* wrote that this 'recent issue of Bukit Kepong could be food for thought for the special committee set up to carry out a review of history textbooks for secondary schools'.<sup>40</sup> The confidential report by the history curriculum committee was submitted to the government in early 2013, but to date there has been no indication of any official intention to make any drastic changes to the perspective used in the official history textbooks.

The public debates over the Mat Indera and Bukit Kepong attacks were indicative of an important, unresolved historical point of contention relating to the role of the communists and left-wing movements in the independence struggle which have emerged over the last decade or so. A public exhibition held at the historic heritage buildings of Carcosa Seri Negara in Kuala Lumpur during September and October 2017 and titled *Jalan Merdeka* (The Routes to Independence) is an attempt to integrate an element of this diversity of narratives into the historical understanding of the processes that led to Malaysian independence.<sup>41</sup> However, whether it will have any future impact on history textbook writing remains to be seen.

## Notes

1. The current edition of history textbooks is being replaced progressively with a new edition, starting from the Form 1 cohort in 2017.
2. B. K. Cheah, 'Writing Indigenous History in Malaysia: A Survey on Approaches and Problems', *Crossroads* 10, no. 2 (1997): 33–81; here, 59–61.
3. *Ibid.*, 62.
4. H. Ting, 'The Politics of National Identity in West Malaysia: Continued Mutation or Critical Transition?', *Southeast Asian Studies* 47, no. 1 (2009): 31–51.
5. This issue continues to be raised whenever debates over history textbooks resurface, such as currently by Ranjit Singh Malhi, a well-known veteran history textbook writer, in an article entitled 'Malaysian History Textbooks' published on 30 September 2017 in the *Malay Mail Online*, in reaction to a rather Malay-centric assertion of historical perspective as the only legitimate one by Arof Ishak entitled 'Do not tinker with discipline [sic] of history' in the *New Straits Times* on 17 September 2017 (see <https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/letters/2017/09/280628/do-not-tinker-discipline-history> and <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/what-you-think/article/malaysian-history-textbooks-ranjit-singh-malhi#IH5kXlt1xcVLMIOf.97>).
6. B. K. Cheah, 'Ethnicity, Politics, and History Textbook Controversies in Malaysia', *American Asian Review* XXI, no. 4 (2003): 229–252; here, 245.
7. S. A. Carstens, 'Dancing Lions and Disappearing History: The National Culture Debates and Chinese Malaysian Culture'. In *Histories, Cultures, Identities: Studies in Malaysian Chinese Worlds*, ed. S. A. Carstens (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2005), 144–176; here, 153.
8. Cheah, 'Ethnicity, Politics, and History Textbook Controversies', 244. While Yap Ah Loy was still included in the revised textbook, his name disappeared altogether from the 1996 edition of the Form 2 history textbook, whereas Raja Abdullah's role was briefly mentioned. His photograph appeared again in the 2003 edition of the Form 2 textbook, in which he was described as 'one among others who developed Kuala Lumpur' without any further discussion of his role, while Raja Abdullah was described as having 'pioneered' tin mining activities in the area. See Carstens, 'Dancing Lions and Disappearing History', 153.
9. Carstens, 'Dancing Lions and Disappearing History', 144.
10. CMCS (Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies) and Nantah (Nanyang University Alumni Association of Malaya), *Perbincangan Tentang Sukatan Pelajaran dan Buku Teks Sejarah Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan* [Discussions on national secondary school history syllabus and textbooks] (Kuala Lumpur: CMCS & Nantah, 2001), 6. Unless otherwise specified, all translations my own.



11. Cheah, 'Ethnicity, Politics, and History Textbook Controversies', 248.
12. Ibid., 247.
13. Cheah, 'Writing Indigenous History in Malaysia', 66.
14. Ibid.; Cheah, 'Ethnicity, Politics, and History Textbook Controversies'.
15. R. Santhiram, 'Curriculum Materials for National Integration in Malaysia: Match or Mismatch?', *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 17, no. 2 (1997): 7–20; here, 10–11.
16. Cheah, 'Writing Indigenous History in Malaysia', 67.
17. Z. A. M. Siti, M. Y. Hashim, A. Z. Ghazali, L. K. Hing, A. F. Basri and A. A. W. Zainal Sejarah, *Malaysia Tingkatan 5* [Form 5 Malaysian history] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992), 126.
18. Ibid., 126.
19. Ibid., 130.
20. Ibid., 131.
21. Cheah, 'Ethnicity, Politics, and History Textbook Controversies', 241.
22. CMCS and Nantah, *Perbincangan Tentang Sukatan Pelajaran*, 13.
23. R. Santhiram, 'Curriculum Materials for National Integration', 15.
24. Ting, 'The Politics of National Identity'; H. Ting, 'The Battle over the Memory of the Nation: Whose National History?'. In *Controversial History Education in Asian Contexts*, ed. M. Baildon et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 36–52.
25. Ting, 'The Battle over the Memory of the Nation'.
26. H. Ting, 'Malaysian History Textbooks and the Discourse of *Ketuanan Melayu*'. In *Race and Multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore*, ed. D. Goh et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).
27. Ibid., 37.
28. Ibid.
29. 'DAP wants review of History subject' and 'Fix biased version of History first, MCA tells Education Ministry', *The Malaysian Insider*, 25 October 2010.
30. See online petition statement at <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/reviewhistorysyllabusinmalaysia/>; signatures were also collected manually in hard copies.
31. 'History textbooks biased, say writers', *The Sun*, 12 December 2010.
32. 'Non-Malays don't understand Malaysia's history, says Perkasa', *The Malaysian Insider*, 10 April 2011.
33. See two writeups of a related event here by a participant: <http://homeschoolhomefrontier.com/2011/malaysian-history-textbooks-too-narrow-say-our-youths>, <http://homeschoolhomefrontier.com/2011/homeschoolers-add-to-malaysian-history-debate>. The memorandum was subsequently submitted to the Education Ministry together with more than 20,000 signatures; see Ting, 'The Battle over the Memory of the Nation' 2014, p. 53;
34. 'DPM appoints new History curriculum committee', *Malaysiakini*, 3 May 2011.
35. S. S. Raja, 'Historians and Integrity', *The Sun*, 12 May 2011.

36. 'Mat Sabu dikecam [Mat Sabu criticised]', *Utusan Malaysia*, 28 August 2011.
37. 'Muhyiddin dakwa Mat Sabu khianati bangsa, gesa minta maaf [Muhyiddin accuses Mat Sabu of betraying race, urges him to apologise]', *The Malaysian Insider*, 28 August 2011.
38. 'PAS wants cabinet committee to review history', *Malaysiakini*, 6 September 2011.
39. 'Profs' council: Leftists not freedom fighters', *Malaysiakini*, 9 September 2011.
40. 'Revise perspectives, not facts', *The Star*, 25 September 2011.
41. Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin, 'Traversing The Many Paths To Merdeka', *Malay Mail Online*, 8 September 2017.

## Further Reading

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# 29

## Republic of Moldova

Stefan Ihrig

### Introduction

Since its independence in 1991, the Republic of Moldova has been plagued by a debate concerning the country's history and, indeed, its identity. The conflict is neither new nor is it restricted solely to history teaching and textbooks; it is part of the broader question about the legitimacy of a Moldovan state separate from Romania. The area, most of it once part of the principality of Moldova, became part of the Tsarist Empire in the early nineteenth century under the name of Bessarabia. In the interwar period, it formed part of Greater Romania and was then incorporated into the Soviet Union as one of its constituent republics after World War II. There had been no Moldovan nationalism (movement or otherwise) and, as many argue, no national sentiment prior to the establishment of the Soviet Republic; the creation of Moldova was part and parcel of Stalin's nationalities policies. The Soviet Union set up a Moldovan Autonomous Republic in 1924, when Bessarabia was part of Romania, encompassing what is today Transnistria and parts of Ukraine, in order to give weight to its claim that the Moldovan people longed to be part of the Soviet Union rather than of Romania. Political Moldovanism was born.

For most of the twentieth century, the creation of a Moldovan nation was almost exclusively a Soviet project with little support from local Romanian elites. The Moldovan nation and Moldovan history carried with them the stigma of Soviet policies, and there is little evidence to suggest that they permeated deep into society. Yet, at the same time, the Romanian national identity did not appear to reach the majority of the population either. It seems that the Romanian-speaking majority had remained rather untouched by the two

competing nationalising projects.<sup>1</sup> It was these conflicts between two varieties of nationalism, two competing sets of elites and a population not yet nationalised that played out at the end of the Soviet Union and in the first two decades of post-Soviet Moldova.

## The Debate

When the Soviet era ended in Moldova (or rather, when Moldova organised its exit from the Soviet Union), nationalism was indeed instrumental, yet the way it was employed was rather ambiguous. The symbols used by Moldovan activists and politicians pointed clearly towards unification with Romania: the Romanian flag, the Romanian national anthem and the Romanian language as the state's first official language—these were not only the slogans and goals of many, but in the end they were also partially adopted into the new constitution.

Post-Soviet change also encompassed the elite classes, and the new elite heavily favoured a Romanian national identity, hence they are often referred to as 'Romanianists'.<sup>2</sup> Members of the old elite as well as minority representatives seemed to favour the 'Moldovanist' approach (hence 'Moldovanists'). With a large part of Moldova's post-Soviet society comprising ethnic minority populations (up to 30 per cent were Russians, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Gagauz and others), minority issues are of crucial importance to the Moldovan state. In the first post-Soviet years, national euphoria installed Romanianists in power, who abolished Soviet textbooks and started using textbooks imported from Romania. The nationalist language laws, overall nationalist tendencies and the apparent development towards a union with Romania in the immediate post-Soviet years led to considerable friction inside Moldova, eventually triggering two separatist movements. The first, in Gagauzia, was pacified by granting far-reaching autonomous powers; the second resulted in the still largely unrecognised Moldovan Republic of Transnistria. Inter-ethnic tension was also an important factor in the development of a post-Soviet Moldovanism.

When, in 1994, the new Moldovanist government set out to 'implement the constitution', the Moldovan identity conundrum resurfaced with a vengeance. Article 13 of the Moldovan constitution speaks of the 'Moldovan language', whilst other parts of the constitution refer to the 'Moldovan people' and 'Moldovan history'. In schools and universities at the time, however, the Romanian language and the history of the Romanians (*Istoria Românilor*) were taught. The new government wanted to bring the curricula 'in line with the constitution', creating Moldovan language and history courses. When an

ordinance to replace Romanian school and university subjects became public knowledge, it was quickly followed by protests. At first the protesters comprised only a handful of university students, but they were quickly joined by their teachers and by schoolchildren in organising a permanent demonstration on the central square of Chişinău, just opposite the parliament and in sight of other government buildings. The demonstration turned into a permanent strike and was accompanied by the public burning of Soviet textbooks. The overall crisis and the demonstrations were ended by a moratorium on all language and history teaching questions, thus resulting in a government failure to push through Moldovan identity and history. The first generation of indigenous history textbooks was then prepared for courses covering the 'History of the Romanians' and published between 1995 and 1998. This created a unique situation where exponents of Moldovanism were in power but Romanianist history was being taught in schools, implicitly calling for unification with Romania. In Romanianist textbooks, national history was described as a process naturally and ultimately leading to the unification of all Romanians.

Naturally, the newly elected communist government, heavily Moldovanist when it came to history and identity, attempted to rectify this situation. Again in 2001, just as in 1994, the reaction was a public outcry followed by large demonstrations and a permanent protest with a tent city in front of the parliament, which threatened to bring down the entire government over the issue. Only after intense negotiations aided by the Council of Europe was the situation yet again defused and a new moratorium on these issues agreed upon. However, the Moldovanist governments did not let the issue rest. One of the many reasons for this was that the textbooks were far behind Western didactic standards and, perhaps more importantly, were violently anti-minority.

The minority populations of Moldova were viewed in Romanianist history writing as proxies of Russia and, as such, forces of 'de-Romanianisation', bent on Russifying Moldova and robbing the Romanians of their birthright. The textbooks varied in the intensity of their anti-minority discourse, but in the first process of textbook revision, even the authors were convinced that the texts should be changed and improved in this area. As a result, a second edition of the first generation of textbooks was published in the years leading up to 2003. The Moldovan government, however, was still pursuing a policy not only of textbook revision but also textbook substitution. Their cause was aided by educational experts they enlisted, who stressed the didactic shortcomings of the current textbooks. From 2001 onwards, the government talked about revision and succeeded in enlisting the Council of Europe and the Georg Eckert Institute in this endeavour. However, as became clear later

in the process, their real goal was the replacement of the old courses and textbooks with new ones designed for a so-called integrated history, thereby also abolishing the separate courses on Romanian and world history.

When textbook revision began in 2003, with the communist government as the main instigator of the process and the only official partner of the institutions mentioned above, they tightly controlled who was and was not to participate in the various activities involved in textbook reform. Reform was then abruptly abandoned in favour of an outright replacement of textbooks and courses with the government's request for textbook proposals in 2004. This request came very close to the deadline, thus giving an unfair advantage to those who had been informed by the government beforehand. As a result, those writing the new textbooks were in effect appointed by the government. Not only were the Romanianists excluded, and with them the dominant academic force in historical research and teaching, but also the various minority organisations including minority researchers from universities and the Academy of Sciences. The new textbooks for the so-called 'integrated history' courses were to replace the existing 'history of the Romanians' and the world history courses.

The result of this process was texts which received wholly negative reviews from the international experts commissioned by the Georg Eckert Institute as well as from internal reviewers in Moldova, teachers and academic historians. The twisted stalemate of the previous years was not overcome by these so-called integrated history textbooks. Although the government wanted to get rid of the old textbooks, it appears that they continued to be used in some fashion in schools and were officially reinstated when the government changed in 2009. The integrated history affair severely hurt political Moldovanism. Its political leaders told the public on various occasions that the integrated history textbooks had received positive reviews from the international experts, even though these experts and the Georg Eckert Institute had repeatedly stated the contrary. In 2010 the head of the Moldovan Historians' Association, Sergiu Musteață, won a court battle over the right to access the expert reports on the integrated history textbooks prepared for the government by the Georg Eckert Institute. With the verdict of Moldova's highest court in his pocket, Musteață published the Georg Eckert Institute's various reports, directly exposing the outright lies of various Moldovanist government officials in the previous years.<sup>3</sup>

While the textbook and history teaching issue almost brought down the government in 1994 and 2001, the conflict surrounding the integrated history textbooks never reached a comparable boiling point, even though it appears they were received very negatively as well. Protests were considerably less well attended than in 1994 and 2001. However, the stalemate between

the two political and historiographical camps on the issue has not been resolved. It remains highly politicised, and any resolution hinges on reducing this politicisation.

## Documentation: The Debate

There are no singular or prominent texts in this debate but rather several series of books and statements. However, it is necessary to stress that the debate is all-encompassing, taking place in history textbooks, schools, universities, within politics and among the public at large. Post-Soviet Moldovanism was the first of the two movements to produce new grand narratives of the nation (Snegur, Stati, Stepaniuc). While for the Romanianists it appeared at first to be sufficient to re-publish older, mostly interwar historiographical works on Bessarabia,<sup>4</sup> for the Moldovanists re-publishing Soviet Moldovanist literature seemed out of the question. The Moldovanist historical grand narratives, on the other hand, were mainly written by people who were not trained historians. Many experts today follow van Meurs's observation that post-Soviet Moldovanism lacked able historians to successfully reformulate Moldovanism.<sup>5</sup> Romanianism, however, as described above, was able to refine and publish its narrative in the first generation of the official history textbooks, which were also often cited in academic texts as 'normal' academic treatises.

The debate centres on the ethnic and national identity of the majority population of Moldova. Yet, the way history is written and perceived also has implications for the state as a whole as well as for its minorities. The Romanianist narrative claims that the majority population of Moldova is part of the Romanian nation. The various parts of the Romanian nation are usually followed through history in these narratives and each is inscribed with a national longing to live in one state with all their Romanian brothers and sisters. In this light, the Great Union of 1918, in which different regions (Transylvania, the Romanian Banat, the Bukowina as well as Bessarabia) opted to unite with the old Kingdom of Romania, is viewed as national fulfilment. The interwar years, when all Romanians were united for the first time in history, is something of a golden age in the Romanianist discourse, during which the nation comes close to achieving its potential in all spheres of life. Conversely, the periods as part of the Tsarist Empire and within the Soviet Union are viewed as dark ages, during which the Bessarabian part of the Romanian nation suffered under the Russian yoke, Russified and colonised. The Moldovanists and the minorities are seen as agents of Russian imperialism in the Tsarist Empire as well as in the Soviet Union.



Before the publication of the integrated history textbooks, Moldovanism had mainly been put forward in speeches and monographs. One prominent Moldovanist author was the linguist Vasile Stati, who published two grand narratives of the Moldovan nation as well as a Romanian-Moldovan dictionary, through which he tried to prove that Moldovan was a language separate from Romanian. Another, but less influential, grand narrative was published by an authors' collective (Taranov et al.).

Moldovanism was often interpreted by outside experts to be a civic form of nationalism, contrasting with the ethnically exclusive form of nationalism that Romanianism was viewed to be. However, this has proven to be a misinterpretation based more on the potential cross-ethnic constituency of political Moldovanism rather than on its tenets as expressed in its historiography and in the speeches of politicians. One of the key events and key texts for post-Soviet Moldovanism was Mircea Snegur's speech 'Our House Moldova' in 1994,<sup>6</sup> which was seen as the founding moment of a new non-Soviet Moldovanism. Snegur's speech also closely mirrored the Romanianist style and argumentation for their nation in Moldova. What the subsequent post-Soviet Moldovanist texts proved was that in fact the Moldovanist narrative of the nation was just as ethnically exclusive as the Romanianist one, the only difference being that it is much more benevolent when it comes to minorities. Yet, in this narrative, the rights the minorities enjoy in Moldova are continuously granted to them by the Moldovans out of goodwill—and not because these groups deserve their rights inherently.

The Moldovanist discourse closely mirrors the Romanianist one. Here the majority population is not Romanian, but of a different ethnic origin with stronger Slavic influences. According to this narrative, the Moldovan (proto-) nation was formed in the principality of Moldova and was always under threat from the Romanians, who wanted to dominate and assimilate it. In the Moldovanist version of history, the Moldovans had only one friend in the world: the Russians. And the Russians duly protected the Moldovans by incorporating Moldova into the Tsarist Empire and furthering the Moldovans' individual culture during Soviet times. Accordingly, the interwar years are the dark ages of the Moldovan nation, as it was subjected to harsh Romanianisation measures. The periods of Russian and Soviet rule, inversely, are viewed as the golden ages of the modern Moldovan nation, while the time of Stephen the Great is seen as an early, 'ancient' golden age.

The first-generation textbooks (*History of the Romanians*) were written exclusively for the majority population, although it was clear that members of the minorities would also be using them and that they would be translated into Russian. The audience of these history textbooks is usually addressed as

‘we, the Romanians’ even though Moldova is a multi-ethnic state. Multi-ethnicity is itself treated as a problem in these books. The treatment of minorities in the interwar period by Romania, which carried out severe assimilation measures, is illustrated here by a chapter heading in one of the books: ‘The Ethnic and Cultural Diversity of Interwar Romania—Political Solutions’.<sup>7</sup> The minorities are usually called ‘foreign-born’ (*alogeni*) even though they have lived in the region for decades, even centuries. A typical description of their role as proxies of Russian imperialism reads: ‘These ethnicities have developed as nations outside of Romanian borders, they have come to Romanian soil as proxies of the ruling imperialist nations’.<sup>8</sup> Both narratives, Romanianist and Moldovanist, have exhibited a marked ethnocentric tendency, not only in their exclusion of minorities from the projected ‘self’ but also in the way they explain progress and how they evaluate different periods of history with their different political regimes. Whether the nation lives under democracy or dictatorship seems to matter little, if at all; what matters exclusively and for all periods is the national aspect. Democracy, capitalism, market economy, communism and so on carry little weight here.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly before the integrated history textbooks were published, the Moldovanist camp attempted to refurbish Moldovanist theory. Victor Stepaniuc, then parliamentary chair of the commission for education and history, published his book *History of Moldovan Statehood* and re-narrated Moldovan history through the prism of ‘statehood’.<sup>10</sup> This approach was also highly influential for the textbooks, which used a similar language. A typical statement concerning statehood and nationhood in Stepaniuc’s text is the following, which is cited in a textbook:

Within the USSR, after 2 August 1940, the reunification of the Moldovans from both sides of the Dniester was possible, as well as the rebirth of Moldovan statehood and its extension east of the Dniester. In this fashion the Moldovan people were reinstated in a republic [sic], with limited sovereignty ... It was a step towards the reestablishment of Moldovan statehood, which had been suffocated in 1918.<sup>11</sup>

The integrated textbooks, again following Stepaniuc’s lead, try to connect a historical tradition of multi-ethnicity with the theme of Moldovan statehood. The fact that during ‘Russian rule’ (Tsarist Empire and Soviet Union) and under Moldovanist governments the minorities were treated better than under Romanian and Romanianist rule is put forward as a major justification for the separate existence of a Moldovan state. However, the minorities are still treated as being outside the national and constituent body politic of the Moldovan

state. Despite attempts on the Moldovanist side to develop their discourse and slightly change their vocabulary, both sides have been stuck in a deadlock for more than a decade in a battle dominated by opposing views of the nation and 'historical truth'. Schoolchildren remain in the middle, suffering from two opposing elites who cannot reach a consensus about national history and identity. As two Moldovan historians—one of them a textbook author himself—self-critically stated in their summary of the conflict in 2007: 'The self-imposed militancy of [Moldovan] historians has hindered them from accepting a new vocabulary adapted to the new realities and tendencies such as is currently used [today] at a European and global level'.<sup>12</sup> And this militancy has expressed itself often in extremely harsh language, for example, with Romanianists alleging a 'cultural genocide' at the hands of the ruling Moldovanists and the Moldovanists comparing Romanianist discourse to that of Goebbels.

## Conclusion

The Moldovan conflict surrounding history, identity and history teaching is remarkable for a variety of reasons: first, it is a rare instance where, in a clearly polarised nationalist situation, one policy (of independence) was in power, while a different one (union with the motherland) was taught in schools. Contrary to nationalism theory, the schools not only refused to act as a conduit of official policy, they actually actively undermined it—though, paradoxically, with government support. Second, the Moldovan case also illustrates the importance of elite-led identity politics and history teaching. There are two sets of political elites with two outlooks on national history and identity, who polarise society to the detriment of both education and the integration of non-Romanian-speaking groups. Both elites use very similar discourses, and this only exacerbates the deadlock character of the situation. Third, in a way the Moldovan case represents a 'typical transformation situation' in which historians take upon themselves the role of 'archaeologists of historical truth'.<sup>13</sup> 'Truth' has become a central category of discourse, with both sides claiming to have a monopoly over it. Key and possibly traumatic events, such as what is perceived as foreign rule, extreme nationalist policies, Stalinism, the Holocaust and so on, are interpreted to fit the overall nationalist historiographic design, so that these interpretations ultimately conflict with memory and the experience of the population at large as well as with careful historical research.

Even if the recent stages of the conflict had less mass-mobilising effects than previous ones, a solution or any sort of compromise on the question of

national history and history teaching has yet to be reached. Interestingly, in recent years historians, especially those formerly associated with the Romanianist camp, have started to venture towards something of a conciliatory and pragmatic position. While a 'middle position' seems theoretically impossible, pragmatism and moderation hold the key for a de-politicisation of the major issues, which in the long run could usher in a new historiographic model. So far, despite the intensity of the ongoing conflict, neither Romanianism nor Moldovanism has appeared able to secure a real historiographic mandate from the majority of the population for their designs of national history.

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2. See S. Ihrig, *Wer sind die Moldawier? Rumänismus versus Moldowanismus in Historiographie und Geschichtsschulbüchern der Republik Moldova, 1991–2006* [Who are the Moldovans? Romanianism versus Moldovanism in the Historiography and History Textbooks of the Republic of Moldova, 1991–2006] (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2008), 19–20.
3. S. Musteață, *Educația istorică între discursul politic și identitar în Republica Moldova* [History Education between Political and Identity Discourse in the Republic of Moldova] (Chișinău: Pontos, 2010).
4. See S. Ihrig, *Wer sind die Moldawier?*, 305–306.
5. W. P. van Meurs, 'Moldova: Nationale Identität als Politisches Programm [National Identity as a Political Programme]', *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen* 4–5 (2003): 34.
6. S. Ihrig, *Wer sind die Moldawier?*, Appendix V, 291–297.
7. N. Enciu, *Istoria Românilor—Epoca contemporană. Manual pentru clasa a XII-a de liceu* [History of the Romanians: The Contemporary Period: Textbook for Grade 12] (Chișinău: Civitas, 2003), 26.
8. B. Vizer, *Istoria contemporană a Românilor—Materiale pentru clasa a IX-a în ajutorul elevilor și profesorilor* [Contemporary History of the Romanians: Materials for Students and Teachers of Grade 9] (Chișinău: Știința, 1997), 9.
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12. I. Şarov and A. Cuşco, 'Der öffentliche Identitätsdiskurs der Historiker: Strömungen, Meinungen, Auseinandersetzungen [The Historians' Public Identity Discourse: Currents, Opinions, Controversial Debates]'. In *Sprachliche Individuation in mehrsprachigen Regionen Osteuropas: I. Republik Moldova*, ed. K. Bochmann and V. Dumbrava (Leipzig: Leipziger Univ.-Verl, 2007), 131.
13. P. Niedermüller, 'Zeit, Geschichte, Vergangenheit: Zur kulturellen Logik des Nationalismus im Postsozialismus [Time, History, Past: On the Cultural Logic of Nationalism in Post-Socialism]', *Historische Anthropologie* 5 (1997): 245–267.

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## The Netherlands

Maria Grever

### Introduction

In the first decade of the new millennium, the Dutch government took some drastic measures to adjust the content of history education. The general complaint in public debates was that Dutch students had no shared historical knowledge as a result of the current practice of teaching ‘eclectic’ historical themes, and, above all, that students barely knew the history of the Netherlands. As elsewhere, many politicians and the wider public expect historians to accommodate them with a clear and recognisable picture of history.<sup>1</sup> This, however, is easier said than done. Finding a consensus, on which all citizens of a country are able to agree, on *what history* should be taught in primary and secondary schools is an impossible task due to the ideological and political views and differences underlying every process of selecting curricular content. It is also questionable whether such an unambiguous picture of history is even desirable. Denying these differences would undermine history as a discipline, of which critical thinking is a key aspect, and its potential function for the upholding of democracy. Agreement on the *objectives* of history teaching is no less difficult to reach. Some scholars assume that the recent disputes about history education in the Netherlands are closely linked to public concern around national identity.<sup>2</sup> In their view, politicians consider the fostering of national cohesion and the promotion of a shared sense of being Dutch to be important objectives of history teaching. While this view is probably true, there are also other, underestimated reasons for the controversies around history education in the Netherlands, such as a sense of alienation between historical scholarship and history education.

This chapter explores the extent to which this alienation is indeed one of the underlying causes of the controversies in the Netherlands. After a brief outline of the historical context of history education in the country, I discuss the principal controversies that have taken place since the late 1990s. The focus is on debates around two influential reports on history education that have been produced by state commissions installed by the Dutch Ministry of Education.

## Old and New Controversies

In the nineteenth century, nation-building in the Western world often entailed the exclusion of cultural minorities. In the Netherlands, polemical controversies between different large religious and ideological groups accompanied the emergence of professional historiography. After 1850, Catholics in particular, who made up about 40% of the Dutch population at that time, yet who had been marginalised for almost 300 years, challenged the dominant liberal Protestant view on Dutch history and sought to take their own place in national historiography as no less true patriots than the Protestants. National commemoration days saw riots between Catholics and conservative orthodox Protestants. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, influential liberal Protestant historians, notably Robert Fruin, also promoted the articulation of different views on the Dutch Revolt and the Golden Age.<sup>3</sup>

In this process, each group constructed its own collective identity and claimed its contribution to the nation state, which each group justified by citing elements of history.<sup>4</sup> The phenomenon of so-called pillarisation, which characterised the Dutch state over a long period, implied the denominational segregation of society: a vertical division into several segments or 'pillars' (*zuilen*) according to religion or ideology. These pillars spanned a range of social classes and had their own social institutions, such as political parties, newspapers, broadcasting organisations, trade unions and farmers' associations, banks, schools, hospitals, universities and sports clubs. This vertically segmented pluralism led to a situation in which the majority of the population had no personal contact with people from another pillar. The Netherlands had at least four pillars—conservative Protestant, Catholic, Socialist and Liberal—which coexisted side by side.<sup>5</sup> Over time, the elites of each pillar gradually began to work together. By 1933, it had become possible for the different groups, with the exception of the Socialists, to join together to celebrate the fourth centenary of the birth of William of Orange, the founding father of the Dutch nation. 'Pillarisation', then, resulted in a generally peaceful



coexistence of different perspectives on academic historiography and the teaching of Dutch history in primary and secondary schools. In this period, historical scholarship in the Netherlands, as in other Western countries, was an influential producer of canonised national narratives in which nation states were the principal *dramatis personae*.<sup>6</sup> Nations waged wars, suffered defeats and finally triumphed. Narratives of the rise, prosperity, decline and survival of nations generated a teleological discourse of steady progression through time, represented by a focus on events characterised as exemplary, protagonists as great and ideas as classic.<sup>7</sup>

In the late 1960s and 1970s, due to processes of secularisation and individualisation, this infrastructure of religious and ideological pillars with specific national narratives, which had characterised Dutch society for so many years, disappeared. At the same time, other historiographical approaches and geographical perspectives came to the fore. Some of these approaches, such as social and economic history, acquired a recognised position in mainstream academic history. Canonised national narratives were gradually called into question from a variety of perspectives. According to Siep Stuurman, these narratives have been subjected to both methodological and cultural critiques.<sup>8</sup> Methodological critiques have deconstructed the national canon as an anachronistic Whiggish narrative based on a series of invented traditions, projecting an 'imagined community' into the past and perpetuating the nineteenth-century national imagination. A cultural perspective on the issues regards national history and the history of political thought as narratives of exclusion as well as inclusion. The principal figure standing at the (virtual) centre of canonical narratives is the male, white, literate citizen of the European nation state. All other figures within the nation state are situated at the margins of the story, if they appear at all. There is a substantial literature that criticises this bias, with a vast array of new sources and interpretations questioning the monopoly of the white male voice in the arena of national history, including collective memory, and the history of political thought.<sup>9</sup> Historians of migration have investigated transnational processes and used research from other fields such as oral history and family history.<sup>10</sup> Gender historians have shown that the emergence of the modern nation was based on a gendered notion of citizenship and on colonial exploitation.<sup>11</sup>

These intellectual innovations have had a great impact on practices of history education in the Netherlands. Yet, no less influential was the introduction of centrally organised written examinations for every subject in the upper levels of Dutch secondary schools. In 1981, after much debate and a series of experiments, this procedure became compulsory for history. The central written examinations for history were to be sat by students at the upper levels of

all secondary schools who had selected history as a subject.<sup>12</sup> This examination covered two topics from history after 1917, changing every two years. Apart from the central examinations, three to four internal school examinations focused on a handful of topics from history before 1917 plus those topics on history after 1917 that were not part of the central examinations. These internal school examinations consisted of several topics covering the period from antiquity until the present, composed and assessed by history teachers themselves. The results of both central examinations and internal school examinations made up the final student grade for history. The examination system stimulated the implementation of new historiographical perspectives in the history curricula of Dutch secondary schools, such as European, colonial and world history, and themes from labour, gender and migration history.

Further, experts in the didactics of history drew up and launched an educational approach based on the processes of the development of second-order concepts (i.e., significance, continuity and change) and key organising ideas (i.e., the use of evidence and causal analysis) which had taken place in the United Kingdom.<sup>13</sup> These *structuurbegrippen* (effectively meaning second-order concepts or historical skills) were introduced by the Dutch history teacher trainer and textbook author Leo Dalhuisen, a member of the commission that designed the format of the central written history examinations.<sup>14</sup> Since the late 1980s, Dutch students in history classrooms have been encouraged to develop their own points of view, as well as acquiring the concepts and heuristics of history as a discipline that will enable them to do so successfully.<sup>15</sup> In 1993, historical skills were incorporated for the first time into the key targets of the secondary school curriculum and the new history examination.<sup>16</sup>

However, academic historians and leading commentators increasingly started to criticise the history curriculum; this criticism has, it seems, frequently been based on impressions and vague memories rather than on research, with the critics identifying a disjunction between school history as it is currently taught and the history lessons of their own youth. The controversies focused on the balance in the curriculum between historical skills and overview knowledge. For instance, a well-known academic historian argued that there was no need to teach young students the skills of the professional historian.<sup>17</sup> Critics likewise attacked the inclusion of what they viewed as trendy topics, such as women's history, in the curriculum and the corresponding textbooks.<sup>18</sup> Some historians considered the very term 'historical theme' anathema and frequently harked back to the 1950s, in their view a golden age of history teaching, when 'a complete overview of history' was still being taught.<sup>19</sup> The assumption underlying this criticism was that the international

and topic-based nature of current history education, and the perceived over-emphasis on didactics and the acquisition of historical skills,<sup>20</sup> had generated a kaleidoscopic approach to history teaching, resulting in the destruction of a coherent narrative and of a sense of chronology.<sup>21</sup> Another complaint increasingly heard has been that, due to these features of history education as it is currently practised, young people are no longer familiar with the national history of their country of residence.

The critics, however, had overlooked several issues. First, the idea of historical skills was not a recent phenomenon. Various Dutch historians and teachers had reasoned as early as the interwar period that learning dates of battles, victories, and kings and queens by heart seemed more an end in itself than an activity that might contribute to education in a more holistic sense; they advocated approaches that focused on critical debate and self-development rather than the rote learning of historical facts.<sup>22</sup> Second, in primary schools, children had once learnt dates relating to the history of their nation; this practice provided successive generations with a chronological basis for their understanding of Dutch history.<sup>23</sup> In secondary schools, history teaching had traditionally involved national and particularly general history. General history (*algemene geschiedenis*) was interpreted as the history of Western (European) civilisation. In the 1970s, the memorising type of history education in primary schools disappeared. Third, after a major education reform implemented in 1968, history had ceased to be a compulsory subject at upper secondary level. The estimate is that 65–70% of all Dutch students over 15 years of age have no history in their curriculum. Moreover, at lower secondary level, the school subject of history is often combined with civic studies, geography and economics into a single subject called ‘world orientation’.

Perhaps an even more influential social factor was the successive breakdown of the Dutch model of pillarisation during the 1970s. This ‘de-pillarisation’ implied the weakening of what had previously been considered to be self-evident historical knowledge about the nation, resulting in a fundamental change in historical consciousness.<sup>24</sup> In response to processes of globalisation and the increasing influence of the European Union in the Netherlands, the Dutch started to redefine the meaning of Dutchness and what is referred to as its Judaeo-Christian roots. Dutch identity became a hot topic in the public sphere, and all the more so after the assassinations of two key figures in these debates: Pim Fortuyn (2002), a political leader known for his anti-Islamic views, and Theo van Gogh (2004), an opinion leader and filmmaker who had sharply mocked Muslims in his columns and in his short film *Submission*.<sup>25</sup> Concomitant with these developments was a resurgence in public interest in national history; newspapers carried quizzes and competitions on the topic,

and there were television programmes and Internet campaigns on the issue. Commentators and politicians called for a revival of national pride and a greater commitment to national values.<sup>26</sup> Public concern about the meaning of national identity, combined with anxiety about the integration of immigrants into Dutch society, fuelled critiques of history education. Legislation was passed compelling migrants to the Netherlands to learn not only the Dutch language but also the basics of Dutch history and culture. The sociologist Frank Lechner was struck by the fierce disputes around national identity that took place at this time, commenting that the Netherlands had traditionally been a country 'that prided itself on not taking pride in its national culture'.<sup>27</sup> In this context, the Dutch government installed two state commissions to implement some crucial changes in history education; these are discussed in the next section.

## Two State Reports on History Education: Ambiguous Responses

In 2001, a state commission chaired by historian Piet de Rooij published a framework of ten historical eras for primary and secondary schools. One of the framework's aims, which were designed by Arie Wilschut, a prominent member of the commission, was to provide students with a coherent chronological overview and to avoid the teaching of 'eclectic' themes. Based on a broad timeline, the framework provides a general overview of the history of the Netherlands and Western Europe along with a handful of topics from world history. The framework does not prescribe specific events, processes and figures which must be memorised; it does, however, prescribe the study of ten eras (see documentation), along with the acquisition of 49 general aspects of what is referred to as orientation knowledge (such as the Industrial Revolution, social movements, decolonisation) linked to these eras and two types of historical thinking skills (collecting, assessing and interpreting sources; the distinction between facts and fiction; continuity and change).<sup>28</sup> Within this framework, which also includes historical thinking concepts, history teachers and textbook authors can still select specific dates, events and historical figures themselves in order to explain the 'orientation knowledge'.

The most striking and contested characteristics of the De Rooij report are the ten-era framework, the marginal degree to which the framework includes representations of the non-European world (except for Islam, which is placed within medieval history) and the absence of women (except for the feminist

movement of the nineteenth century). Consequently, the report generated disputes surrounding its perceived Eurocentricity and gender bias and its contested chronological framework.<sup>29</sup> After years of debate, the report was finally implemented in 2006 in primary and lower secondary education, and in 2007 in the school examinations for the upper levels of secondary education (HAVO/VWO). There was, however, still one issue to overcome, which, despite its relative significance, gained little attention in public debate. Because the framework does not prescribe knowledge of specific historical events, processes and figures, it proved very difficult to compose reliable and valid questions for the national written history examinations. Indeed, a pilot showed problems with the validity and reliability of central written examinations. Moreover, teachers complained about the curriculum overload caused by the uncertainty around the historical contexts that would be examined. As a result, the government decided to produce a syllabus with minimal thematic descriptions of historical contexts for about 45 per cent of the framework. The first national history examinations for the upper levels of HAVO/VWO took place in May 2015. Two years later, the government decided to relieve the pressure of the amount of material to be covered by moving the assessment of the time period up to 1500 for HAVO from the central examinations to the school-based examinations. A revision of the syllabus, which will still be in line with the framework of the De Rooij report, is planned for the year 2021. Surveys have shown that teachers are generally happy with the greater attention to chronological knowledge prioritised by the new curriculum and the idea of a frame of reference, but they regret the curriculum's Eurocentricity and the pressure on time in the curriculum which is difficult to reconcile with its core aims on historical thinking, which call for a more profound knowledge of historical contexts.<sup>30</sup>

In 2004, when the disputes about the ten-era framework were still in progress, Piet de Rooij and another historian, Jan Bank, sparked a wave of interest in historical canons in the Netherlands with the publication of their newspaper article 'What everyone should know about the history of our nation'.<sup>31</sup> Their initiative came in the wake of a Dutch television programme centring around finding 'the Greatest Dutchman of all time'.<sup>32</sup> Although the canon of historical knowledge proposed by Bank and De Rooij referred to the framework of ten eras, their article particularly focused on enumerating important facts from Dutch national history. In this way, Bank and De Rooij triggered a debate in the media over how to advance knowledge on national history among young people.<sup>33</sup> On the urgent advice of the Netherlands' Education Council, apparently in response to the article,<sup>34</sup> the Dutch minister of education installed a 'Commission for the Elaboration of a Dutch Canon', chaired

by the literary historian Frits van Oostrom. This commission commenced on 1 September 2005 with the task of formulating a canon on Dutch history and culture. Justifying her decision, the minister referenced recent developments in society which in her view called for a reconsideration of Dutch identity and its articulations in education. There was a general need, she argued, for a new narrative of the Netherlands.

A year later, the commission published a Canon of Dutch History and Culture, which was immediately made available online.<sup>35</sup> The national canon contains 50 topics or 'windows' for primary education and the lower levels of secondary school. References to historical thinking or the teaching of history as a discipline are missing; nor is there any explanation as to why specific topics and contents were selected for inclusion.<sup>36</sup> The selected canon 'windows' pertain to the history of politics, ideas, art and, in a few cases, technology and economics. Slavery, colonialism and multiculturalism are fairly well represented, but they figure principally as political and emancipatory landmarks rather than as structuring elements of Dutch history.<sup>37</sup> Long-term social, economic and cultural transformations are largely absent. Fifteen of 50 windows feature a person, three of whom are female: the suffragette Aletta Jacobs, the famous Jewish diarist and Holocaust victim Anne Frank and Annie M. G. Schmidt, a writer of children's books and songs.

The canon is presented as a chart, in printed and digital format, featuring 50 windows located on a winding timeline.<sup>38</sup> Behind each window is a short story explaining the significance of the selected person, idea or event to the canon. All canon windows lead on to relevant ideas and insights for students and teachers, under the headings of 'Branches' and 'References', enabling them to expand on the window's topic. The heading 'Branches' contains sections entitled 'Primary Schools', 'Secondary Schools', 'Past and Present' and 'The Treasury'. The section for primary schools focuses on storyline topics, and also presents users with suggestions for topics for secondary school students, so they can widen or deepen the view from the window. 'Past and Present' contains suggestions for comparisons between then and now. 'The Treasury' makes suggestions for the further study of historical heritage related to the topic, including images of authentic objects, other memorabilia, charts and books. The section 'References' contains 'Locations to go', with suggestions for possible excursions, 'Youth literature' with lists of relevant age-appropriate books, 'Background literature' with academic titles, and 'Websites' with informative links.

Politicians, leading commentators, journalists and those who are interested in history have responded with great enthusiasm to the canon. The mere

announcement of a national canon inspired various groups and communities to create their own canons; many are variations on or elaborations of the national canon, while others are protest or counter-canons. More than 500 local, regional and thematic canons have been constructed to date by such communities and groupings as villages, cities, provinces, religious groups, sporting organisations, women's groups and commercial enterprises. Some of these canons revolve principally around entertainment and are humorous in nature. Most of them take a more serious tone in their examination of, for instance, the identity of a region, a village or a specific community. Canons have been created on the history of Putten, Den Bosch, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Gelderland, Limburg and West Friesland; there are canons of feminists, orthodox Protestants and Dutch Indisch people; there are canons of church hymns, and even a canon of extreme winters and summers.<sup>39</sup> Most of them share a strong emphasis on heritage. Several local heritage canons are connected to projects of city branding and reveal an anachronistic tendency to project a perceived continuity of identity between the present day and a remote past. In 2007, the Dutch government commissioned the Netherlands Institute for Heritage to organise a 'Canon Tour' of all Dutch provinces and four large cities, with the aim of supporting the development of local and regional canons and linking them to the national one, thus preventing the occurrence of fragmentation.

History teachers' response to the canon has been equivocal. Overall, school teachers have not welcomed the canon with great enthusiasm.<sup>40</sup> However, they appreciate the online canon with its large selection of pieces of text, images, films and other information about the canon 'windows'. Secondary school teachers of history in particular emphasise the fact that the canon offers them a good justification to argue for more history lessons, as the position of history as a school subject has become vulnerable at lower secondary level. Another interesting effect has been instances of cooperation between history teachers, heritage educators, museum curators and representatives of tourist offices to construct local canons which are connected to history education in schools.<sup>41</sup>

Other voices in the debate, mainly academic historians, have explicitly criticised the very idea of an imposed canon and the lack of provision of a rationale for the topics selected. They fear that a national canon will suppress diversity.<sup>42</sup> When the government decided in 2008 to prescribe the canon by implementing it in the key learning targets for primary and secondary schools, 23 academic historians, experts in history education and history teachers sent an open letter to parliament to protest against what they



regarded as a top-down procedure.<sup>43</sup> The Dutch Council of State also advised against the imposition of the canon, holding the view that it would contravene Article 23 of the Dutch constitution on the freedom of teaching.<sup>44</sup> Two years later, despite this opposition, and under the pressure of several influential members of parliament from both left and right, the government decided by royal decree to implement the canon by linking it to the existing system of ten eras with the following provision: 'The canon windows serve as a starting point for the illustration of the system of ten eras'.<sup>45</sup> The provision amounts to a firm recommendation to use the canon in the classroom and does not represent an absolute obligation to teach every canon topic.<sup>46</sup> Although this outcome is effectively a compromise, it is significant that Dutch academic historians' views on these and similar issues have not been conducive to presenting a united front against government intervention into the teaching of history.

Recently, 70 academic historians have responded to a call in a weekly magazine to reflect on the darker chapters of Dutch history and to create a canon of Dutch involvement in large-scale conflicts and the oppression of other peoples.<sup>47</sup> They referred to, for instance, the Dutch involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and the colonial wars in Indonesia.

## Documentation and Sources of the Debates

### **Report of *de commissie historische en maatschappelijke vorming***

*Verleden, heden, toekomst. Advies van de commissie historische en maatschappelijke vorming* [Past, Present, Future: Committee on History and Social Sciences] (Enschede: SLO, 2001).

Chaired by the Amsterdam historian Piet de Rooij, this state commission consisted of 25 members: 3 academic historians, 2 social scientists and 20 history educationalists and history teachers.<sup>48</sup> The history educationalist Arie Wilschut designed the framework of ten eras, covering the history of the Netherlands, Western Europe and a few topics from world history. Each era is represented by a logo, a specific title and 49 aspects of historical 'orientation knowledge' which fall within it. The eras are as follows (Table 30.1):

The framework was implemented in primary schools in 2006, and in secondary schools in 2007.

**Table 30.1** Chronological framework of ten eras

- 
1. Time of Hunters and Farmers (up to 3000 BC)
  2. Time of Greeks and Romans (3000 BC–500 AD)
  3. Time of Monks and Knights (500–1000 AD)
  4. Time of Cities and States (1000–1500 AD)
  5. Time of Discoverers and Reformers (1500–1600 AD)
  6. Time of Regents and Princes (1600–1700 AD)
  7. Time of Wigs and Revolutions (1700–1800 AD)
  8. Time of Citizens and Steam Engines (1800–1900 AD)
  9. Time of World Wars (1900–1950 AD)
  10. Time of Television and Computers (1950 AD onward)
- 

## Report by the Canon Commission

*Entoen.nu—de canon van Nederland. Rapport van de commissie Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon* Deel A [The canon of the Netherlands. Report of the Dutch Canon Committee, part A.] (Den Haag: Ministry of Education, 2006).

*Entoen.nu—de canon van Nederland. Rapport van de commissie Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon* Deel B [The canon of the Netherlands; Report of the Dutch Canon Committee, part B] (Den Haag: Ministry of Education, 2006).

*Entoen.nu en verder—de canon van Nederland. Rapport van de commissie Ontwikkeling Nederlandse Canon* Deel C [The canon of the Netherlands; Report of the Dutch Canon Committee, Part C] (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007). A response to all reactions to the canon.

Frits van Oostrom, ed. *The Netherlands in a nutshell. Highlights from Dutch history and culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).

Chaired by the then president of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Frits van Oostrom, this state commission consisted of nine members: a literary historian and expert in medieval Dutch literature (van Oostrom), four academic historians, one expert in the didactics of Dutch literature, a philosopher, a specialist in human geography and a regional politician. The canon consists of 50 items or windows, covering the history and culture of the Netherlands from prehistoric times to the present. The canon was implemented in primary schools and the lower levels of secondary schools in 2010 (Table 30.2).

**Table 30.2** The Dutch canon: 50 windows on Dutch history and culture

|                                                                                       |                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dolmens                                                                            | 26. The patriots (rebels against the <i>stadtholder</i> )                                   |
| 2. The Roman Limes                                                                    | 27. Napoleon Bonaparte                                                                      |
| 3. Bishop Willibrord                                                                  | 28. King William I                                                                          |
| 4. Charlemagne                                                                        | 29. The first railway                                                                       |
| 5. <i>Hebban olla vogala</i> (one of the first written Dutch sentences)               | 30. The Dutch constitution of 1848                                                          |
| 6. Floris V, count of Holland                                                         | 31. Famous novel <i>Max Havelaar</i> (a protest against colonial exploitation in Indonesia) |
| 7. The Hanseatic League                                                               | 32. Opposition to child labour                                                              |
| 8. Scientist Christiaan Huygens                                                       | 33. Vincent van Gogh                                                                        |
| 9. Erasmus                                                                            | 34. Suffragette Aletta Jacobs                                                               |
| 10. Charles V                                                                         | 35. The First World War                                                                     |
| 11. The <i>Beeldenstorm</i> (iconoclasm, the start of the Dutch revolt against Spain) | 36. The <i>Stijl</i> (art movement)                                                         |
| 12. William of Orange                                                                 | 37. Crisis years                                                                            |
| 13. The Dutch Republic                                                                | 38. The Second World War                                                                    |
| 14. The Dutch East India Company (VOC)                                                | 39. Anne Frank                                                                              |
| 15. The Beemster Polder                                                               | 40. Indonesia                                                                               |
| 16. The Amsterdam canals                                                              | 41. Prime minister Willem Drees                                                             |
| 17. Hugo Grotius                                                                      | 42. The flood of 1953                                                                       |
| 18. The <i>Statenbijbel</i> (Bible)                                                   | 43. Television                                                                              |
| 19. Rembrandt                                                                         | 44. Port of Rotterdam                                                                       |
| 20. The Atlas Maior of Blaeu                                                          | 45. Writer of children's books Annie M.G. Schmidt                                           |
| 21. Sea admiral Michiel de Ruyter                                                     | 46. Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles                                                   |
| 22. Spinoza                                                                           | 47. Srebrenica                                                                              |
| 23. Slavery                                                                           | 48. Multicultural Netherlands                                                               |
| 24. Rich country houses (eighteenth century)                                          | 49. Natural gas                                                                             |
| 25. Astronomer Eise Eisinga                                                           | 50. Europe                                                                                  |

## Conclusion

Recent controversies on history education in the Netherlands frequently refer to public debates around whether knowledge or skills should be emphasised, and more recently how history education can stimulate national cohesion and an awareness of national identity. There are, however, other, less noticed issues. In the 1970s, history ceased to be a compulsory subject at upper secondary level in the Netherlands. Additionally, at lower secondary level, history is often combined with civic studies, geography and economics into a single subject field called 'world orientation'. The current canon and its impact on public debate have provided history teachers with a rationale for arguing for more history teaching hours in the high school curriculum. The acrimonious debates that have taken place point to a degree of insecurity about their discipline on the part of Dutch historians. We might go as far as to suggest that

history as taught in schools seems to be the Achilles' heel of the current position of historical scholarship in Dutch society. There is a tendency observable in today's society for the sciences to be considered important and useful while the humanities, with their lack of immediately applicable economic use, are marginalised within the academic world. Against this backdrop, the public calls for a national canon of history offer an opportunity to give history a new lease of life. Such a response is understandable, but it is doubtful whether this approach will enhance the quality of history as it is taught in schools.

Strikingly, in this respect, in contrast with the report of the De Rooij commission, the Dutch history canon we have discussed in this entry and the heritage education projects have no sustainable connection to academic history and the didactics of history. The likely reason for this is that the national canon and the heritage education projects have an interdisciplinary character, aiming at the teaching of Dutch history, culture and arts.<sup>49</sup> In this way, there is a risk of a growing gap between historical scholarship and history education, between what Jeremy Black has called 'the questioning ethos and methods that are central to the modern notion of scholarship, and public history in which the emphasis is rather on answers, with myths providing ways to make sense of the past'.<sup>50</sup> If this tendency becomes standard, history lessons may be in danger of turning into the teaching of ideologies.

This said, both supporters and opponents of the De Rooij report and the Dutch canon agree on one issue: they all regret that over the past 15 years, students of history teacher training have been acquiring insufficient historical knowledge. Further, and despite the occasionally 'love-hate' relationship between academic historians and history education specialists, the disputes have generated a common commitment to enhancing the quality of history education. The degree of alienation between historical scholarship and history education now appears to have lessened. Academic historians, experts in history education and history teachers in the Netherlands are currently striving for more collaboration and greater exchange of ideas and experiences. Research into the didactics of history teaching has been given an extra boost. All this together represents a hopeful development for history education in the Netherlands.

## Notes

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  13. L. G. Dalhuisen, P. A. M. Geurts and J. G. Toebe, eds., *Geschiedenis op school in theorie en praktijk* (Groningen: Wolters Noordhoff, 1976); C. Counsell, 'Historical Knowledge and Historical Skills: A Distracting Dichotomy'. In

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# 31

## New Zealand

Mark Sheehan

### Introduction

Much of the debate over school history textbooks since the 1980s has focused on the role of the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>1</sup> in the history curriculum. The Treaty serves as the legal framework for addressing historical grievances<sup>2</sup> and is seen by many as New Zealand's founding document. This chapter will first outline the historical background to this debate, and will then examine how the Treaty was presented in school history textbooks in the years during which it had no legal status and was seen simply as a symbol of racial harmony. Finally, it will look at how the Treaty has been incorporated into school textbooks in recent decades (since its integration into New Zealand's legal framework) and recent attempts to introduce Māori history into the curriculum.

### Context

Debates over history curriculum matters do not occur in a vacuum. The question of the extent to which the unsettling aspects of New Zealand's colonial legacy should be portrayed in history textbooks, and of the role that should be accorded to the Treaty in these depictions, is controversial. The debate has seen a parliamentary investigation into the history curriculum and

ongoing criticism by politicians, educators and historians. This reflects the radical changes to the social, intellectual and economic fabric of New Zealand society over the last 30 years. New Zealand in the three decades following the Second World War can be characterised as a prosperous and socially conservative society with all the trappings of a British colony. The economy was centrally controlled and based on producing a narrow range of agricultural goods for the British market. Visits by the British royal family were enormously popular and foreign policy was aligned with the interests of the United States and the United Kingdom. Māori played little role in the way the country was run. In the 1970s, however, this began to change. The New Zealand economy suffered spiralling inflation, growing unemployment and financial insecurity. The decade that followed saw a radical shift in the political, economic and social make-up of New Zealand society. Its centralised economic model was dismantled and replaced by a more market-orientated approach, and New Zealand's foreign policy was realigned to reflect a more independent stance. Furthermore, the relationship between Māori and Pākehā was reshaped based on a bicultural partnership framework as defined by the Treaty of Waitangi.

## **The Treaty of Waitangi: A Bicultural Framework**

In the late twentieth century, in the face of a widening disparity in socio-economic status between Māori and Pākehā, Māori leaders called for greater autonomy over their affairs and for the distinctive features of Māori culture and identity to be acknowledged and maintained. They argued that although racial discrimination was illegal, Māori had unique rights in New Zealand as they were indigenous and the basis of the relationship between Māori and Pākehā should be based on the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>3</sup> Although the Treaty had played little part in New Zealand society since 1840, in the final decades of the twentieth century an increasing number of New Zealanders saw it as having the potential to resolve growing racial tensions between Māori and Pākehā. In the twenty-first century, the Treaty has emerged as the official bicultural framework on which the relationship between Māori and Pākehā is based and which acknowledges Māori as having first-people status.<sup>4</sup> This has seen a series of legislative measures based on the Treaty, including legislation that requires schools to consult with local Māori tribal authorities over education matters (The Education Act 1989). It has also

seen an extension of the authority of the Waitangi Tribunal, which is a government-funded body charged with investigating historical claims by Māori tribes of wrongdoing by the British Crown in the nineteenth century. Since 1985, the Tribunal has produced over 100 reports and judgements that have contributed to the return of tribal lands by the government and financial compensation for historical grievances.

The bicultural nature of twenty-first-century New Zealand, however, is more fragile than it appears at first sight, and the historical nature of the Treaty has significant implications for the history curriculum and history textbooks in the country. At an official level, all major political parties acknowledge the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand society and support the Treaty reconciliation process, and the Treaty is embedded in a number of key statutes. Many New Zealanders also see the Treaty as New Zealand's founding document and indicative of an emerging Pacific-oriented national identity. Māori motifs and icons are now prominent in government organisations, the media, sport and the arts, and increasingly Pākehā are using Māori phrases and/or greetings as part of their everyday speech. Nevertheless, not everyone endorses the central place of the Treaty in New Zealand. Some view the changes made on the basis of the Treaty as cosmetic and as not going far enough in recognising the rights and privileges of Māori as 'first people'. They point out that Māori experience higher rates of failure in schooling and poorer health than Pākehā, as well as making up a higher proportion of those who live in poverty. Recent years have seen protests by Treaty activists over a perceived failure to 'honour the Treaty', including land occupations, marches on parliament and the disruption of annual Waitangi Day celebrations.

Opponents of the Treaty framework reject the notion that Māori have a unique status and warn that biculturalism is leading to racial divisions and separatism. The extent of this feeling became apparent in the 2005 election campaign, when Māori claims to New Zealand's seabed and foreshore<sup>5</sup> divided the country. Don Brash, the leader of the centre-right National Party opposition, echoing the rallying cry of opponents to biculturalism that 'we are all New Zealanders', claimed that the centre-left Labour government's 'race-based' policies unfairly advantaged Māori and professed himself especially concerned at the central place of the Treaty in history textbooks. He promised that, if elected, the National Party would amend the school curriculum so that the Treaty of Waitangi would not be portrayed as a partnership between Māori and Pākehā. The National Party's policies on the status of the Treaty won

them few friends in the Māori community, but garnered considerable sympathy among conservative voters, who brought them close to winning the 2005 election. Brash was replaced as leader in 2006; ironically, his successor as leader of the National Party, John Key, eschewed his predecessor's anti-Treaty stance. Once elected in 2008, he formed an alliance with the Māori Party that regarded the Treaty as central to the relationship between Māori and Pākehā.

## Debate and Documentation

The Treaty of Waitangi has featured prominently in school history programmes since the early twentieth century and there was little controversy over its inclusion in the curriculum until the official policy of biculturalism was introduced in the 1980s. Speeches on the symbolic importance of 'The Treaty', to be read at school assemblies, were published annually by the Department of Education in the official *Education Gazette*. They were closely censored to ensure they reflected the official view of the Treaty as New Zealand's 'Magna Carta' and the basis of a racially harmonious society. This official view was promoted in the core New Zealand textbooks, *The School Journal*<sup>6</sup> and *Our Nation's Story*.<sup>7</sup> The prevailing official view promoted in history textbooks at this time was that the Treaty of Waitangi was the symbol of the harmonious race relations which characterised New Zealand. Young people were told that this was a source of national pride for New Zealanders given the experiences of indigenous peoples in other settler nations such as Australia and South Africa.

Racial stereotypes played a prominent role in *Our Nation's Story*. While the British were seen the benchmark by which all others races were judged, Māori were portrayed as having the potential to progress to the civilised standards of Europeans.<sup>8</sup> The impact of the wars fought between the Colonial government and Māori in the nineteenth century was largely played down. Known as the New Zealand wars, these conflicts were a devastating and traumatic experience for Māori. By 1900 the majority of Māori land had been confiscated (or sold), and the population had declined to less than half what it had been when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840.<sup>9</sup> *Our Nation's Story* characterised the wars as largely a series of misunderstandings and asserted that both sides held considerable admiration for each other in light of heroic deeds such as Rewi Maniapoto's last stand at Orakau.<sup>10</sup>

School history textbooks drew on an extensive historiography of Pākehā writing on Māori for these views. Although Māori seldom had a voice or

agency in how they were portrayed, their experiences generated the interest of Pākehā historians and were featured in historical and popular narratives. Percy Smith, Elsdon Best, John White, Edward Tregear, John Macmillan Brown, J.E. Gorst and James Cowan researched and published on Māori history. While these scholars all approached Māori history in different ways, they shared a sympathetic interest in the Māori world that was framed by a belief that they were recording the achievements of a dying race.<sup>11</sup>

The scholarship of these writers was widely disseminated in school textbooks and largely shaped Pākehā perceptions of the Māori world. Although sympathetic, they brought their own preconceptions to their historical work and judged Māori according to the standards of Victorian middle-class British society that, at that time, was held up as the benchmark to which all peoples in the British Empire should aspire. In a number of cases, they attempted to fit the oral testimonies that they were told by Māori into a universal narrative and ignored the tribal complexities of the Māori world. Consequently, several erroneous narratives of New Zealand's Māori past were taught in schools and widely accepted. Stephenson Percy Smith is credited with promoting the myth of 'Kupe and The Great Fleet'<sup>12</sup> that brought Māori to New Zealand in 1350. While this was probably a result of a synthesis between the accounts of Māori informants and Smith, the story was discredited in the 1970s. The naming of New Zealand as Aotearoa by Māori was also a fabrication, yet, like the legend of the 'Great Fleet', it was widely disseminated through *The School Journal* and *Our Nation's Story*. The most enduring and pervasive myth that was featured in *Our Nation's Story* was Smith's claim that a race of Melanesians called the Moriori, who were intellectually and culturally inferior to the Polynesians, were the first inhabitants of New Zealand and were conquered by the ancestors of the Māori. Although unsubstantiated, this myth continues to emerge at times today in letters to the editors of newspapers; in the eyes of those who oppose the Treaty's bicultural framework, it may provide some justification for the Pākehā colonisation of New Zealand.<sup>13</sup>

Until the 1970s, there was little controversy over the Treaty of Waitangi; one of the central tenets in New Zealand historiography, uncritically accepted and largely unchallenged, was the notion that New Zealand was a biracial paradise. Even historians such as Keith Sinclair, who demonstrated the perfidy of the government's actions in purchases of Māori land and the government's willingness to use force to achieve their aims, viewed New Zealand's past as comparatively benign in terms of race relations. He argued that the country enjoyed a better situation in this regard than other settler colonies, such as South Africa, Australia and the United States. It would not be until the 1970s that historians began to adopt a far more critical stance towards



New Zealand's biracial past in the context of the emerging tensions between Māori and Pākehā over socio-economic inequality, as well as cultural alienation suffered by Māori in the context of loss of land and language. Over the last 30 years, historians have documented the extent of Pākehā racism and violence in the process of colonisation as well as the Crown's contravention of the guarantees given in the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>14</sup>

A more critical portrayal of New Zealand's colonial legacy has been the dominant narrative in history textbooks since the 1970s.<sup>15</sup> These views were apparent in the New Zealand Social Studies Curriculum (1997),<sup>16</sup> which highlighted the centrality of the Treaty; while this focus largely found the support of educators, in the wider community it was controversial. The first two drafts of the curriculum were rejected. Opponents of the Treaty framework claimed the curriculum ignored New Zealand's European/British heritage and promoted what they called 'Waitangism'.<sup>17</sup> Advocates of the Treaty, by contrast, argued for a bicultural approach to history as a vehicle for addressing contemporary concerns around racism, sexism and inequality. Kay Harrison, a history teacher and author of several school history textbooks, viewed history as a weapon that would help in the 'battle against ethnocentrism' and address 'the injustices of the past'.<sup>18</sup>

## The Treaty in 2014

In the initial years of the twenty-first century, the limitations of the bicultural model that has dominated contemporary educational thinking on Māori issues became apparent. The 'two peoples' ethos of biculturalism was based on the assumption that there was a single 'Māori' approach to history that could be accommodated by the curriculum; however, the tribal nature of Māori history is more complex than this model allows. Māori historians are typically located within a tribal context and, unlike their Pākehā counterparts, are often embedded within their communities. In addition to documenting their tribal past, they can be expected to ensure their view of history asserts the authority of their people over tribal lands. While historical debates are a feature of discussions within tribal contexts on the *marae*, the traditional communal spaces within which official functions take place, for Māori historians, tribal knowledge is not always something to be lightly shared and open to public scrutiny outside this arena. Māori historians are also acutely aware that the framing of tribal historical narratives is not a neutral process and that, in the light of the Waitangi Tribunal investigations into historical claims, it has implications for the future. In this context, history is the primary vehicle in establishing

legitimacy for claimants and the past is subject to competing claims between different tribal groups.

The current New Zealand curriculum was introduced in 2007.<sup>19</sup> It allows history and social studies teachers considerable autonomy in the aspects of the past they choose to prioritise. At the senior school level, where history is an optional subject and covered by the major public assessments and examinations, there are no prescribed topics. Teachers are expected to address the Treaty in the core subject of social studies, but how they do so is up to them. Although there is considerable autonomy in how schools structure their history programmes, teachers are increasingly focusing on New Zealand and Māori history, considering it an important topic for young people developing a sense of place and identity. While history in New Zealand is largely based on the discipline's traditional academic structure, recent initiatives by the New Zealand history teaching community and the Ministry of Education<sup>20</sup> have seen a more explicit focus on including Māori approaches to history. The rationale behind this development revolves around the idea of fostering a sense of personal identity and place in students, which, it is argued, contributes to all young people developing a sense of their identity as citizens of New Zealand. Although the implementation is in its early stages, this signals a new chapter in how young New Zealanders learn about their history. It puts a sense of place at the centre of how students understand and engage with the past. Pita Sharples, Associate Minister of Education, launching the initiative to strengthen the teaching of Maori history in years 1–13 in June 2014, commented: 'Māori history is New Zealand history ... and will strengthen students' sense of personal identity and engagement with where they are from, through the teaching of relevant and localised Māori history'.<sup>21</sup>

## Notes

1. Signed first at Waitangi in the north of New Zealand in February 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was a pact between the British Crown and Māori chiefs. Māori ceded sovereignty to the British in return for guarantees that they could retain particular privileges and rights over their lands and fisheries.
2. The Treaty was signed prior to the widespread British colonisation of New Zealand. In 1840 there were fewer than 2000 Pākehā (non-Māori, predominantly European, settlers) in New Zealand and around 120–150,000 Māori. However, the Treaty did little to protect Māori from the worst effects of colonisation. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Pākehā population outnumbered Māori, the majority of Māori land had been either sold or

- confiscated and the Māori population had declined to less than half what it had been in 1840.
3. Although the Treaty of Waitangi had no legal status until the 1980s (and there were differences between the Māori and English versions), it has generally been seen by Māori as a binding agreement between the indigenous people of New Zealand and the Crown.
  4. Known as *tangata whenua*, people of the land.
  5. Māori claims to the foreshore and seabed were based on a 2003 Appeal Court decision that the foreshore and seabed were 'land' and that under common law, Māori tribal groups who had continuously occupied coastal regions since 1840 could make a claim to the Māori Land Court for title. It was an especially divisive issue that saw the government legislate to disallow these claims being made.
  6. *The School Journal* has been published since 1907 by the New Zealand Ministry of Education and is aimed at developing literacy skills in pupils aged 4 to 8. See: <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Literacy-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Instructional-Series/School-Journal> (accessed 28 September 2017).
  7. *Our Nation's Story* was published by Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd. and told the history of Great Britain. It was used as the main history book in New Zealand primary schools from the mid-1920s until the 1940s.
  8. C. McGeorge, 'New Zealand in New Zealand School Books before 1930', *History Now* 10 (2005) 2, 4–11; C. McGeorge, 'What Was "Our Nation's Story"?' *History of Education Review* 28 (1999) 2, 46–59.
  9. O'Malley, V. (2016). *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800–2000*. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington.
  10. 'Rewi's last stand' at the battle of Ōrākau in 1864 was immortalised in Rudall Hayward's 1925 silent film of the same name (remade as a 'talkie' in 1940).
  11. Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003).
  12. Three rival theories are debated regarding the pre-European settlement of New Zealand: One asserts that Tahitian explorers discovered New Zealand and subsequently emigrated there. Another theory argues these settlers killed or enslaved aboriginal inhabitants. The third claims that New Zealand was the result of accidental voyages. 'The "Great Fleet" Myths', from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966. Te Ara—the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/history-myths-in-new-zealand/page-11> (accessed 28 September 2017).
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14. M. Belgrave, *Historical Frictions: Maori Claims and Reinvented Histories* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2005); J. Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Penguin, 2001); G. Byrnes, *The Waitangi Tribunal and New Zealand History* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2004); R. and J. Consedine, *Healing our History: The Challenge of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Auckland: Penguin, 2011); R. Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu mātou: Struggle without End* (Auckland: Penguin, 2004).
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# 32

## Northern Cyprus

Hakan Karahasan and Mehves Beyidoglu Onen

### Introduction

The ongoing ethnic conflict in Cyprus has not gone unremarked upon in the country's education system and in its textbooks. For many years, the Turkish Cypriot official education system sought to legitimise the division of Cyprus on the basis that 'the two communities in Cyprus cannot live together'. Nevertheless, Turkish Cypriot history education and its textbooks have gone through visible changes over the last ten years. Within this context, this chapter will discuss how history education can be used as a tool to help build harmony and understanding and how the teaching of controversial historical issues might contribute to peace rather than cementing divisions within and between nations.

### Historical Background

It is a well-known phenomenon that education systems do not always promote independent thought and critical thinking. In many countries, students are not encouraged to search for the truth for themselves but are instead indoctrinated according to government policies. History teaching can be the most important part of this indoctrination and can find itself used as a tool for propaganda in order to impose on students the 'official' view as espoused by the state. Distortion of facts, negative judgements, misinformation, the omission of pertinent facts, and the use of information for the purposes of state authorities are some of the methods that can occur in history books.<sup>1</sup>

A prime example of the above can be seen in history textbooks used in secondary schools in the northern part of Cyprus between 1997 and 2004. The books, written by Dr. Vehbi Zeki Serter, subjectively narrate the history of Cyprus by legitimising the 'national goal', stating that Turkish and Greek Cypriots cannot live together, assuming the perspective of the Turkish Cypriot community and denying the legitimacy of the 'other'. According to Serter's books, 'Cyprus was never Greek and Greek Cypriots are in fact not Greek either, but instead the "remnants" of the various nations who passed through Cyprus in the course of its history'.<sup>2</sup>

In Serter's second volume, the book continually refers to the 'spoiled Greeks' who killed the Turks in order to achieve Enosis; this term, meaning 'union', is used by Greek communities outside Greece who seek to incorporate the territories in which they live into the Greek state. The author describes the Turks as 'Turkish heroes' who bravely resisted Enosis:

Greeks are dreamers and liars because the Greek, throughout history, is [continually] asking for something. He demands dollars from America, and pounds from England. He demands money, he demands territory. For example, from his neighbour Albania he wants the Epiros, from Bulgaria he demands Macedonia. In the past, he wanted from Turkey the whole of western Asia Minor. Now, he demands Cyprus. If tomorrow he wants Egypt because of some Greek element in Egypt, do not be surprised ... In order to defend our rights and freedoms, we will resist you. And, for this aim, if we don't find a piece of stick or stone, we will take in hand the bones of our 80,000 martyrs who died for this land, and resisted you.<sup>3</sup>

Such statements are examples of a method of history teaching that is far from contemporary history teaching methodology, yet one that was practised in schools until recently. These old history textbooks could be viewed as a mere reflection of nationalistic policies based on an ethnocentric perception of history. Such books were written in a manner that attempted to justify and legitimise the nationalist policy of partition by instrumentalising the past.

A significant political change occurred in the late 1990s, in which the Turkish Cypriot community witnessed the rise of 'Cyprus-centred' thinking, which in turn allowed for fundamental changes in particular aspects of social and cultural narratives in the country. Indeed, 1999 was considered by some to represent 'a turning point for the Turkish Cypriot community'.<sup>4</sup> Many members of the Turkish Cypriot community began to look towards the European Union and express a strong desire and support for the accession of the island to the EU. Indeed, one might say that a political U-turn took place, away from nationalistic thinking. The Turkish Cypriot community



began to reject Turkish nationalism and its proposal of a permanently divided Cyprus in favour of a 'peaceful European Cyprus'. Forty-one different non-governmental organisations and opposition parties formed the 'This Country is Ours' platform, an initiative aimed at inspiring and bringing together grass-roots movements in search of a solution to the 'Cyprus Problem'. This movement, which asserted that a lasting peace can only be achieved through a federal solution and EU membership, gained impetus through the Annan Plan, which was presented to the leaders of Northern and Southern Cyprus in November 2002 by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. 'The Plan is a "lengthy, complex, and comprehensive" proposal ... which was presented as the latest international attempt to reach a settlement on the island. The major aim of the Plan was to find a solution for the settlement of the ongoing Cyprus question and to allow a Unitary State of Cyprus to become a member of the European Union'.<sup>5</sup>

This idea found particularly strong support among socialist political parties and NGOs. Following the proposal of the Annan Plan, the platform's representatives increased to 91; these then went on to develop a 'Common Vision' equating to 'Peace in Cyprus and "yes" to the EU', which received support from the majority of groups in the community. A cross-section of society, including businesspeople, trade unionists, teachers, and other members of the working and middle classes, came together to work for a solution to the ongoing 'Cyprus Problem'. Although these groups each held their own ideology, they pursued the common aim of bringing peace to Cyprus. Cyprus now began to be perceived as the homeland of all the population living on the island, including Greek Cypriots; this new perception radically challenged the principles held by the nationalist elite at the time.

During a conference in Ankara, Turkish Cypriot community leader Rauf Denktaş was asked to reply to the following question: 'Wouldn't it be better for the Turkish Cypriot community to struggle with Greek Cypriots for a Federal Republic of Cyprus?'

My ancestors come from Anatolia. From top to toe I am a Turk and my origins come from Central Asia. I am a Turk with all my culture, language, history and identity. I have a state and a motherland. All the words such as Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, and Common Nation are nonsense. They have their Greece and we have our Turkey. So why do we need to live under one republic? Some circles tend to say that there are Cypriots, some Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. They tend to tell stories about a common culture. However, there is neither Turkish Cypriot nor Greek Cypriot nor Cypriot. You should never ask us whether we are Cypriot or not. This may cause misunderstanding. You know why? Because there is only one Cypriot thing in Cyprus and that is the Cypriot donkey.<sup>6</sup>

Denktaş's words are an exemplar of the ideas that once prevailed among the ruling elite and which negated all local cultural elements of being Turkish Cypriot and promoted an abstract sense of belonging to the Turkish nation. A growing movement of opposition to such predominant ideas within the Turkish Cypriot community began to challenge the concepts of Turkism and Turkish nationalism and instead advocated the cultural uniqueness of the Turkish Cypriot community. This emphasis on difference was in fact an attempt to differentiate the Turkish Cypriot community from the Turkish nation, an effort which in turn led to political change after the election of 2003. The new government, formed by Mehmet Ali Talat, shared the view that the old history textbooks exploited students' chauvinistic and nationalistic perceptions and immediately began to reconsider history textbooks and educational policy in general. Dr Hasan Alicik, former head of the Turkish Cypriot Educational Planning and Programming Department, gave an example of the chauvinistic ideas relayed by the textbook series in use at that time, observing that Serter's books described the EU as a 'rotten apple' and a 'poisoned carrot': 'This was not an idea which was in line with the views of the 65 per cent of the Turkish Cypriot community which said yes to the EU. Therefore [the government] decided to change the methodology used'. Alicik described the new methodology used in the revised textbooks as 'student-centred' because 'it aims to motivate students by involving them in the education process'.<sup>7</sup>

Once the Turkish Cypriot authorities had made the decision to modify history textbooks, the authorities responsible for education invited teachers and academics to come together to completely rewrite the textbooks used in the first three years of lower secondary school. In the ensuing period, a group of volunteer teachers began working on a new style of history textbook. All three books were completed by the start of the new academic year in 2004/2005.

It should perhaps be noted at this point that the country's trade union for secondary school teachers (KTOEÖS) played a crucial role in the 'This Country is Ours' platform. The members of this union were the pioneers of the change towards a 'Cyprus-centred' way of thinking, with a corresponding influence on the process of change and consequently the content of textbooks.

In order to fully understand the differences between the old and the new textbooks, it is important to undertake a qualitative comparison: Is there a shift from an ethnocentric approach to a humanist approach? What image of the 'other' is presented in each set of textbooks? Is the image of Greek Cypriots shown in the books consistently negative throughout? Do the textbooks refer to any other groups or peoples as 'enemies' (apart from the Greek Cypriots)? What visual materials do the textbooks use and what messages do they leave out?

The findings of a recent study on textbooks on the northern part of the island, conducted by the POST Research Institute and entitled *Re-writing History Textbooks—History Education: A Tool for Polarisation or Reconciliation?*, suggest that, generally speaking, the content of the textbooks that were revised during the CTP (Republican Turkish Party)<sup>8</sup> government, elected in 2003, is far removed from the ethnocentric approaches apparent in the textbooks written by Vehbi Serter. Textbooks written during the CTP government's tenure generally evaluate historical issues from a humanistic perspective. Moreover, there is no explicitly designated national 'enemy' or 'other' in the new books. One of the most fundamental characteristics of the new textbooks is their emphasis on social history and its role in general history. References to social events that affected the whole of Cyprus during various historical periods help readers to make sense of the fact that their social space is a shared one and they also identify with the Greek Cypriot community. Cartoons and pictures are also given considerable prominence. Such visual imagery helps to further engage the reader with the subject matter and to hold their attention. Another important aspect of the books is their use of Turkish Cypriot dialect. Until recently, the Turkish Cypriot dialect was often viewed as a 'local cultural characteristic' and has been regarded with a degree of derision by various dominant Turkish nationalist groups. However, the authors of the new textbooks have attempted to introduce a limited amount of Turkish Cypriot dialect into the text, and in doing so have promoted a sense of pride in the 'Cypriotness' of the Turkish Cypriot community. Furthermore, the authors of the new textbooks take care to refer to Greek Cypriot writers and thus recognise the importance of their work.

Research conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture among 1413 lower secondary school pupils found that 92 per cent of them expressed positive views on the revised books. Alicik, in an interview, stated that the pupils' families had also responded positively to the modified books.<sup>9</sup>

During the process of educational reform, the Turkish Cypriot Educational Planning and Programming Department set up 147 commissions comprising teachers and academics who were involved in the revision of history textbooks and teaching materials. In total, 350,000 books were printed in the northern part of Cyprus; previously, history textbooks had been printed in Turkey. This represented a step forward for a number of reasons. First, it allowed the Turkish Cypriot community to have greater control and responsibility over the teaching of their history. Further, it enhanced the economy of the northern part of Cyprus, enabling new businesses to be set up and jobs to be created; entrepreneurs began to open new printing houses and businesses installed

new technology, and graphic designers, academics, and writers were recruited to undertake this sizeable task.

Public interest in and concern about the way in which history is taught and the links made between the past and present in the teaching process intensified in the northern part of Cyprus during the peace process. This concern enabled the CTP government to make substantial changes to the traditional history textbooks. The start of the new academic year in September 2004 saw the new history textbooks in use in all secondary schools.

The Civil Society Impact Study on Secondary Education found that the teachers' unions in Northern Cyprus played an active role in promoting a new curriculum. The Turkish Cypriot primary and secondary school teachers' trade unions (KTÖS and KTOEÖS) gave their own account of this change. There had been an ideological confrontation between the then government and the teachers' trade unions about the content of the curriculum. While the former had usually been supportive of a curriculum stressing the 'historical enmity' between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, the latter stressed the necessity of universal principles such as friendship, anti-chauvinism, and mutual understanding as the basic values on which school curricula should be based. The teachers' trade unions and their leading members published strong anti-chauvinist polemics but could not exert any meaningful impact on education policy until the December 2003 elections through which the CTP came to power. In September 2004 history textbooks were replaced by new ones, which were ostensibly more empathetic than their predecessors.<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, revision of the *Kıbrıs Tarihi* (Cyprus History) textbooks in 2004 did not put an end to the discussion. Instead, a number of critics, primarily with nationalist agendas, expressed their 'disappointment' at the textbooks and accused them of being non-nationalist. One of the objections raised most frequently against these textbooks was that they did not explain to students the 'real history' of the island, such as the sufferings of the Turkish Cypriots at the hands of the 'enemies', but instead concentrated on social history.<sup>11</sup> The new textbooks discussed such issues as the country's bi-communal football teams, social issues during the Second World War, and Greek and Turkish Cypriots who worked in the mines in Lefka. The textbook issue featured in the public debate during the 2009 election campaign; one critic claimed that 'the aim of the books is to divert people [from their ethnic allegiances] and turn them into Cypriots who forget their "Turkishness". They are brainwashing our children'.<sup>12</sup>

Immediately after the UBP (National Unity Party) won the election,<sup>13</sup> it announced its intention to make changes to the Cyprus History textbooks which had been revised by the CTP.<sup>14</sup> As Karahasan and Latif state,

quite unexpectedly, Mr. Derviş Eroğlu, the president of the 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus',<sup>15</sup> revealed the new history textbooks to the public during a press conference on the 8th of September 2009. He said that the history textbooks had been changed following discussions. Eroğlu showed a picture of Atatürk following the cover page and explained that from now on our students would learn true history from these books.<sup>16</sup>

Textbooks that were written during the CTP period were withdrawn; in the academic year commencing in 2009, pupils began to use the textbooks that were produced by the commission established by the UBP.<sup>17</sup>

One of the primary differences between the revised textbooks and their previous editions lies in the fact that textbooks that had been revised during the CTP government placed more emphasis on social history and commonalities between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, whereas the textbooks written in 2009 focussed more on contemporary problems between Turkish and Greek Cypriots.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusions

Even a relatively brief glance at the Cyprus History textbooks indicates that, in Cyprus, history education is still viewed as an instrument capable of generating and sustaining national consciousness.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, when the CTP came to power in 2003, it undertook the revision of the Cyprus History textbooks with the aim of promoting support for peace, coexistence, and reconciliation among upcoming generations. Nonetheless, as indicated by the findings of a POST Research Institute study entitled 'Education for Peace II', the 'potential danger' of this revision was the lack of certainty as to whether or not the revision would lead to changes in government policy.<sup>20</sup> The concerns expressed in the study were indeed realised. Immediately after the UBP won the parliamentary elections in 2009, they revised textbooks once again, basing this action on the notion that 'pupils would be able to learn true history from the newest books'.<sup>21</sup>

The 2009 textbooks reintroduced an ethnocentric approach to the narratives presented to pupils and the history of Cyprus once again became a history of wars and difficulties underlining the disharmony between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. Social history, which had been given a significant place in the textbooks of 2004, found itself practically ousted in the books of 2009 in favour of a close focus on the differences dividing Turkish and Greek Cypriots. History teaching is clearly a key issue for Cypriot politicians, who evidently view it as

a potential tool for the creation of ‘national’ subjects in schools.<sup>22</sup> While the history of textbook revision detailed above indicates that a desire for peace and reconciliation through education in Cyprus is undoubtedly present, there is still a relatively long way to go. Firstly, Cyprus is as yet without a settlement between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot people. Secondly, the lack of official policies on textbooks makes them vulnerable to revision, essentially for political ends, with each new government that takes office. Thirdly, the production of textbooks still takes place on a centralised basis through the government, so that teachers do not have the opportunity to use more than one textbook and thus introduce a multi-perspective approach to their teaching. Finally, a complete lack of common policies between Turkish and Greek Cypriots only increases the vulnerability of history and the tendency to vacillate sharply between the opposing historical perspectives; this leads to history becoming instrumentalised due to short-term political agendas.

## Notes

1. Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, *Facing Up to Methods of Misuse of History*, Symposium, 28–30 June 1999, 37–57.
2. The term ‘remnants’ is taken from C. Ramm, ‘Assessing Transnational Re-negotiation in the Post-1974 Turkish Cypriot Community: “Cyprus Donkeys”, “Black Beards” and the “EU Carrot”’, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 6, no. 4 (2006): 523–542.
3. V. Z. Serter, *Kıbrıs Türk Mücadele Tarihi* [The History of the Turkish Cypriot Struggle] (Nicosia: KEMA Matbaacılık, 2002), 80–81. All translations by the author unless otherwise stated.
4. N. Kızılyürek, *Doğmamış bir Devletin Tarihi: Birleşik Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005), 266.
5. M. Beyidoglu Onen, ‘South Tyrol and Cyprus: Autonomy and/or Integration?’, Unpublished Master of European Studies thesis, 2005, 31.
6. *Ortam*, 13 November 1995, cited by N. Kızılyürek, *Milliyetçilik Kısıncında Kıbrıs* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002), 293.
7. Interview with Dr. Hasan Alicik, 6 September 2006, Lefkoşa.
8. The CTP [Republican Turkish Party] is a centre-left party that supports a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation in Cyprus.
9. Interview with Dr. Hasan Alicik.
10. For more information, see H. Karahasan and D. Latif, ‘Rewriting History Textbooks—History Education: A Tool For Polarisation Or Reconciliation?’. In *The Future Of The Past: Why History Education Matters*, ed. L. Perikleous and D. Shemilt (Nicosia: Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 2011), 433–451.

11. For more information regarding these debates, see H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'The Current Debates and Dilemmas on History and Reconciliation Amongst the Turkish Cypriots', *PRIO Cyprus Center Annual Conference: Learning from Comparing Conflicts and Reconciliation Processes: A Holistic Approach*, 18–20 June 2009 (Nicosia, Cyprus); H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'Education for Peace III. Textual and Visual Analysis of the Upper Secondary School Cyprus History Textbooks: Comparative Analysis of the Old and New Cyprus History Textbooks'. In *Rewriting History Textbooks—History Education: A Tool for Polarisation or Reconciliation?*, ed. M. Beyidoglu Onen et al. (Nicosia: POST RI, 2010), 1–96; Y. Vural, 'Seeking to Transform the Perceptions of Intercommunal Relations: The Turkish-Cypriot Case (2004–2009)', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 18, no. 4 (2012): 406–430; Y. Vural and E. Özuyanık, 'Redefining Identity in the Turkish Cypriot School History Textbooks: A Step Towards a United Federal Cyprus', *South European Society & Politics* 13, no. 2 (2008): 133–154. For a nationalistically motivated criticism of the textbooks, see B. Özter, *Gerçekler Işığında Kıbrıs Tarihi Kitapları* (Lefkoşa, 2006).
12. S. Bahceli, 'Threat to Revert to Old Version of Turkish Cypriot History Books', *Cyprus Mail*, 12 March 2009.
13. The UBP [National Unity Party] is a centre-right party whose policy traditionally privileges cooperation with Turkey and rejects the notion of a solution for peace with Greek Cypriots. Recently, the party has argued that a settlement might be possible if Greek Cypriots respect the rights of Turkish Cypriots in the context of a bi-communal, bi-zonal federation. For more information regarding the development of the UBP's policies and the 'Cyprus Problem', see: D. Latif, 'An Overview of the Turkish-Cypriot Right-Wing in the Case of the National Unity Party (UBP) and Cyprus Problem'. In *Isolated Part of Cyprus*, ed. S. Tkachenko & M. T. Özsağlam (St. Petersburg: VVM Publishing, 2011), 48–55.
14. See 'Özgürün: Tarih Kitapları Değişecek', *kibrispostasi*, 4 June 2009, accessed 2 June 2017, <http://www.kibrispostasi.com/index.php/cat/35/news/25170>.
15. 'The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', established on 15 November 1983, is not recognised internationally as an independent state, except by Turkey.
16. H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'Education for Peace III', 28.
17. *Ibid.*, 28.
18. For more information regarding the findings, see *ibid.* For a summary of the findings in a different volume, see: H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'Rewriting History Textbooks', 433–451.
19. H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'Education for Peace III', 28.
20. Beyidoglu Onen, M. et al., 'Education for Peace II—Textual and Visual Analysis of the Lower Secondary School Cyprus History Textbooks Studied Between 2004–2009'. In *Rewriting History Textbooks—History Education: A Tool for Polarisation or Reconciliation?*, ed. M. Beyidoglu Onen et al. (Nicosia: POST RI, 2010), 97–166.



21. H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'Education for Peace III', 28; 'Accomplishments of the New Authority in 100 days', *BRT News*, 8 September 2009.
22. Cf. Z. Bekerman, 'Introduction'. In *Rewriting History Textbooks—History Education: A Tool for Polarisation or Reconciliation?*, ed. M. Beyidoglu Onen et al. (Nicosia: POST RI, 2010), 6–12; H. Karahasan and D. Latif, 'General Introduction to History Education'. In *Rewriting History Textbooks—History Education: A Tool for Polarisation or Reconciliation?*, ed. M. Beyidoglu Onen et al. (Nicosia: POST RI, 2010), 13–20; F. Pingel, 'Dealing with Conflict—New Perspectives in International Textbook Revision'. In *The Future of the Past: Why History Education Matters*, ed. L. Perikleous and D. Shemilt (Nicosia: Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, 2011), 405–430.
23. This section is mostly taken from Beyidoglu Onen, M. et al. *Rewriting History Textbooks*. We are grateful to the POST Research Institute for giving permission for us to republish this material here.

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# 33

## Northern Ireland

Alan McCully

### Introduction

Unusually for a divided society which has experienced violent conflict, the nature of the history curriculum has not been a significant political issue in Northern Ireland (NI); nor have textbooks been a major source of dispute. This is because control of the school curriculum has remained outside the direct influence of local politicians. Rather, debates have been largely within the domain of educationalists. This has allowed history educators to respond positively to finding ways by which the teaching of history might contribute to greater understanding and social cohesion in a deeply fractured society.

It has been long recognised that, in NI, events from the past have been used in selective and partisan ways to justify the contemporary political positions of one community and, in so doing, denigrate the other.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, progressive educators have seen it as an imperative that school history should challenge prevalent historical myths and provide young people with a more reasoned understanding of Ireland's past. Yet, when two communities see the present from such different perspectives, a common and agreed-upon narrative of the past is unlikely. Instead, history teaching has adopted a process-led, enquiry-based approach. This was formally recognised in the first statutory NI Curriculum in 1989.<sup>2</sup>

Here, this curriculum's strengths and limitations are examined. Furthermore, current areas of debate are identified which suggest that the revised curriculum, introduced in 2007, has been taking history teaching forward.

## Context/Historical Background

NI is emerging from violent conflict. At its heart is a disputed national identity. From the partition of Ireland in 1922, the majority Protestant, or unionist, population held power and professed its political and cultural allegiances to the United Kingdom. The Catholic, or nationalist, population, deprived of political influence and favour, identified as Irish and sought reunification with the Irish Republic. Further, the school system was, and remains, largely segregated, with Protestant and Catholic children attending state and denominational schools respectively. Each sector tends to reflect, and reinforce, the dominant cultural ethos of their respective communities.<sup>3</sup> In 1968–1969, discontent due to the denial of civil rights for the minority population fuelled deep-seated communal tensions which, in turn, led to three decades of internecine conflict. The political settlement, reached through the Belfast Agreement signed in 1998, attempted to overcome division by making power-sharing a mandatory form of government; this led to legal equality and parity of cultural esteem, allowing Northern Ireland's citizens to hold either British or Irish passports. Both prior to and after 1998, official policy has acknowledged that education has a role to play in conflict transformation.

Empirical evidence regarding history taught in schools prior to 1968 is sparse. The prevailing view is that state schools avoided Irish history in favour of English history and taught the former only at senior examination level when it was relevant to the latter. Catholic schools, too, followed these examination syllabi but, without a prescribed curriculum in the junior years, had more freedom to pursue teaching which supported a nationalist view of Ireland's past.<sup>4</sup> Either way, little happened to challenge the collective memory of unionists that led them to maintain their links with Britain for safety and security reasons, or of the nationalists that depicted a long and violent struggle for freedom from British persecution.

The history curriculum of 1989 marked an important development in educational policy though, in truth, it consolidated ideas that innovative teachers from both communities had been pursuing for several years. In NI, though the statutory curriculum is the responsibility of a state-funded organisation, it is structured in such a way as to distance it from direct political interference. The curriculum had several salient features. Between the ages of 5 and 14, it stated, history teaching should foster conceptual understanding, investigative skills and critical thinking which, with the growing maturity of pupils, should then be applied to contentious aspects of Ireland's past. For the first time, therefore, pupils would study Irish history from the twelfth to the twentieth century.

However, rather than encountering events in a given narrative, they should engage with alternative perspectives and interpretations and reach conclusions for themselves based on the critical examination of evidence. The island's history should be viewed as shaped by waves of settlers each making distinctive contributions rather than as a struggle of one group to justify its supremacy over another. Surprisingly, this caused little public reaction. Cynics might argue that politicians at the time were too locked in bitter enmity to take heed of the subtleties of curriculum change. However, as the new curriculum placed the emphasis on enquiry and examining a range of perspectives, it was difficult to accuse those diffident towards it of partisanship.

This curriculum operated until 2007, straddling the years of ceasefires and post-conflict political accommodation. There has been no official evaluation, but a range of evidence is available from school inspectorate reports,<sup>5</sup> small-scale teacher studies<sup>6</sup> and studies of the views of young people.<sup>7</sup> These are of value because they represent a fully-fledged case study of enquiry-based, multi-perspective history teaching and serve as a model for the international community in other post-conflict regions.

## The Debates

A curriculum, as experience shows, frequently deviates from that which is planned. Studies of the NI history curriculum show that teachers interpreted the document in accordance with their own views about history teaching. After all, teachers are products of society and subject to its influences and pressures. Yet, evidence indicates that most NI history teachers strive, at least in their conscious practice, to teach in a balanced and non-partisan way. Rather, the discernable division is between those who have taught history within the confines of the intrinsic aims of the discipline and those who have sought to use their teaching for extrinsic purposes to promote social change.<sup>8</sup> The former have largely embraced the philosophy of enquiry-based history, welcomed aspects of its innovative pedagogy and been happy to apply it to potentially sensitive aspects of the past. However, they have then been reluctant to explore the political significance of such events in the present. They are comfortable when enquiry remains within history's academic parameters but it is not their role to engage pupils in contemporary political debate. The latter take a social utilitarian view and sees history as important for promoting social change through challenging young people's cultural and political values. The curriculum favours the extrinsic approach. This is unfortunate only in that it has made it difficult for teachers to openly voice any apprehension towards the

curriculum. Teachers require open debate to help history teaching move forward in a more consensual and coherent way. Until 2016, no association of history teachers existed to facilitate this.

This matter has become more pressing with the advent of the revised curriculum of 2007<sup>9</sup> which places even greater emphasis on preparing pupils to be ‘contributors to society’. The sweeping away of prescribed content and placing of the emphasis on schools to address directly the relationship between the past and pupils’ sense of national identity has created an even greater danger that teachers will feel deskilled and overwhelmed. The revised curriculum has also introduced a Local and Global Citizenship Programme into secondary schools. The local dimension includes preparing young people to resist sectarianism and racism and to participate fully in the new political structures. Initially, some history teachers perceived citizenship education as a threat to their established position in the curriculum, but others are perhaps being too easily seduced by its social relevance and are allowing their history teaching to stray into areas which compromise their disciplinary rigour. The nature of the interface between history and citizenship and the need to identify the relationship between their complementary but distinct characteristics is another pressing issue for teacher debate.

Internationally, research evaluating the effectiveness of enquiry-based, multi-perspective history teaching on pupils’ learning in conflict environments is still in its infancy. Work in NI provides some illumination. The overall outcome is encouraging. Recent studies of young people’s experiences of history<sup>10</sup> reveal that they value the insight that school history brings, in that they expect it to provide new knowledge and alternative perspectives to the history they encounter in their communities. Yet, deeper analysis also shows that there continues to be major gaps in pupils’ historical knowledge, particularly related to recent conflict. Even when young people are exposed to enquiry-based history, as they become politicised, they tend to use knowledge selectively to support the dominant views of their respective communities. It is difficult for young people to move beyond the formative family or community narrative even when they value what they encounter in schools.

These findings raise questions about pedagogy and practice since the early 1990s. Possible explanations are that:

1. Enquiry-based history lays too much emphasis on cognitive understanding, despite communal allegiances associated with national identity having deeply felt emotional associations. Unless teachers are confident with handling emotional reactions, pupils may fail to connect the formal learning in school with the raw allegiances that matter in the community.



2. Teachers convince pupils of the worth of a multi-perspective approach yet often lack the pedagogical skills to fulfil these expectations in practice.
3. Constant reference to the two dominant perspectives of unionism and nationalism, while broadening pupils' understanding, also tends to perpetuate the view of the conflict as being two opposing and irreconcilable blocks, whereas historical study should reveal a more nuanced picture, in which individuals and minorities act in ways different from the majority in their respective communities.

In an increasingly mature post-conflict learning environment, history educators must consider these explanations and develop practice accordingly.

So far, the issues raised have been confined largely to educational debates. Latterly, the legacy of the recent past has engaged the attention of civil society. Subsequent to the Belfast Agreement, NI has struggled unsuccessfully to find a mechanism for dealing with this; moreover, the question of justice for 'victims' of violence has been a recurring obstacle in the road to political progress. An officially commissioned *Report of the Consultative Group on the Past*<sup>11</sup> foundered on the question of paying financial compensation to all victims of violence, whatever the circumstances. In the absence of consensus, non-governmental organisations and other funding agencies intervened. Initially, this concentrated on 'psychological truth', particularly to enable those hurt and traumatised by violence to have their stories heard in a cathartic environment.<sup>12</sup> These initiatives have been led by lawyers, psychologists, therapists and community activists. Whether through indifference, timidity or exclusion, historians and history educators have been conspicuous by their absence.

It might be hoped that Lord Saville's recent report into the events of Bloody Sunday in 1972 will mark a turning point, in that its unexpectedly frank and unequivocal conclusions on the misconduct of British troops signalled a more open and considered climate in which stories of the recent past can be examined through the critical lens of historical truth. Research indicates that young people do want to know more about 'The Troubles' in school. At the age of 14 to 16, an elective course is provided for those taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination, but, inevitably, the pressure for results makes it difficult for teachers to dwell too long on the human dimensions of conflict. However, the revised curriculum of 2007 offers flexibility and is encouraging risk-taking teachers to engage their younger pupils, both cognitively and affectively, with sensitive history from the recent and not so recent past and to help them make links with their own lives today. This is reawakening the debate regarding age appropriateness and the presentation of sensitive issues.

The challenge facing history teaching is ever quickening, for Northern Ireland is now in the midst of a decade of historical centenaries. The second decade of the twentieth century defined the future of a partitioned and troubled island. Between 2012 and 2022, there are a series of anniversaries including those of the signing of the Ulster Covenant, the outbreak of World War One, the Easter Rising, the Battle of the Somme and the partition of the island which will inevitably attract some who wish to use past events to promote exclusive and partisan interests. The implications are serious, for historians have argued that the furore caused by the commemorations of the Somme and the Rising in 1966 were a significant precursor to the violence which followed two years later. Politicians and civic society, north and south, are aware of the dangers but also of the opportunities that these anniversaries provide to challenge old certainties and bring fresh insight from the perspective of a new Ireland, committed to resolving its differences through peaceful dialogue. Historians and history educators are stepping forward to ensure that an informed and critical public debate takes place around the collective memory and commemoration associated with these events.

## Documentation

Official documents relating to history teaching in NI are largely confined to those relating to statutory curriculum provision or accompanying guidance material. These documents are useful in tracing the evolution of approaches since 1989.

The *Proposals for History in the Northern Ireland Curriculum* were produced by the working group set up to construct the first statutory NI history curriculum. Its focus was evident from its introductory pages:

History remains a live issue in Northern Ireland, but what passes for history does not always live up to its name. Too often partial views, prejudiced accounts and dangerous myths have been harnessed to processes inimical to the pursuit of truth. The members of the Working Group have been particularly anxious, therefore, to construct a programme of study that has balance and breadth and that pays due attention to objectivity and the disciplined use of sources.<sup>13</sup>

After consultation, *The Northern Ireland Curriculum: History* emerged. It emphasised the importance of fostering enquiry into key aspects of Irish history. A minor review in 1996 resulted in *The Northern Ireland Curriculum Key*

*Stages 3 and 4: Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets for History.* This addressed teacher concerns regarding content overload but made no concessions to those who felt ‘overburdened’ by the social responsibilities placed upon them. Indeed, pupils were now expected to explore:

The cultures and lifestyles of people who are different from them within Northern Ireland, these islands and beyond, in order to understand and respect others, and where appropriate to question and challenge prejudice and stereotypes, for example neighbourhood graffiti and wall murals, and one-sided interpretations of significant historical events.<sup>14</sup>

However, an official school inspectorate report of 2006, *History Matters*,<sup>15</sup> reminds us that innovative curricula rely on committed teachers for their execution. The report concluded that ‘the systematic linkage of the past and present is not a sufficiently strong aspect of history teaching in Northern Ireland’. Furthermore, ‘[t]he manner in which controversial issues in Irish history are addressed continues to require attention. Contested events are (usually) noted within the written planning, but classroom practice varies considerably and issues related to their current significance are not explored in a sufficiently detailed manner’.<sup>16</sup>

The revised curriculum, *Northern Ireland Curriculum Environment and Society: History* (2007),<sup>17</sup> advances even further down the social utilitarian road. In developing pupils as ‘individuals’ and ‘contributors to society’, teachers are given the flexibility to:

- Explore how history has affected their [pupils’] personal identity, culture and lifestyle;
- Investigate how history has been selectively interpreted to create stereotypical perceptions and to justify views and actions;
- Investigate the long- and short-term consequences of the partition of Ireland and how it has influenced Northern Ireland today, including key events and turning points.<sup>18</sup>

Twenty years after the Belfast Agreement, civil society is supporting the increasingly positive responses of teachers. *The Report of the Consultative Group on the Past* advocates ‘working with young people so that they are provided with the skills necessary to ensure there is no repeat of the past, including through education programmes, to inform young people, in a balanced way, about the nature and impact of the conflict’.<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

NI presents an innovative and creative case study as to how history teaching might respond to deep societal conflict. This intervention has been led by history educators from its two main communities working together. The question to be asked is less about the issues this has raised and more about why, given a divided society, it has not generated a greater social debate. As popular engagement with the various centenary commemorations continues, history teaching must take the opportunity to demonstrate its worth to the lives of pupils, their families and their communities.

## Notes

1. B. Walker, *Dancing to History's Tune: History, Myth and Politics in Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, The Queens University of Belfast, 1996), 57–74.
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4. M. Smith, *Reckoning with the Past: Teaching History in Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005), 107–121.
5. Education and Training Inspectorate, *History Matters: Report on a Survey on the Extent to which the Teaching of History in Post-primary Schools Helps Prepare Young People to Live in Northern Ireland's Divided and Increasingly Pluralist Society* (Bangor, Department of Education, 2006).
6. See M. Conway, 'Identifying the Past: An Exploration of Teaching and Learning Sensitive Issues at Secondary School Level', *Educate* 4, no. 2 (2004); A. Kitson, 'History Education and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland'. In *Teaching the Violent Past: History Education and Reconciliation*, ed. E. Cole (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 123–153.
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18. *Ibid.*, 43.
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# 34

## Norway

Bente Aamotsbakken

### Introduction

Norway is located at the very northern edge of Europe, and the country has an important strategic position due to its expanse of coastline onto the North Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Furthermore, the country shares borders with Russia, Sweden and Finland, which brought about tensions on the border with the former Soviet Union. Nowadays the border is more-or-less open and free for passage without difficulties.

As a sparsely populated country with large oil reserves, Norway is an economic exception to its neighbouring countries and business partners. Unlike in other countries, the economic crises of recent years have left no traces in Norwegian society. Norway has, in a lot of surveys, been characterised as one of the best countries in the world in terms of living standard and social welfare.

Concerning the teaching of history in Norwegian schools, there is a significant difference between the teaching of world history and Norwegian history.<sup>1</sup> In the latter, the textbooks reveal a rather self-confident view of the nation with an emphasis on all the advantages of being a member of Norwegian society. As far as textbooks for school use are concerned, Norwegian authors tend to agree on how to present historical events. Conflicting opinions about textbooks are rare, but the history books published for a general audience are to some extent characterised by differences in view.

One factor behind the lack of conflicting views on the depiction of historical events is probably related to Norway's system of official certification of

textbooks.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Norway is one of the few countries in the world that has had an official system for the certification of textbooks, a system which had been in effect since 1860 but was abolished by the Norwegian Parliament in June 2000. This system implied that every textbook was subject to authorisation up to 2000.<sup>3</sup> Such a system might have had the consequence that authors and editors were forced to submit to certain controls regarding content, language and gender balance. It is to be assumed that such controls would lead to some conformity in mediation. The impact of this official certification system will be further dealt with in the section entitled 'Documentation'.

The most obvious conflict dealt with in history textbooks in the post-war period is related to the question of Norwegian membership of the European Community or later the European Union. There have been two referendums on this question, and on both occasions the Norwegian people have been divided. However, the majority in both referendums rejected joining the union, and today Norway is an associate member of the union via the so-called EEA cooperation. This means that Norway has to comply with most laws and regulations of the union but the country has no real influence on the policies and decisions made in Brussels. In other words, Norway contributes financially to the EU system, but Norwegian diplomats are kept at a distance in 'the corridor' and not allowed into the rooms where politics are being discussed.<sup>4</sup>

## Historical Background: The Norwegian Resistance to the EEC and the EU

Norway is the only nation in Europe that has twice turned down the possibility of becoming a member of the European Economic Community and later of the European Union. How can this resistance and lack of willingness be explained? One explanation could be related to the country's location on the outskirts of Europe. Norway has simply not had the same close relations to the continent as its neighbouring countries. Norway, with its long westerly coastline, has been oriented towards Great Britain and the US. Traditionally Great Britain has been Norway's ally in questions of security and warfare, and membership of NATO from 1949 strengthened its ties to the US even more. The US-led NATO alliance has guaranteed Norway's protection and security, and Norway's independence from the EU means that it is responsible for its own defence policies.<sup>5</sup>



The general trend in the Norwegian political discourse is consensus-oriented, which is reflected, for example, in school textbooks. There have been certain conflicts among authors of general history books related to questions concerning the German occupation of Norway, such as the deportation of Norwegian Jews to Germany and the role of the Norwegian police during the operation. However, these conflicts have not been analysed in detail in history textbooks for school use. Synne Correll's doctoral thesis 'Krigens ettertid: Okkupasjonshistorien i norske historiebøker' (*The Aftermath of the War: The History of Occupation in Norwegian History Books*) points out that historical nuances concerning the war are, in general, not addressed within the framework of ordinary history books.<sup>6</sup> If such nuances are neglected in the standard history books, it is no surprise that they should also not feature in textbooks published for school use. Even though history textbooks contain almost no traces of controversial themes, this does not mean that history education is one-dimensional. History didactics may compensate for the lack of controversial questions in the textbooks. The historian Harald Syse argues for a didactic method of history teaching which allows the students to compare different narratives of the war and reflect on them critically, instead of reproducing well-known knowledge.<sup>7</sup> One must also take into account that the conflicts among authors of general history books over the consequences of the German occupation and the fate of the Norwegian Jews are relatively recent. The decades after the war constitute a period of reconciliation and forgiving and a lot of heroic stories of Norwegian resistance were dealt with in great detail. Critical voices were rare and, especially in a school context, the picture of a peace-loving people eager to defend their country was typical. The textbooks consequently mediated a discourse characterised by reconciliation.

When it comes to the question of transferring sovereignty to supra-national institutions such as the EU, a focus on the historical background may shed light on the resistance on the part of the Norwegians. As a nation, Norway is relatively young and has only been a sovereign state since 1905. This fact may explain the Norwegian eagerness to defend their independence. The country has a long tradition of being a part of a union with its neighbouring countries such as Denmark and Sweden, and, consequently, many Norwegians used to fear that the country would once again be subject to a government located in a foreign country. During World War II this fear was nourished due to the German occupation from 1940 to 1945. The resistance against Hitler and the Nazi Party made many Norwegians even more conscious of the necessity to protect their national independence and their democracy.

## The Debate: Nationalism and Membership of the EU

### The Question of Independence and Identity

Since Norway has a history of being an underdog in unions with neighbouring countries and has only really been an independent nation since 1905, the question of national identity has been a frequently debated issue within history education, and society in general. In the 1972 referendum, 53.5 per cent voted not to join the EEC in spite of the fact that the Labour Party, the Conservative Party, the largest trade union (LO) and the major business organisations, including the biggest national newspapers, had been in favour of EEC membership for Norway. The resistance may have various explanations, but the negative result of the referendum may largely be related to issues of identity.

It has been claimed that economic interests of farmers and fishermen were the main reasons for the resistance.<sup>8</sup> These industries are primary industries with very long traditions. People in the countryside and along the coasts have for centuries based their lives on the income from these trades and industries. The importance of upholding these traditions is deeply rooted in people's consciousness and identity. In fact, these traditional industries could be said to constitute important roots of cultural identity and identification for Norwegians. Although modern Norway is a country whose biggest export commodity is oil, the industries referred to above are considered, by many Norwegians, to be significant industries in their country. National hymns and folk songs praise the simple and healthy way of life in the Norwegian countryside,<sup>9</sup> and the romantic notion of Norwegians as tough people capable of struggling with the forces of nature and surviving in a rough climate still prevails. This concept of what constitutes a Norwegian is also connected to the idea of self-determination and sovereignty. As mentioned above, after having had to struggle for independence from Denmark and later on from Sweden, many Norwegians felt that their freedom and sovereignty could be endangered by entering the European Union. The dominant opinion was that important issues should not be decided upon by the bureaucrats in Brussels but by elected Norwegians in the Norwegian Parliament.

However, the nation appeared to be divided into two camps after the first referendum in 1972, which makes it difficult to define a national cultural and political identity involving all Norwegians. It should not be forgotten that 46.5 per cent of Norwegians had voted in favour of membership and that

their arguments were, for instance, that Norway would benefit economically by becoming a member. Furthermore, people in favour of the union argued that membership for Norway meant a continuation of the traditional alliance policy and of the strong connection with countries in the western part of Europe.

If we look at the distribution of negative versus positive votes in this context, the resistance seemed to be tougher and more outspoken in rural districts than in urban areas. However, gender, educational background and profession also played an important role in the resistance against membership. The resistance was in fact stronger among women and young people, and among people with low levels of education who earned their living in the countryside. It is a fact, however, that the resistance movement could not have succeeded without a large number of votes also from the middle-aged, middle-class population in the capital and in other central cities in the eastern part of the country. These are the most densely populated areas in Norway, whereas the western and northern parts of the country are sparsely populated.

After 1972 and for the next 20 years, Norway moved from being a relatively modest economic power to having an oil-based economy with large resources and financial means. Relations with the other Nordic countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Finland had been strengthened through organisations like the Nordic Council. However, the general opinion seemed to change in favour of EU membership in these countries, and, in 1994, the Norwegian government decided to apply for membership together with Sweden, Finland and Austria. Referendums were held in all of these countries, and, whereas the Norwegian result was negative for the second time, the outcome in the other three countries was positive.<sup>10</sup> Those three countries therefore joined the union in 1995. In Norway the figures were approximately the same as in the previous referendum; 52 per cent voted against membership. This meant that Norway was left outside the union together with Iceland and had to cling to the so-called EEA agreement that was negotiated in 1992.<sup>11</sup>

Something must have happened to Norwegian questions of cultural and political identity in these 20 years or more. The debate was not as hostile during the second referendum, although the arguments on both sides in the conflict resembled those from 1972. One could argue that Norwegians must have become more globally oriented during these decades. The EU undoubtedly had proven itself as a keeper of the peace, and we are today experiencing the longest period of peace throughout Europe for centuries.<sup>12</sup> The fact that neighbouring countries such as Sweden and Finland were members presumably also had a positive effect; the hostilities between the rivalling parties in the

debate had lessened. However, the dividing lines were about the same as over 20 years ago, even though more than half of the participants in the referendum were new voters.

## Documentation

Even though there were other issues of importance on the political agenda, the question of Norway as a potential member of the European Community played a major part in the political debate in the decades from the 1970s to the 1990s. The question created new political alliances, led to the fall of governments, divided families and split friendships. A positive aspect of the question of membership for Norway was that it created a great political interest in large parts of the population. This interest was subject to discussion in history textbooks from the 1990s, but the focus was mainly on Norway's strategic position and questions connected to the Norwegian oil fortune. Instead of discussing potential problems connected to the fact that Norway was outside the EU, positive factors such as the following were stressed:

Denmark chose to become a member of the EU (EF) in 1972, and the country has since then contributed to the work of NATO as well as of the EU. Norway has also been able to participate in the discussion about the future of Europe owing to its NATO membership. When the Soviet Union was dissolved and no longer constituted a threat to world peace, the interest in NATO on the part of the Americans as well as of the Europeans decreased. Vital political questions were, from then on, often debated directly between the EU and the US and, in this context, Norway was left out.<sup>13</sup>

This quotation reveals Norway's position as an outsider after the referendum in 1994. The country could participate in some discussions on European affairs, but was in fact without any major influence as a direct dialogue was established between the US and Europe after the breakdown of the Soviet Union. What is surprising in the comments on and discussions of Norway's choice to remain outside the European Union is that there is almost no focus on the peace-keeping nature of the union.<sup>14</sup> The idea behind the establishment of the union was the wish for a peaceful Europe, whereas the discussion about a potential Norwegian membership has mainly been about economic questions and questions of security.

The period between the two referendums was 22 years, but the results were very similar: around 53 per cent against EU membership in 1972 and 52.2

per cent 22 years later in 1994. One textbook discusses this similarity in the following way:

The result was surprising if you relate it to the explanations for the 'no victory' in 1972. Since then a lot of changes had taken place at home and internationally, which one would assume would lead to a 'yes' majority. Many had, for example, assumed that peasants, fishermen, radical industrial workers, counter-cultures and nationalism had been decisive in 1972. But in the meantime the percentage of the population engaged in primary industries had decreased by half and the number of industrial workers had diminished drastically, support for the use of local dialects, teetotalism and low-church Christianity had also fallen. Furthermore, it has been a ruling opinion that 'traditionalism' of a different kind had been important in 1972. Since then, society has been substantially modernised in terms of the economy and lifestyle.<sup>15</sup>

The textbook lists a number of potential reasons to explain that the resistance to EU membership in 1972 equalled that of 1994. Since the social and political situation had undergone substantial changes in the period between the two referendums, other explanations than those valid in 1972 have to be sought in order to find a possible answer for the result in 1994.

The debate on the outcome of the two referendums has been dealt with in several other history textbooks for upper secondary school level, and one of the most popular textbooks offers this summary:

Why did Norway choose to take its own course in the EU question? It has been stressed that the word 'union' did not sound good in a country which had been in unions almost continuously for 525 years up to 1905. National sovereignty consequently played an important role in the minds of the Norwegian people. Another reason could be that the European Union was not an economic necessity for Norway. Since 1972 the oil wealth and official welfare policy had contributed to lower unemployment and fewer social differences than in most EU countries.<sup>16</sup>

We can see from the quotation that Norwegians are occupied with questions of independence and sovereignty and the fact that they can afford to stay 'on the outside'. Norway's economic, cultural and political independence seemed to play a crucial role in their national identity in both referendums. Another fact that also heavily influences Norwegian identity or the constitution of that identity lies in relations with neighbouring countries. For centuries, Norwegians have been engaged in questions of national identity.<sup>17</sup> As far as textbooks

are concerned, in those most frequently used over the last two decades, there are in fact no serious conflicts concerning the interpretation of the past, but rather a willingness to express a balanced view of the current situation with a population that is very much divided in its attitude towards the EU and potential membership. The lack of conflict related to history education or history textbooks is characteristic of Norwegian textbook authors; they are instructed by the official curricular documents to present balanced views. This suggests that the presentation of the questions on the EU and the possible impact on future Norwegian membership should contain facts, 'pro and con' arguments and tasks for the students to complete as well as suggested topics for class or group discussions. As mentioned earlier, Norway has had a national system for the certification of manuscripts written for school use since before World War II. After the war and especially since the 1970s, three factors have been subject to official certification; these are gender issues, language and content. This regulation was abandoned in 2000, and even editors in major publishing houses admitted that they 'missed' the opportunity of having their manuscripts reviewed more thoroughly. After 2000, history textbooks and textbooks written for other subjects have been the responsibility of the authors and the editors alone. One explanation for the lack of conflict in Norwegian history textbooks may be to do with the former certification system. Every potential author of history textbooks had to write within the framework of the system and the content was analysed with regard to didactical correctness and gender balance. Additionally, the linguistic level of the texts was examined with regard to understanding, choice of symbolic expression and transparency.

After the authorisation of textbooks was abolished in 2000, authors felt free to write in a more provocative manner and reveal their personal views in their argumentation. We might therefore expect differences in views on the EU question, and it could also be expected that the recent debate on the role of the Norwegian police during the war and the deportation of the Jews will be problematic in future history textbooks. It seems to be a tradition that history textbooks are conservative and slow to change. This may be the reason for the high degree of similarity between the textbooks.

A history textbook for upper secondary level, in fact the most frequently used book in Norwegian schools, has allowed extra space for what it calls 'The Norwegian resistance to the EU in a long view'. A quotation from this book could widen the perspective on the resistance even more:

Some special political and cultural aspects have contributed to increasing the distance to Europe. The deep conflict between the centre and the periphery in

Norwegian politics deserves special attention. In this context counter-cultures play an important role. In mountain areas and in the inner fjord regions to the south of Nordland where New Norwegian [referring to the language] and the liberal youth movement have proved to be strong, there is a basic scepticism against industrialisation, urban culture, modernisation and bureaucracy. The resistance to urban culture is strong among teetotallers and low-church Christians along the coast from Oslo to Trøndelag.<sup>18</sup>

The identity of 'war' or conflict among Norwegians in this textbook is discussed in more detail. One could argue that supporters of the minority language, New Norwegian, were as heterogeneous as any other group with special cultural interests. What is more to the point in this argumentation is the view on the centre-periphery issue. Even today Norwegians experience heated debates in the mass media over the transfer of money to sparsely populated areas in the distant parts of the country, 'distant' as seen from the areas around the capital Oslo. Even though Norway is looked upon as a country with a successful rural district policy, a policy maintaining industries and lively population centres all over the country, many voices in urban areas, where the political and economic power is concentrated, complain about the unjust distribution of taxpayers' money.

## Conclusion

There is consequently no simple, unified answer to the question of Norwegian identity and Norwegians rejection of membership of the European Union. Like any other country Norway is characterised by plurality with regard to culture, language, economy and education. It is no longer reasonable to expect to find clear dividing lines in matters of Norwegian connection to the European Union. One could say that Norwegians have become more globally oriented and less occupied with matters of national interest in recent years. However, in Norway, the population enjoys great wealth, a predictable health and welfare system and political stability. The country has not faced any serious conflicts apart from the Cold War in the post-war era and can enjoy peace and tranquillity on the outskirts of Europe. The country has to contribute to the financial system in the EU without having real influence, as stipulated by the EEA agreement, but in the name of political and cultural independence, this has so far been a decisive choice by Norwegian politicians.<sup>19</sup>



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3. *Ibid.*, 356.
4. Senter for Europarett, University of Oslo, *Democratic and Legal Problems in the European Community* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1994).
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8. O. K. Grimnes and B. Nøkleby, *Spor i tid. Norge etter 1850* [Traces in Time: Norway After 1850] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1995), 168 ff.
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10. *Tidslinjer 2, Verden og Norge: Historie Vg3*, [Time lines 2: The World and Norway: History Vg3] O. K. Grimnes et al. (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2008), 360 f.
11. A. D. Gjønnnes and S. Knutzon, *EØS-håndboken* [The EEA handbook] (Oslo: Universitetsforlage, 1995).
12. K. Sarastuen and A. Ystad, *Hva er EU?* [What is the EU?] (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1995).
13. O. K. Grimnes and B. Nøkleby, *Spor i tid*, 204 [author's translation].

14. One textbook published after the system of certification of textbooks was abolished argues, however, for the peace-keeping function of the EU: 'There is no doubt that the EU has contributed to secure peace, stability and economic growth in Western Europe ... Since it [the union] now includes major parts of Eastern Europe, it contributes to the promotion of economic growth as well as democratic development in the former communist states' (*Tidslinjer* 2, O. K. Grimnes et al., 362, author's translation).
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17. S. Lorentzen, 'Building a Nation: Stages in the Construction of National Identity in Norwegian History Textbooks'. In *Nordic Identities in Transition—as Reflected in Pedagogic Texts and Cultural Contexts*, ed. S. Selander and B. Aamotsbakken (Oslo: Novus Press, 2009), 261–282.
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# 35

## Pakistan

M. Ayaz Naseem

### Introduction

Since its inception as an independent nation state in 1947, Pakistan has made great progress in many areas. Over the years it has improved a number of key economic and social sectors and has created a number of institutions from scratch. While rapid development and improvement are visible in areas such as industry, finance, media, defence and so on, the same cannot be said for education. This sector has seen few gains and many losses. This can be attributed to relatively low rates of investment in this sector, falling enrolment rates, high dropout ratios, inadequate teacher training, a lopsided gender balance, lack of political will and patronage and a politically motivated agenda guiding curricular design and development. While successive governments have vowed to address what ails the educational system and have boasted about increased literacy rates, the situation on the ground does not support either the promises or the extensive claims.

According to the Constitution of Pakistan, education is the responsibility of individual provinces. Until 2010 it was on the list of subjects that were jointly administered by the federal and provincial governments. The federal government controlled finance (indirectly) and curriculum development (directly). The Curriculum Wing (CW) of the Federal Ministry of Education was the body responsible for curriculum development and for providing the provincial ministries of education with guidelines determining how textbooks, teaching guides and other materials were to be produced. According to the Ministry of Education website, one of the main aims of the CW was related to ‘directing any person or agency to delete, improve, or withdraw any

portion or whole of the curriculum, textbooks and reference material prescribed for any class being repugnant to Islamic Teaching and Ideology of Pakistan'.<sup>1</sup>

The rationale given for this arrangement was the desire to standardise textbooks all across the country. This quest to standardise the curricula has its roots in the requirements of nation building. The quest for standardisation can be seen as a quest to homogenise multiple cultures, ethnicities, languages and religions in accordance with the notion of a single nation and thus requires textbooks and therefore educational discourses to also conform.

## Historical Background

For the majority of students in Pakistan's state schools, textbooks are their primary source of knowledge. These books are often badly designed and badly produced. The quality of research leaves much to be desired. The data is frequently inaccurate and the texts are full of editorial mistakes. Prior to 1958 the curricula contained history, geography and civics as separate subjects. However, the military regime of Ayub Khan abolished history as a subject in its own right and introduced a new subject by the name of *Masharti Uloom* or social studies (for classes 3–8) and another subject by the name of *Mutala Pakistan* or Pakistan studies for classes 9–12.<sup>2</sup> Both these subjects are an amalgam of history, economics, civics and social studies.<sup>3</sup>

Combining history, geography and civics to form one subject effectively saves time and space and fuses the relations between citizens and the state by creating one umbrella subject under which to teach pupils.<sup>4</sup> A close look at the curriculum documents (CD) issued by the Curriculum Wing (CW) and at the textbooks that are prepared according to those documents shows that this amalgamation of subjects was not really an attempt to provide a multi-disciplinary perspective for pupils. Each area within both the CD and the textbooks is tightly compartmentalised and anything that does not fit anywhere else seems to be thrown in at random.<sup>5</sup> There also seems to be no attempt to provide an epistemological explanation of the amalgamation of these disciplines. No explanation of interlinkages, underlying factors or themes that might unite these areas is provided either. These texts simultaneously create and blur disciplinary boundaries with what Saigol terms 'a fragmented view of social reality ... [that] produces ... violent consciousness'.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that there is little difference between Urdu (language) and social studies curricula. The Urdu curricula, consisting of courses basi-

cally meant to impart knowledge of the pupils' first language, contain much the same content as the social studies texts.

## The Debate

There has been little public controversy with respect to the teaching of history or historical content in Pakistan. This should not be taken to mean that there is a consensus on this content. History textbooks (social studies/Pakistan studies) have come under scrutiny on previous occasions, for example in April and May 1992 when Professor Khurshed Kamal Aziz, a leading historian, published 11 articles on the discrepancies in the history taught in the state school system in Pakistan.<sup>7</sup> These articles later became the basis for Professor Aziz's ground-breaking book *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan*. As he writes in the preface to his book, he expected an outraged reaction from general readers, parents, teachers, policymakers, legislators, and textbook authors and the textbook board authorities. However, according to him, 'what actually happened did not amount to more than a whisper'.<sup>8</sup> There was minimal reaction from parents, no response from the authors or the textbook board authorities and virtually no reaction from the political and education decision makers. This led Professor Aziz to comment, '[N]ow I knew that Pakistani legislators don't read newspapers or, if they do, don't attach any importance to their content'.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to this apathetic behaviour by some sections of civil society, the intelligentsia and the academic community in Pakistan reacted differently. As a result of Professor Aziz's work, there has subsequently been serious academic scrutiny of history (social/Pakistan studies) textbooks in Pakistan. These include studies by scholars associated with the influential think tank Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)<sup>10</sup> that are impressive works on gender and education discourses in Pakistan,<sup>11</sup> and studies on militaristic identities portrayed in the textbooks.<sup>12</sup>

The research into history textbooks that followed in the wake of Professor Aziz's seminal work covered many of the controversial aspects of history teaching in Pakistan. These included the controversy over the 'demand' for the history of Pakistan's formation to be taught, the manipulation of the historical record regarding certain major personalities in the Pakistan movement (especially the *ulemas* [religious leaders/scholars] and female leadership), the secession of East Pakistan, the militarising potential of the textbooks, gender dynamics in the textbooks and so on. Since the focus of this volume is contro-

versies over history, I will confine the discussion in this chapter to three aspects that generated public discourses of various intensities in Pakistan.

The first of the controversies concerned what is popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution. All Pakistanis are taught that the 'idea' of Pakistan as a separate homeland for the Muslims of India has its genesis and articulation in the resolution presented and adopted at the Lahore session of the Muslim League held at Minto Park from 22 to 24 March 1940. The date 23 March has since been designated as an important day and a public holiday in Pakistan. Aziz, through his meticulous analysis of a large number of textbooks, has shown the fallacy of such claims. After listing each and every book that makes similar or related claims, Aziz writes: '(1) It was not the Pakistan Resolution but the Lahore Resolution ... (4) It was not passed on 23 March but on 24 March. (5) It did not demand *an* independent state; the word "State" was used in the plural'.<sup>13</sup> Aziz continues: 'the resolution is so clumsily drafted that in the opinion of some careful scholars it is debatable whether it demanded independent status or suggested some kind of a confederation between the Indian state and the Muslim "States"'.<sup>14</sup> Cambridge historian Ayesha Jalal<sup>15</sup> also takes a similar stance with respect to Jinnah's<sup>16</sup> real intentions. The debate over this issue is ongoing. The leading scholar, journalist and publisher Najam Sethi also addressed it on 14 March 2012 on the leading national TV channel GEO. Notwithstanding the many research publications, articles, op-ed pieces and TV programmes surrounding the issue, the mistakes pointed out above have not been rectified and still appear in almost all textbooks at all levels in Pakistan. While the debate over the exact date that the resolution was adopted is rather academic, the issue of whether the leadership of the All-India Muslim League envisaged a separate state for the Muslims of India has significant bearings on how the people of Pakistan understand their historic reality, their 'self' and identity.

A second issue on which the textbooks prescribed for all levels of state education in Pakistan create a misleading master narrative is the events surrounding the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. At the time of its creation in August 1947, Pakistan was comprised of two wings, East and West Pakistan, separated by a thousand miles of Indian landmass. The two wings were not only separated by geographical distance but also by differences in culture, language and history. Perhaps the only thing that the people of East and West Pakistan had in common was their religion (Islam). The political elite in West Pakistan imposed an alien language (Urdu) on a people that had historically defined itself through its language (Bengali) and culture. The West Pakistan elite also deprived the East Pakistanis of their rightful share in the federal government, in the civil services of Pakistan, in the armed forces and of resources. The

result was an alienated people that formed protest movements throughout the 1960s and which had descended into civil war by 1970. The Pakistani army was sent by the political leadership in West Pakistan to quell the civil war but was unable to do so. East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan in 1971 and became the independent state of Bangladesh.

The historical version presented in the textbooks portrays a distorted picture of the events surrounding the secession of East Pakistan. Aziz summarises the resultant narrative according to almost all textbooks at all levels as follows:

[I]t was imprudent and mischievous of the people of East Pakistan to oppose Urdu as the national language; the Hindu population of East Pakistan was disloyal; there were internal enemies who conspired against the country; India engineered riots in East Pakistan through her agents; when conditions were ripe, India invaded East Pakistan from all four sides, and the Pakistani army had to surrender; East Pakistan became Bangladesh.<sup>17</sup>

An examination of history textbooks in Pakistan also reveals the glaring exclusion of Bengalis from the texts on the Pakistan movement and the history of Pakistan before 1971.<sup>18</sup> This exclusionary articulation successfully erases Bengal and Bengalis from the national consciousness. In interviews that I conducted with pupils, it became apparent that the pupils' knowledge of Bengal, East Pakistan and the Bengalis was limited. They could only articulate ideas about former East Pakistan involving Indian aggression and the treachery and betrayal of Bengalis. The master narrative that is propagated by the textbooks is in consonance with the official historical narrative in Pakistan. This narrative is based on the need to justify the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims of India on the basis of religion. It is also based on the need to negate the fact that the West Pakistani elite (and by association the people) treated the people of East Pakistan unfairly and undemocratically.<sup>19</sup>

The need to perpetuate the master narrative is also visible in the way that the texts distort history through various exclusions and inclusions. For example, the inclusion in the narrative of Pakistan as a separate homeland for the Muslims of India on religious grounds and the role of the *ulema*<sup>20</sup> in the Pakistan movement is a classic case of a distortion supported by the official historical discourse. It is a well-known fact that the *ulema* were vehemently opposed to the creation of Pakistan on the grounds that such a course of action was aimed at dividing the Muslims of India. The social studies and Urdu textbooks, consonant with the discourse of 'religiopoly', describe the role of the *ulema* in two ways. While most of the textbooks from the pre-Zia era



do not mention that most *ulema* were against the creation of Pakistan, those written and produced during the Zia period claim that the *ulema* were as much a part of the Pakistan movement as the nationalist leadership.<sup>21</sup> One text goes so far as to include Maulana Maudoodi and Maulana Mahmud Hasan in the list of founders of Pakistan.<sup>22</sup> Both of these religious leaders were very much against the creation of Pakistan.

Another issue raised by an examination of textbooks is that of the underrepresentation or omission of minorities in Pakistan. A general reading of the texts gives the clear impression that there are no minorities in Pakistan. For instance, in all chapters on the population of Pakistan in social studies texts, population statistics and their explanations are given in whole numbers.<sup>23</sup> No breakdown of the minority populations in Pakistan is ever mentioned. While the Christian minority might get an occasional mention in the explanation, the Hindu minority never makes an appearance. The texts only allude to minorities such as Parsis, Bohras, Khojas and Memons in the context of their support for the Pakistan movement. The texts even fail to mention that Jinnah himself belonged to the minority Khoja community. Sections on prominent personalities (*mashaheer*) do not include personalities such as Justices Cornelius and Dorab Patel, Sir Zafarullah Khan (the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan, who belonged to the Qadiani or Ahmadi minority declared non-Muslim by Bhutto) or even the Nobel Laureate Dr Abdus Salam (also a Qadiani).<sup>24</sup> Similarly, the ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities belonging to other sects of Islam, such as the Shias and Ismailis, are not mentioned at all, effectively excluding them from the national narrative. The overall picture that the texts paint is that of a homogeneous population.

Finally, an issue that has been the subject of wider controversy with respect to Pakistani history textbooks is that of the underrepresentation of women in Pakistan. Women are grossly underrepresented in the historical narrative presented to students.<sup>25</sup> A total of five female religious or national figures are presented as role models to pupils in eight textbooks (ten including the experimental readers for class three in the federal area) during eight years of education. In each of these cases, the female figures in Islamic and Pakistani history are introduced to students as mere cohorts or appendages of male religious and nationalist leaders. Other women who are mentioned in the texts are either from the Prophet's family (Ayisha, Zainab, etc.) or were active in the nationalist movement that led to the creation of Pakistan. In both cases the frequency of their appearance in the texts is conspicuously low. This is especially true of women in nationalist leadership roles. Apart from Fatima Jinnah, there are scattered, and passing, references to a few others such as Lady Noon. It is interesting to note that two women leaders who were active during and

after the nationalist movement and who worked resolutely for the women of Pakistan both within the legislature and outside it, namely Begum Jahan Ara Shahnawaz and Begum Shaista Ikramullah, are totally excluded from the texts. During the interviews that I conducted with pupils from state schools in Pakistan, I asked them if they knew of either of these ladies and, not surprisingly, the answer was always negative.

## Conclusion

The relative lack of a vigorous public debate<sup>26</sup> concerning the glaring inconsistencies in the historical discourse as presented by the history (social studies/ Pakistan studies) textbooks prescribed for state education in Pakistan highlights how well entrenched the official historical discourse is in Pakistan. At the same time, an examination of the textbooks from the last three curricular reforms in Pakistan also shows that the issues highlighted by critical elements in civil society and among the intelligentsia, and the resultant demands for changes in the curricula and textbooks, have brought about significant changes in textual materials. For example, while the historical records of the demand for Pakistan's foundation, the Pakistan movement and Pakistan's dismemberment in 1971 remain almost unchanged, the representation of women has increased in textual materials, and the amount of radical and militarising material in the textbooks has decreased (based on a comparison of textbooks from the 2002, 2005 and 2012 reforms).

## Notes

1. Ministry of Education, accessed 27 May 2017, <http://www.moent.gov.pk/>.
2. K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan*. (Lahore: Vanguard Publishers, 1993).
3. Ibid.
4. R. Saigol, *Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan* (Lahore, Pakistan: ASR Publications, 1995), 208.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. An earlier work in this respect is P. Hoodbhoy and A. Nayyar, 'Rewriting the History of Pakistan'. In *Islam, Pakistan and the State: The Pakistan Experience*, ed. A. Khan (London: Zed Books, 1985).
8. K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History*, xi.
9. Ibid., xiii.

10. A. Nayyar and A. Salim, eds., *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks In Pakistan, Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics* (Islamabad: SDPI, 2003).
11. R. Saigol, *Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan* (Lahore, Pakistan: ASR Publications, 1995); M. A. Naseem, *Education and Gendered Citizenship In Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
12. See, for example, M. A. Naseem and R. Ghosh, 'Construction of the "Other" in History Textbooks in India and Pakistan'. In *Interculturalism, Society and Education*, G. Pampanini et al. (Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei: Sense Publishers, 2010); M. A. Naseem, 'Construction of Militaristic Identities in Pakistani Textbooks'. In *Shaping a Nation: An Examination of Education In Pakistan*, ed. S. M. Lyon and I. R. Edgar (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009); M. A. Naseem, 'Allah, America and the Army: Impact of the US Involvement in South Asia on Pakistan's Educational Policy'. In *By the Dawn's Early Light: American Post-Conflict Educational Reconstruction From The Spanish-American War to Iraq*, ed. N. Sobe (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
13. K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History*, 146.
14. Ibid.
15. A. Jalal, 'The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
16. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a lawyer, politician and the founder of Pakistan. From 1913 until Pakistan's independence in 1947, Jinnah served as leader of the All-India Muslim League and then as Pakistan's first Governor-General until his death in 1948.
17. K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History*, 154.
18. P. Hoodbhoy and A. Nayyar, 'Rewriting the History of Pakistan'; K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History*; R. Saigol, *Knowledge and Identity*.
19. For a contrasting account of the events surrounding the secession of East Pakistan in Pakistani and Bangladeshi textbooks and educational discourses, see: M. Hussain, 'What Do School Books In Bangladesh and Pakistan Say About 1971 War?', *DAWN*, 16 December 2010; H. Imtiaz, 'Fall of East Pakistan', *DAWN*, 16 December 2010.
20. A body of Muslim scholars with specialist knowledge of Islamic sacred law and theology. Religious teachers of the Islamic community, theologians, canon lawyers, judges, professors and high state religious officials frequently come from this class. *Ulema* may also refer to a council of learned men holding government appointments in a Muslim state.
21. The text lists selected *ulema* who were not at the political forefront during the Pakistan movement. Those listed include Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, Maulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni, Maulana Zafar Ahmad Usmani and Hafiz Kifayat Hussain (Punjab Textbook Board (2002). *Urdu* for class eight. Lahore: Izhar Sons, 152). The text fails to

mention that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a staunch Congressite and that Maulana Maudoodi was the head of an influential religio-political party vehemently opposing the idea of Pakistan.

22. *Masharti Uloom (Lazmi)* [Social Studies—compulsory] Cited in K. K. Aziz, *The Murder of History*, 88.
23. See Punjab Textbook Board. *Social Studies* for class four. Lahore: Izhar Sons, 2002; Punjab Textbook Board. *Social Studies* for class five. Lahore: Izhar Sons, 2002; Punjab Textbook Board. *Social Studies* for class six. Lahore: Izhar Sons, 2002.
24. The text also omits the services of the Parsi and Memon communities in the cause of the independence movement. It is a documented fact that these were the first communities who were asked by Jinnah to move their successful businesses from Bombay to Karachi even before Pakistan came into being (for details see the analysis by Venkataramani (1986) based on declassified State Department documents).
25. M. A. Naseem, *Education and Gendered Citizenship in Pakistan* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Also see R. Saigol, *Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan* (Lahore, Pakistan: ASR Publications, 1995).
26. There are two controversies related to textbooks in Pakistan that, though important, are not included in this chapter because they did not involve history textbooks. The first of these was the controversy in the early 2000s when the then opposition coalition Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) protested inside and outside the parliament over the removal of two Jihad-related Hadith from biology textbooks. The opposition coalition at one point threatened to walk out of the parliament if the deleted Hadith were not restored and if the Minister of Education did not apologise. The issue was resolved when their demands were met.

The second ‘controversy’, popularly known as the Northern Areas/Gilgit-Baltistan textbook ‘controversy’, arose over the content of *Islamiyat* (Islamic Studies) textbooks introduced in the state school system of the Northern Areas (now the province of Gilgit-Baltistan) in 2000 by the Federal Ministry of Education. The content of the textbooks was deemed offensive by the Shi’ite community. Violent clashes broke out between the Shi’ite and the Sunni communities and carried on intermittently until 2005. Although textbooks were the most immediate catalyst of the controversy and the violence that ensued, most scholars are of the view that the larger national, regional and international political and geopolitical dynamics provided the cause (see, e.g. N. Ali, ‘Outrageous State, Sectarianized Citizens: Deconstructing the “Textbook Controversy” in the Northern Areas, Pakistan’, *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 2 (2008)). See also: G. Stöber, ‘Religious Identities Provoked: The Gilgit “Textbook Controversy” and its Conflictual Context’, *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29 (2007), 389–411.

## Further Reading

- Ali, N. 'Outrageous State, Sectarianized Citizens: Deconstructing the "Textbook Controversy" in the Northern Areas, Pakistan'. *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 2 (2008).
- Aziz, K. K. *The Murder of History: A Critique of History Textbooks Used in Pakistan*. Lahore: Vanguard Publishers, 1993.
- Nayyar, A., and A. Salim, eds. *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks In Pakistan, Urdu, English, Social Studies and Civics*. Islamabad: SDPI, 2003.
- Saigol, R. *Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Educational Discourse in Pakistan*. Lahore, Pakistan: ASR Publications, 1996.
- Stöber, G. 'Religious Identities Provoked: The Gilgit "Textbook Controversy" and Its Conflictual Context'. *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 29 (2007), 389–411.

# 36

## Palestine

Samira Alayan

### Introduction

This chapter examines the textbooks published by the Palestinian Authority (PA), their foci and the processes they have undergone through the years. It does so from both an educational and a pedagogical perspective, rather than from a historical one. When examining textbooks, especially history textbooks, compiled and published by the Palestinian Authority, a discernible attempt becomes clear to use the influential vehicle of school textbooks to construct and to maintain a Palestinian national identity, a collective identity, for the people of Palestine. These textbooks not only attempt to relate historic events; they also shape the collective Palestinian memory.

Before showing how influential textbooks are on the collective identity of Palestinian students and on the construction of a national identity, I will give some historical background on these textbooks. The Palestinian Ministry of Education was assigned the task of supervising and approving textbooks written by a special committee, after the Palestinians and Israelis signed the Oslo Accords in 1993/1994. Between the end of the 1948 war and 1967, Palestinian education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was under the respective auspices of Jordan and Egypt. During that time Palestinian pupils used textbooks that were produced according to Jordanian and Egyptian educational objectives and goals. After the 1967 war the Israeli military authority assumed control over the Palestinian education system but the same Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks continued to be used in Palestinian schools, and they were censored by the Israeli military education commander.<sup>1</sup>

After the Oslo Accords in 1993/1994 and the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), responsibility for education in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem was handed to the PA.<sup>2</sup> The PA created a curriculum development centre tasked with writing a new Palestinian curriculum to replace the Jordanian and Egyptian curricula. The committee working on the first Palestinian curriculum faced many issues, which were expressed in questions from one of the committee members, Professor Ali Jarbawi: What Palestine do we teach? How do we view Israel? What borders should we mention in the books? These issues sat alongside other important questions related to Palestinian identity.<sup>3</sup> In spite of all these questions and challenges, the Palestinian Ministry of Education managed to write a new curriculum and to add material pertaining to Palestine to existing textbooks. They also started simultaneously to write their own complete textbooks, and to take responsibility for their content, at the beginning of the academic year 2000/2001.

## Background

If we look closely at the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its impact on the curriculum and textbooks of both sides, we can see that they are structurally similar to other states involved in conflict, each attempting to highlight their own narrative while marginalising, rebutting or denying the narrative of the 'other'.<sup>4</sup> This is why children who grow up during times of war and conflict are usually familiar only with the narrative of their own group. When it comes to textbooks, this practice is characterised by an attempt to strengthen the national identity of students in opposition to the 'enemy'.<sup>5</sup>

Since the 1993 Oslo Accords, which led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, debates have evolved surrounding teaching in the Palestinian territories and how it could 'serve the peace process'.<sup>6</sup> The new Palestinian Ministry of Education took control, in 1994, of a failing education system that had been so badly neglected during the Israeli occupation that it was close to collapse. There was a shortage of classrooms and qualified teachers, some of the buildings were unsafe or so small that the students had to study in shifts. Facilities, teaching aids, technical equipment, libraries and laboratories were scarce and generally inadequate, and there were no original Palestinian textbooks. As mentioned earlier, textbooks were imported from Jordan (for students in the West Bank) and Egypt (for students in the Gaza Strip), where any reference to a Palestinian national identity was censored.<sup>7</sup>

As a first step, the Ministry put in place an emergency plan to stop the education system from collapsing and dedicated its first year to studying the



educational reality and to formulating new plans to reverse the downward trend and to reform and upgrade the system.

One of the most serious challenges confronted by the Ministry of Education was the fact that two different educational systems were in place, one in the West Bank and the other in the Gaza Strip. Political borders separating the two geographical areas added to the problem. The Ministry immediately took steps to harmonise the two systems and bridge the gaps. Basic compulsory education was unified up to year 10, and the procedures for school matriculation or the final examination known as the *Tawjihi* were also standardised.<sup>8</sup>

Today, formal education in the area under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority comprises primary education (years 1–10) and secondary education including the foundations for both academic and vocational education (years 11–12). In order to prevent the system from collapsing and to set in motion a process of improvement and reform, the newly created Ministry of Education immediately embarked on a series of initiatives made possible by local assistance and that of the international community. Since 1994, new schools have been built, facilities improved, classrooms renovated, new teachers trained and qualification processes upgraded (teachers now need a bachelor's degree in order to qualify), and the number of students enrolled in government schools has subsequently increased.

A curriculum development centre (CDC) team, led by Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, started the process of reform between October 1995 and September 1996, working as a 'semi-independent operation'. Abu-Lughod kept the PA and its Ministry of Education at bay by emphasising that 'his mandate was actually conferred upon him by UNESCO'.<sup>9</sup> The centre was established in October 1995 with technical assistance from UNESCO. The national curriculum followed a concept that sees the curriculum as a matrix of goals, contents, teaching methods and evaluation methods set to attain an integrated improvement of the educational system.<sup>10</sup> In 2000 the PA started introducing Palestinian textbooks, and by 2006 all classes were being taught from locally produced textbooks instead of those from Jordan and Egypt.<sup>11</sup>

Contestation and tensions were present throughout the development of the new curriculum, and by 1996 conflict had already arisen between secular-national and Islamic standpoints.<sup>12</sup> Nathan Brown points out that the textbooks' representation of Palestinian identity is not the outcome 'of a single, comprehensive view of Palestinian identity but of competing (and sometimes conflicting) views' between 'reformist' and Islamist visions.<sup>13</sup>

Since 2006 these new textbooks have been the subject of debates surrounding issues on two main levels. The first was at an internal level, and concerned

claims by some institutions that the new curriculum did not live up to the expectations and national-historical perceptions of the Palestinians. The second was at an international level; Israel argued to the international community that the new textbooks were aggressive and that they encouraged violence. One such external organisation is the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education,<sup>14</sup> which reached the conclusion that the Palestinian Authority schoolbooks:

- Delegitimise the Jewish and Israeli 'other' by denying the historical and religious presence of Jews in Palestine and practising non-recognition of the State of Israel
- Demonise the 'other' by ascribing dubious and nefarious characteristics to Jews (never portrayed as individuals) and the State of Israel
- Present a biased view of the Middle Eastern conflict by assigning Israel exclusive blame and absolving the Palestinians of any responsibility for it
- Stress the ideal of a violent struggle of liberation rather than advocating the ideal of a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>15</sup>

These allegations were directed towards non-Palestinian donors who funded the publishing of the textbooks.<sup>16</sup>

The main points of controversy between Palestinian and Israeli scholars and politicians regarding the new Palestinian textbooks were the mention of Palestinian cities occupied in 1948 by the State of Israel (Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, etc.), the mention of Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital and the denial of a historical Jewish presence in the Middle East and in the Holy Land in particular. Moughrabi found in his research that the claim that the new Palestinian textbooks incited students against Israel has been widely accepted as truth in the United States and Israel, although such claims were largely based on comments from, and subsequently publicised by, CMIP,<sup>17</sup> a Jewish-American organisation with known links to the Israeli settlement movement in the West Bank. None of the organisations or Western donors who hastily cut their funding for Palestinian textbook development checked the claims made in the CMIP reports against the actual texts.<sup>18</sup>

## Palestinian Textbooks

In Palestine, debate has arisen recently regarding the content of the textbooks and the extent to which they convey modern values such as human rights, equality, freedom and good governance. On another level, debates have been led

by institutes or organisations that support historical Israeli allegations that history textbooks are biased and refuse to adopt another historical point of view.<sup>19</sup>

Two major elements continue to influence the publishing process behind Palestinian textbooks. The first is the close supervision exercised by those attempting to affect the production of these textbooks and the continuous criticism expressed by them. This includes attempts to reduce the status of Palestinian national identity and to include positive references to the existence of the State of Israel (the latter, Israeli critics claim, does not exist in official Palestinian textbooks). The second element concerns the ongoing factors influencing the willingness of external funders and donors to print these textbooks.

Internal Palestinian arguments surrounding the textbooks have raised further issues such as the omission of references to the 'right of return' and the situation of exiled Palestinians. Another issue has been the idea of writing a curriculum under Israeli occupation that not only overcomes political conditions but cultural and geographical conditions as well.

In the same context, it was not only the textbooks published under the conditions of the Oslo agreement that were open to question, but the agreement itself, because 'it [the Oslo agreement] has done more harm to national identity than the occupation itself.'<sup>20</sup> In addition, Wissam Rafeedi, a social studies expert at Birzeit University, stated, in her article in the *Al-haq Alawda* news, that the curriculum itself should be rewritten at a national level as a first step towards repairing the damage done to national identity.<sup>21</sup>

The main arguments in the debate surrounding Palestinian textbooks have traditionally revolved around the PA and its commitment to the Oslo Accords and the conditions imposed by the international community, as well as the PA's own ideas regarding the conflict with Israel. Another side of the textbook argument was raised in a special report by Aljazeera on Palestinian education and concerns the limited information included in textbooks on the 'Nakba' (Palestinian catastrophe) or the war of 1948, which led Palestinians to lose the coastal plain cities and 78 per cent of what they now call 'historical Palestine'. This deficit caused many Palestinians to demand the addition of more detailed information about the 'Nakba', as well as the Palestinian right of return and the Palestinian relationship to Jerusalem, which they consider their capital.<sup>22</sup>

In response to these demands, the Palestinian Ministry of Education declared that some issues would be off the agenda until political solutions were found. They also attributed the lack of certain historical information, especially in the new history textbooks, to the intervention of donors and sponsors and to the pressure exerted by Israel at an international level to prevent the PA from delivering 'the whole message'.<sup>23</sup>

## References to Conflict, Peace and Identity in Palestinian Textbooks

Palestinian history textbooks have been analysed by historians and scholars for some years now, and most of them agree that these books are selective and that they serve the specific purpose of 'the peace process'.<sup>24</sup> It has also been argued that there is little to no evidence of collective memory in these textbooks. This point can be illustrated by some examples from the textbooks themselves.<sup>25</sup>

If we look at the history textbook for year 11, part 1, we can see that the war of 1948 is mentioned as 'The Arab-Israeli war',<sup>26</sup> although in the Palestinian collective memory, it was never presented this way, firstly because matters such as the expulsion of Palestinians and the acquisition of the lands by Zionists had started before there was a state called Israel<sup>27</sup> and also because this war is perceived by the Palestinian public to have been between Palestinians who were forcibly exiled from their lands and the 'Zionist groups' that expelled them.<sup>28</sup>

Staying with the same year 11 history textbook,<sup>29</sup> the adoption of the word 'Israel' indicates an inconsistency between the policy reflected in the textbooks and the historic Palestinian master narrative, because the acceptance of Israel as a state is still controversial within Palestinian society and within Palestinian collective memory. However, despite the controversy surrounding the use of the name, my research found reference to 'Israel' in texts and on maps in other Palestinian history textbooks.<sup>30</sup> These findings indicate that Palestinians do indeed recognise the 1967 borders drawn according to the Oslo Accords and do not deny the existence of the Israeli state. Furthermore, I have found in my previous research that Palestinian textbooks also recognise the historic existence of Jews in the historical land of Palestine. It is worth noting that several textbooks include chapters addressing Jewish history. The 'conflict', according to these books, is between the Palestinians and the Zionist movement; there is no conflict between Muslim Palestinians and the Jewish religion or with the Jews in general. Therefore, textbooks use the term 'Zionist' and not 'Jewish' when referring to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned above, the fact that the PA's Ministry of Education closely supervised the textbooks' creation is apparent in many parts of the books. Their influence mostly manifests itself in a rather superficial and undetailed representation of past and current events in the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian reality. For instance, such perfunctory reference is made to the

Oslo Accords that it is not possible for students to understand the whole picture. Moreover, there is an obvious lack of information and explanation regarding Jerusalem and its role as the 'nation's capital' from the point of view of the Palestinians, especially regarding settlement in the holy city.<sup>32</sup> This demonstrates that Jerusalem still remains a problematic issue for the PA, due to the gulf between the narratives of the Palestinian people and what can be achieved by negotiations between the PA and Israel.

Internally, further arguments were raised about the 'unanimous discourse' in the textbooks, which give barely any (or in some cases no) information about the existence of different political parties or of factions that exist within the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) itself, which gives the impression that 'history is not being taught for the whole of Palestine, but just for one group'.<sup>33</sup>

Prior to 2008, additional textbooks were printed by private research centres in an attempt to intervene in historical and national education.<sup>34</sup> Their aim was to fill certain gaps in historical and national information in formal textbooks, and many conferences were held to discuss certain delicate issues where consensus is lacking between the Palestinian narrative and the Palestinian vision.<sup>35</sup>

Nowadays, the debate revolves around matching the PA's vision with the Palestinian narrative, their collective memory and history on one hand, and their political discourse and political behaviour, which until now have been considered controversial, on the other. The current textbooks are hardly satisfactory from either a national or an educational point of view. They display signs of direct censorship by those who finance these textbooks and are most probably subject to indirect Israeli censorship, which creates a situation where the history the Palestinians want to teach does not correspond with the history that Israel and the donors want Palestinians to be teaching. These include differences in content and stern conditions proposed by Israel in order to lessen Palestinian attachment to 'historical Palestine' over the course of the next few generations.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the challenges and dilemmas confronting the Palestinian Authority when writing textbooks. These dilemmas cause a state of internal conflict for Palestinians in which they must confront the Palestinian identity and collective memory and its subsequent portrayal in these textbooks. There is, however, also external conflict with issues relating to the Israeli occupation as well as with external financial support and other

politically significant elements, which limit the books' ability to present facts that both correspond to the prevailing Palestinian vision and satisfy the Palestinian public for whom these textbooks are written.

There was great debate surrounding the Palestinian textbooks when they were first published and many scholars have studied them. A great number of those scholars were critical of the books, and some even asserted that the books, especially those for history, lacked liberal or modern thought. There were claims of omissions that needed to be rectified, such as references to one religion (Islam) to the near-exclusion of other religions, factors which can influence the Palestinian national identity.<sup>36</sup>

However, one should also note that these textbooks have been able to deal effectively with many historical aspects and narratives, except those relating to their own history, because the Palestinian curriculum has been designed to serve the needs of the government of the PA and its agenda, not the greater Palestinian narrative as a whole. Furthermore, the history textbooks have been accompanied by controversy. On the one hand, these textbooks, written under occupation and in times of conflict, acknowledge the existence of an Israeli 'other' and have been designed to further the peace process, to a certain extent. However, they also fail to acknowledge present historical events or to present any alternative information related to the history of Palestine. In spite of the multiple perspectives in existence, only one interpretation is included in these books.<sup>37</sup>

Palestinian textbooks therefore exemplify claims made by many scholars that textbooks written in countries in a state of ongoing conflict rarely demonstrate objectivity. Both Palestine and Israel use this important tool in order to present what they each see as a just and balanced narrative.<sup>38</sup>

## Notes

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10. Ibid.
11. S. Alayan, 'History Curricula and Textbooks in Palestine', 209–236.
12. A. E. Mazawi, 'Which Palestine Should we Teach?'
13. N. Brown, 'Genesis of a New Curriculum'. In *Teaching Islam: Textbooks and Religion in the Middle East*, ed. E. A. Doumato and G. Starrett (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 125–138.
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15. A. Groiss, 'Palestinian Schoolbooks: An Updated Conclusion', *Israel Behind The News*, October 29, 2009, accessed 9 July 2017, <http://israelbehindthe-news.com/palestinian-schoolbooks-an-updated-conclusion/6194/>.
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25. S. Alayan, 'The Holocaust in Palestinian Textbooks: Differences and Similarities in Israel and Palestine'. *Comparative Education Review*, 60, no. 1, (2016), 80–104.
26. *Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Eleventh Grade.Pt. 1*. Ta'areekh Falastin al-Hadith wal-Mu'asser (State of Palestine: Ministry of Culture and Higher Education of the Palestinian Authority, 1st ed., 2005) 33.
27. M. Peled, *The General's Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine* (Charlottesville: Just World Books, 2010).
28. *Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Eleventh Grade.Pt. 1*. 33.
29. The writer chose year 11 textbooks for examples of handling 'the other' which, historically, is Israel. History textbooks for younger pupils (starting in year 5) do not address subjects such as the 'Nakba' or recent Palestinian history.
30. S. Alayan, 'History Curricula and Textbooks in Palestine', 209–236.
31. *Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Eleventh Grade.Pt. 2*. Ta'areekh Falastin al-Hadith wal-Mu'asser (State of Palestine: Ministry of Culture and Higher Education of the Palestinian Authority, 2nd ed., 2006), 35–36.
32. Ibid., 63.
33. Interview with Curriculum and Education Specialist Tahseen Yaqeen.
34. Al-Buraq research centre used to print a 'national education' textbook, due to the absence of any 'other narrative than [that of] the PA' in textbooks, and it

- was taught in Palestinian schools until 2008, when the Israeli army closed the centre. Printing was then exclusively carried out by the Ministry of Education.
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  36. N. Brown, 'Democracy, history, and the contest over the Palestinian curriculum'. In *Contested Past, Disputed Present: Curricula and Teaching in Israeli and Palestinian Schools* (= Studien zur internationalen Schulbuchforschung: Schriftenreihe des Georg-Eckert-Instituts, 110), ed. F. Pingel (Hanover: Hahn, 2003); N. Brown, 'Genesis of a new curriculum'; A. E. Mazawi, 'Which Palestine Should we Teach?'
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# 37

## Poland

Joanna Wojdon

### Introduction

In the view of Paweł Machcewicz,<sup>1</sup> the legacy of communism and the attitudes shown by the Poles during the Second World War are the most controversial issues debated by Polish historians in the early years of the twenty-first century. The fiercest debates have been ignited by three sources of input: the activities of the Institute of National Remembrance, which holds archives of the documents produced by Poland's communist secret service and conducts research on the post-1939 history of Poland from an openly anti-communist perspective; the books of Jan Tomasz Gross on Polish participation in the Holocaust; and the ideas behind the historical museums commemorating these events, some of which have opened (the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk), while others are still more or less advanced projects (the Museum of Recovered Territories in Wrocław, the Museum of the History of Poland and the Second World War Museum). This chapter will focus on those aspects of debates that found reflection in history education at Polish schools.

### Historical Background

The collapse of the communist regime in Poland was a process rather than a single event, both in political life and in school history education. Significant changes had already taken place in school curricula and textbooks in the

1980s as a result of the activities of the Solidarity movement. At this time, the main decision-making body in the field of education was still the Polish United Workers' (i.e., communist) Party; it controlled, among other institutions, the state publishing house Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, which continued to hold the monopoly in textbook publishing and played a crucial role in the process not only of creating but also of approving textbooks, nominating reviewers who recommended textbooks for official ministerial approval and even employing its own censor.<sup>2</sup> At this point, the previously active core team of textbook authors had not yet changed. All this notwithstanding, the results of negotiations that had taken place in 1980 and 1981 between the Ministry of Education and Solidarity trade union were gradually being implemented, with the principal changes in curricula for Polish language, history, civic education and foreign languages. The works of émigré poets and writers were permitted to be included in Polish lessons, and teachers received more freedom in choosing which pieces of literature to present to their students and which interpretations to offer. New facts from the past and new interpretations of historical events and processes were included in the curricula, such as the role of the nobility in Poland, the Polish-Soviet war of 1919–1921 and events during the Second World War. Changes to civic education curricula saw communist indoctrination replaced by a new emphasis of the difference between fact and opinion and the explanation of social mechanisms. English, French or German were to be taught starting in primary school alongside Russian, which had previously dominated modern foreign language teaching. Surprisingly, the imposition of martial law in December 1981 had little, if any, influence on these reforms.<sup>3</sup> As a result, a new set of primary school history textbooks published in the 1980s was not only much more visually attractive and advanced in terms of its educational approach, including primary sources for interpretation, illustrations, exercises and lesson structures, but its content also differed markedly from previous books. For instance, the books contained notably fewer references to communist ideology than ever before in the history of the People's Republic of Poland, devoted much less space to a presentation of the 'class struggle' in the past and to the history of the labour movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and presented Christianity and the Catholic Church in a more unbiased way.<sup>4</sup> The Katyn massacre was mentioned in these history textbooks for the first time since the 1950s, and it was suggested that it may have been committed by the Soviets.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that history and civic education under communist rule in Poland, especially in the 1980s, was not entirely monopolised by the state. There are numerous examples of teachers whose interpretations of issues

and events differed significantly from the official ones; this generally had little negative impact on their professional careers. In the 1980s, there were many independent publications available in what was known as the 'second publishing circuit' (i.e., unofficial/illegal), including ones that were developed as alternative textbooks or supplements to the official books.<sup>6</sup> Even though these were not used officially during lessons, they were, or information on them was, available to pupils who were interested in them. My personal experience as a secondary-level student in the late 1980s in a major city is that about half of my schoolmates were interested and read them. Independent lectures took place on history and related subjects, often in churches. Radio Free Europe broadcast historical programmes. Virtually everyone interested in history, at least in larger cities, had access to uncensored information.

The collapse of the communist regime made these initiatives legal. There was a veritable boom on the history book market at the beginning of the 1990s. Gradually new textbooks from alternative publishers appeared, and teachers had more freedom to choose the content and methods of their teaching. Although books still had to be approved by the Ministry in order to receive the official status of a 'textbook', teachers were now permitted to recommend other materials, develop their own and use them in their classrooms. These spontaneous changes in school history education were limited in their scope and were introduced by proactive, dedicated and open-minded teachers.

The first visible change in terms of official school textbooks after the end of the communist dictatorship was the disappearance of the censorship officer's 'signature' on textbooks<sup>7</sup> after 1990. Slight yet significant changes were introduced in new editions of old textbooks, which remained in use unchanged, beyond the rewording of individual sentences, for a number of years. All of the changes that took place at this stage had an ideological background. The introduction to one fourth-year primary school textbook of the 1980s showed historical images and informed pupils that these pictures 'present rich and poor [people], those who worked and those who lived from the work of others'. In the 1990s, the caption was changed to describe the pictures as showing 'how people used to dress in the past, what they did, what their customs were, what made them happy and what made them particularly sad'.<sup>8</sup> In this way, an ideological, class-based perspective was replaced with a view of everyday life. Another example is the interpretation of the imposition of martial law in 1981. The 1990 edition of a secondary school textbook contained the following passage on this subject: '[O]n the night of December 12/13 [1981], the State Council, according to art. 33, point 2 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Poland, introduced martial law throughout the territory of

Poland. A Military Council of National Liberation was established under the chairmanship of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski'. An edition of the same textbook issued in 1991 interpreted the same event in a completely different manner: '[O]n the night of December 12/13, the Military Council of National Liberation gained control over the entire territory of Poland. With Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski in charge, it was a self-appointed and therefore unconstitutional body'.<sup>9</sup> The former (1990) edition presented a Soviet cosmonaut on its cover, while the latter (1991) had just a crossroads.

The more profound changes in history education that later ensued resulted from the reform of the education system introduced by the government in 1999 rather than from professional discussion among textbook authors, teachers or history educationalists. The subsequent reform, announced in 2008 and effective since 2012, which again was not preceded by professional consultation and which resulted in the most heated public debate to date about the place of history education in Polish schools, is described in detail in the final section of this chapter.

The reform of 1999 replaced the previous system of eight-year primary school followed by four-year secondary school with six-year primary, three-year lower secondary and three-year upper secondary school. Under the 1999 curriculum, history was taught from the fourth year of primary school (ten-year-olds) until the end of upper secondary school as a compulsory subject, with the curriculum structured in three cycles from ancient times to the present day; one cycle was taught in primary, one in lower secondary and one in upper secondary school. It was an optional subject for the final secondary school exam (*matura*). The national curriculum was very brief in its stipulations, giving teachers considerable freedom in defining the content of their lessons. School textbooks could be chosen by a teacher from a list of books approved by the Ministry of Education, but the use of other materials was also allowed, and even encouraged in professional literature for teachers. The Ministry's acceptance or rejection of a textbook was based on reviews by two specialists, who were recommended by the universities and professional institutions and organisations such as the Academy of Sciences or the Polish Historical Association. An official list of reviewing specialists was compiled by the Ministry of Education. It was the publisher who chose the reviewer for a particular textbook from the list and paid that person.<sup>10</sup> The system changed in 2004, with the Ministry of Education now assigning particular reviewers to a book that a publisher proposes for consideration; the Ministry then collects special fees from the publishers and pays the reviewers. The principles surrounding the compilation of the list of reviewers have not changed.<sup>11</sup>

The initial result of the new system was a boom on the textbook market. There were more than 30 different history textbooks available for each grade, with a variety of underlying educational concepts and historical interpretations, as well as aggressive marketing campaigns targeted at teachers. The least popular books successively dropped out of the market; successful smaller publishers were absorbed by the larger companies, four or five of which remain active players. All of them adopted new educational concepts of (at least attempted) multiperspectivity and began in their history textbooks to pay attention to social and cultural history and everyday life in the past and to promote active methods of learning. Teachers in today's Poland are encouraged to familiarise themselves with a variety of textbooks and to use them in the classroom alongside other teaching materials that do not require ministerial approval.

## Debates Since 1990

### 'From Independence to Independence'

Among a plethora of additional materials offered to teachers and students in the period since the end of dictatorship in Poland was an upper secondary school textbook titled *Od niepodległości do niepodległości. Historia Polski 1918–1991* (From independence to independence: The history of Poland 1918–1991), published in 2011 by the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN). It did not hold the status of an official textbook but was distributed free of charge to secondary schools and to interested teachers. The book itself can be regarded as a voice in the national debate on the communist past. Contrary to the general tone of officially approved textbooks, which present that period in a rather neutral way and detail both negative and positive sides of life in Poland under communist rule, the IPN's textbook regards communism as a totalitarian system and denies it any justification. It was for this reason that the book was praised by those who shared this attitude and were glad to have new heroes introduced to the young generation in the shape of people known as *żołnierze wyklęci* ('cursed soldiers'), who chose military struggle with the communist regime after the Second World War and were sentenced not only to death but also to oblivion by the communist system. The book's reviewers also appreciated its unbiased presentation of various political movements and positions aiming at the full independence of Poland (with the communists not included among these



groupings) from the First World War until the 1980s. Further, they enjoyed the communicative style of the book, perceived as ‘American’, and the rich selection of visual sources that accompanied its text.<sup>12</sup>

The book’s critics found its unequivocal condemnation of communism biased. They accused the authors of omitting difficult facts from the biographical information they gave on some of the ‘cursed soldiers’ and formulating ready-to-adopt judgements instead of providing young readers with historical evidence in order to help them formulate their own views. Other issues with the book that gave rise to criticism were the amount of space devoted to individual figures and/or events and the allegedly questionable accuracy of particular factual details.<sup>13</sup> The book’s presentation of Lech Wałęsa, who, according to the authors, cooperated with Służba Bezpieczeństwa (the communist secret police) in the early 1970s, also provoked controversy. Wałęsa himself promised to take legal action against the textbook’s authors,<sup>14</sup> although he did not follow through with this intention.

The debate can be regarded as part of a longer-lasting and more profound controversy, continuous and ongoing in both the political sphere and historiography, over the activities and historical research findings of the IPN, which was founded in 1999 as both an institution for research into the communist past and a commission for the prosecution of crimes committed in the era. There has been no research on the reception of the textbook in schools. ‘Lessons of Contemporary History’, another educational project conducted by the IPN, involving educators from the Institute going into secondary schools by invitation to teach on particular topics in accordance with lesson plans developed by the Institute, has not given rise to such a debate. And the board game ‘Kolejka’ (Queue), developed by IPN, intended to reflect the realities of living in the former communist ‘economy of deficit’, has generated record sales.

## ‘Understanding History, Shaping the Future’

*Zrozumieć historię. Kształtować przyszłość. Wybrane aspekty stosunków polsko-niemieckich w latach 1933–1949* (Understanding history, shaping the future: Selected aspects of Polish-German relations in 1933–1949) by Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, Tobias Weger and Kazimierz Wóycicki, edited by Kinga Hartmann,<sup>15</sup> is a selection of sources on the history of Poland and Germany in the National Socialist and immediate post-war period, organised into 20 chapters each preceded by a short introduction by one of the authors. This book can be regarded as the first step towards the writing of

a Polish-German history textbook, whose publication in four volumes is currently in progress. The comment aroused by *Zrozumieć historię* might have led us to anticipate that the publication of the textbook would be an intensely debated issue in history education in Poland. Thus far, however, the work of the Polish-German textbook commission undertaking the project, as well as that of other bilateral bodies such as the Polish-Ukrainian, Polish-Lithuanian or Polish-Russian commissions, has not enjoyed broad interest from the media. Neither the guidelines for the Polish-German textbook nor its first two volumes were commented upon outside of the scholarly community.<sup>16</sup>

*Zrozumieć historię* was discussed in both professional periodicals and the general press. On the one hand, it was welcomed as the first joint Polish-German attempt to present the past to pupils in both countries and as an embodiment of compromise in the discussion of sensitive issues, acceptable to both sides, and available in the same form to readers and users on both sides of the border.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Polish critics of the book were not satisfied with the selection of sources and the terminology used in parts of the text. In the sources, they found the presentation of the Polish underground state during the Second World War unsatisfactory, accusing it of contributing to the German stereotype that the Poles were incapable of political sovereignty. Further, they criticised the failure to mention the Warsaw uprising and the absence of a chapter devoted to the Polish resistance during the Second World War, to which point the authors responded that it was discussed in various parts of the text throughout the book. Critics protested against the use of the word *wypędzenie* (*Vertreibung*/expulsion) to describe the resettlement of Germans from the former eastern provinces of Germany after the war. The book referred to these areas as *ziemie włączone* ('included territories'), in a similar manner to German historiography. This term was also subject to critical questioning, since Polish historiography usually either follows the language generally used in Poland after the Second World War by calling these areas 'Recovered Territories' (sometimes in quotation marks) or, more neutrally, refers to them as 'Western and Northern Territories' or, recently, 'incorporated territories'. Those unhappy with the book also argued that its perceived funding from the German government had exerted influence on the 'German' point of view that it appeared (to them) to present.<sup>18</sup> The authors denied these accusations and regarded the publication of the book—which was funded by a European programme, Interreg III, and not by the German taxpayer—as a success. While they admitted that some of its details might not be found entirely satisfactory by a Polish reader, they argued that it was better to have the book as it was than not to have one at all.<sup>19</sup> They also advanced the view

that the book, being aimed at both Polish and German audiences, needed to account for both.

## Holocaust Education

Piotr Trojański and Robert Szuchta, Polish educators who promote Holocaust education in Polish schools, authored a secondary school curriculum titled *Holocaust: program nauczania o historii i zagładzie Żydów na lekcjach przedmiotów humanistycznych w szkołach ponadpodstawowych* (Holocaust: A curriculum on the history and extermination of the Jews, for humanities lessons in secondary schools) and a book, *Holocaust. Zrozumieć dlaczego* (Holocaust: To understand why). These publications did not initiate much discussion. We might regard this as a problem, especially when we consider that the presentation of the Holocaust in Polish secondary school textbooks is far from satisfactory, as a recent study by Robert Szuchta has shown.<sup>20</sup> The publications of J.T. Gross<sup>21</sup> ignited a fierce debate on the Polish role in the Holocaust; this debate, however, has thus far failed to reach history education. Generally, debates on the Holocaust seem to be marginalised in schools,<sup>22</sup> with the exception of efforts undertaken by figures such as Trojański and Szuchta. Young people whose knowledge of the Holocaust is based on school textbooks are unlikely to be aware of any controversies in this field.

During a conference in Oświęcim in 2013 on teaching about the Holocaust, Szuchta expressed concern about the future of Holocaust education in Poland. Recent education reforms have meant that the history of the twentieth century has been removed from the lower secondary school curriculum and postponed to the first year of upper secondary. Szuchta argued that this move will destroy existing models of teaching about the Holocaust, which have been developed and elaborated in the past ten years and addressed predominantly to young people of lower secondary school age.<sup>23</sup> This topic brings us to the most spectacular debate on history education in Poland in the last 20 years, which has revolved around the place of contemporary history in the education system and the content of general history education in upper secondary school.

## Reform of the Education System

In the autumn of 2008, the Polish Ministry of Education announced its plans to reform the education system. This involved dividing the history curriculum taught in lower secondary school and reassigning it to the lower secondary

level (three years, ending with the First World War) and upper secondary level (with 1918 to the present dealt with in the first year of this phase). A further intent of the planned reform was to effect overarching changes in the design of upper secondary education, which had thus far been general in character with few optional subjects and most pupils taking the same curriculum. The reform's plans, which took effect from 2012 onwards, envisaged only the first year of upper secondary school continuing in accordance with this general model. In the second and third years, only five core subjects would be taught to everyone (Polish language, mathematics, two foreign languages and physical training), with further subjects depending on the 'profile' of the class chosen by a pupil upon enrolment in school. These chosen 'class profile' subjects, post-reform, are taught more extensively than before; for instance, there are now three lessons of history per week rather than two before the reform. Any further subjects are concentrated in what are known as supplementary blocks: There is 'History and Society—the Heritage of Ages' for those who choose sciences, and 'Nature' for those who choose humanities. Taught in two sessions per week, 'History and Society' consists of four modules chosen by a teacher from nine topic-oriented clusters, which are as follows: Europe and the World; Language, Communication and Media; Men and Women, the Family; Science; Belonging and Foreignness; The Economy; The Ruling and the Ruled; War and Military Affairs; The National Pantheon and National Disputes. These modules are structured in a chronological fashion, each covering a substantial era. Instead of making their selection from the topic clusters, teachers can choose modules from five historical periods (antiquity, the Middle Ages, the early modern period, the nineteenth or the twentieth century), or select any combination of the periods and clusters, such as antiquity and the history of communication. A teacher can also develop his or her own block instead of using one of the nine proposed.

Criticism of the planned reforms surfaced as early as 2008; it was voiced in *Rzeczpospolita*, one of the largest Polish newspapers, by Prof. Andrzej Nowak of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, editor of the conservative historical journal *Arcana*.<sup>24</sup> Nowak warned that the reform would mean the end of history in schools and presented a number of arguments that would also be used later in the debate. His first concern was the age of the pupils who, due to the disappearance of history as a compulsory subject from the more advanced stages of upper secondary schools, would be taught history as a core curricular subject for the last time in their lives at the age of 15; he felt that these pupils were too young to understand more complex issues and so would miss out on gaining a sophisticated view of history and develop oversimplified ideas of the past. Second, Nowak did not regard the subject 'History and Society' as his-

tory; his view was that the very label of 'supplementary subject' diminished its position in the curriculum. Nowak argued that if 'History and Society' were excluded on the basis of it not being 'real' history, the number of history lessons pupils would receive would drop by 40 per cent compared to the 1980s.<sup>25</sup> Nowak's third point was that the reform gave teachers scope to choose topics in such a way that would result in pupils not being taught Polish history at all in secondary school, a potential state he viewed as unacceptable. He was worried that this would effectively debar students from understanding common Polish and European heritage and participating in public debate on historical and political issues. Further, Nowak criticised the manner in which the reform had been prepared, claiming that it had been worked on mostly in secret and that no professional historical bodies were consulted. Concerning this latter point, he asked fellow historians from the Polish Academy of Sciences, major universities and the Polish Historical Association whether they had been approached by the ministry in this capacity; all of these bodies replied in the negative. Finally, Nowak was unhappy about the funding of the reform development process by a non-Polish body, the European Social Fund, which also sponsored an information campaign about the reforms eventually adopted.

In reply,<sup>26</sup> Prof. Jolanta Choińska-Mika and Anna Radziwiłł, the chief authors of the reform of the history curriculum, argued that there was no sense in teaching the same material three times during students' general education, that is, at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary level. They spoke of the difficulties faced by lower secondary school teachers in covering the entire curriculum during the three years assigned. The result of this, the authors suggested, was that for many children school history ended with the Second World War at best, and they learned nothing about the recent past. The authors added that according to research, 80 per cent of secondary school pupils were unable to meet the curriculum requirements, which they interpreted as proof of the ineffectiveness of the existing system.

Choińska-Mika presented the supplementary subject 'History and Society' as an opportunity to focus less on political issues and more on social or cultural history, the history of science and of everyday life, and other topics that inspire pupils' interest. In Choińska-Mika's view, the fact that the subject would not conclude with a final examination meant that teachers would be able to show students how fascinating history can be and relate it to pupils' preferences without any exam pressure. Further, she argued that the number of lessons taught per week in 'History and Society' would be just the same as the number of history lessons taught before the reform, and even higher for pupils who chose history as an optional subject.

This defence only served to confirm the fears of the reform's opponents, who saw it as an admission that national history was not a priority and viewed the lack of final exams as devaluing the subject. In the course of the debate, the Ministry accused the reform's critics of making their points in ignorance of the reform's details. The further course of the debate was truncated by the signing into law of the reform before Choińska-Mika's defence of it was even published.<sup>27</sup> Even those who generally supported the reform criticised this manner of proceeding on the part of the Ministry of Education, which changed little in the ensuing years. Adam Leszczyński wrote in 2012<sup>28</sup> that the Ministry had played into the hands of the opposition parties by consistently ignoring calls for debate on educational matters, issued, for example, by academic historians whose letter of protest 'Ratujmy historię, ratujmy polski kanon' (Let us save history, let us save the Polish canon) of January 2009<sup>29</sup> was ignored. The Ministry designated 2009 as the 'year of history' in an attempt to demonstrate that history was appreciated and not neglected by the education system. The reform attracted media attention from time to time over the three years that followed, during which it remained unchanged, with teachers' and educationalists' proposals—including one to offer regional history as a thematic option within the 'History and Society' subject—failing to be taken into consideration.<sup>30</sup>

The debate regained momentum in spring 2012, with the impending realisation of the reforms in the upcoming academic year. This time the debate went beyond the media; a group of former Solidarity activists went on hunger strike in Kraków with the stated aim of attracting media coverage in order to compel the minister of education to address the issue and inspire discussion in families and society: 'We want the issue of history's neglect at the hands of the Ministry of Education to unleash national debate'.<sup>31</sup> Academic staff of the Institute of History at the Jagiellonian University, including Prof. Nowak, publicly supported their protest. The education reform was discussed at a parliamentary session<sup>32</sup> and attracted criticism from both left- and right-wing opposition parties. The successor party to the formerly ruling communists was concerned less about patriotic education than about the haste in which the changes were being introduced and about the replacement of general education with a large number of optional subjects. 'Such early specialisation of education for young people can lead to many complications', commented Krystyna Łybacka, former left-wing education minister.<sup>33</sup>

The Ministry of Education's response was to reiterate the arguments it had previously advanced. Eventually, the president of Poland, Bronisław Komorowski, and the archbishop of Kraków, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, acted as mediators in the dispute. The cardinal asked the protesters to stop

their hunger strike, and the president invited them to his palace for round-table talks with ministry officials. The result was an undertaking on the part of the Ministry to make the module 'The National Pantheon and National Disputes' compulsory, thus ensuring that all upper secondary students would learn some Polish history at the age of 18 to 19.<sup>34</sup>

This compromise did not completely close the issue. A petition drawn up in 2013 by a group of parents opposed to another point of the reform, the lowering of the primary school starting age from seven to six, also included a question on whether the full history course should be reinstated in upper secondary schools. Before submitting their petition to parliament, the initiators collected signatures from almost a million supporters, almost double the half a million required to force a parliamentary vote on holding a referendum. However, the motion for a referendum was rejected by parliament on 8 November 2013, after heated debate, by 232 to 222 votes.

The political situation in Poland has changed significantly since the parliamentary elections of 2015, with a profound impact on the position of history in public debate, the officially promoted interpretations of historical events, the school system and curricula, and almost every other aspect of history. Conducting history politics has become one of the goals of the new government. The most heated debates in the last two years, which went beyond Poland and reached international audiences, were related to the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk<sup>35</sup> and the 'cursed soldiers'.<sup>36</sup> Most recently, the new primary and secondary school curricula for history have become the subjects of public debate due to their Polonocentric and knowledge-centred rather than skills-oriented emphasis. History educators initiated this discussion, which may well spread further into the general public sphere following education reforms whose implementation began in September 2017. The reforms will see children once again starting school at the age of seven and attending eight years of primary and four years of secondary school, with history taught from year 4 onwards in two independent detailed cycles, one in primary and another in secondary school.

## Conclusion

Most controversies on history education in Poland that enter public debate pertain to relatively recent and contemporary history. Earlier periods do not attract the same degree of attention, and the controversies they generate tend to be limited to discussion among specialists.



Discussions on individual books, processes or events, a selection of which are detailed above, reflect disagreement on wider and deeper issues within Polish society. It is highly likely that, in years to come, the same issues will give rise to strong emotions: the heritage of the communist regime, the interpretation of the attitudes of Polish society during the Second World War, relations with Poland's neighbours and the role of history education in general. Poland will continue to face many of the fundamental questions with which other countries are confronted, one of which is whether history, as taught in schools, should be a cornerstone of citizenship and/or national education or rather a school of critical thinking and other practical skills.

## Notes

1. P. Machcewicz, *Spory o historię 2000–2011* [Disputes about history 2000–2011] (Kraków: Znak, 2012). These issues are also the two from Poland presented in A. Miller and M. Lipman, eds., *The Convolutions of Historical Politics* (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2012).
2. J. Brynkus, *Komunistyczna ideologizacja a szkolna edukacja historyczna w Polsce (1944–1989)* [Communist ideologisation and school history education in Poland (1944–1989)] (Kraków: Antykwa, 2012), 432.
3. T. Bochwic, 'Narodziny i działalność Solidarności Oświaty i Wychowania 1980–1989 (w świetle dokumentów NSZZ "Solidarność" i relacji jej działaczy)' [The birth and activities of Solidarity of education 1980–1989 (in light of documents from the Solidarity trade union and testimonies given by its activists)], PhD thesis (Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej, 2006), 104–110.
4. M. Koczerska and E. Wipszycka, *Historia. Świat przed wiekami. Podręcznik dla kl. 5 szkoły podstawowej* [History. The world ages ago. Textbook for the 5th year of primary schooling] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1985).
5. A. L. Szcześniak, *Historia. Polska i świat naszego wieku. Książka pomocnicza dla kl. VIII szkoły podstawowej* [History. Poland and the world of our century. Auxiliary textbook for the 8th year of schooling] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1984), 227–28. On the Katyn Massacre in English, see, for example, W. Materski, A. Cienciała, N. Lebedeva, eds., *Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment* (Annals of Communism Series) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
6. Bochwic mentions an alternative civic education textbook, published in 1981 by Solidarity, to be used on an experimental basis in 29 upper secondary schools and a set of history brochures. More were published illegally after

1981. See T. Bochwic, 'Narodziny i działalność Solidarności Oświaty i Wychowania 1980–1989', 109–112.
7. Under communism, a code matched to a specific censorship officer was put on every book alongside information on its publisher and printer, number of copies produced and date of printing.
  8. J. Centkowski and A. Syta, *Historia. Z naszych dziejów. Podręcznik dla klasy czwartej szkoły podstawowej* [History. From our past. Textbook for the 4th year of primary school] (Warsaw: WSiP, 1986/1991), 6–7; cited in J. Wojdon, 'The Impact of Communist Rule on History Education in Poland', *JEMMS. Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* 4, no. 1 (2012): 65.
  9. A. Pankowicz, *Historia. Polska i świat współczesny. Podręcznik dla szkół średnich dla klasy IV liceum ogólnokształcącego oraz dla klasy III technikum i liceum zawodowego* [Poland and the contemporary world. Secondary school textbook for the 4th year of general and 3rd year of technical school] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1990), 278.
  10. 'Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 24 kwietnia 2002 r. w sprawie warunków i trybu dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego programów nauczania, programów wychowania przedszkolnego i podręczników oraz zalecania środków dydaktycznych [Ordinance of the Ministry of Education and Sport of 24 April 2002, pertaining to the conditions and procedures of approving school and pre-school curricula and textbooks, and of recommending teaching aids]', *Dziennik Ustaw*, no. 69 (2002), pos. 635 and earlier regulations.
  11. 'Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej i Sportu z dnia 5 lutego 2004 r. w sprawie dopuszczania do użytku szkolnego programów wychowania przedszkolnego, programów nauczania i podręczników oraz cofania dopuszczenia [Ordinance of the Ministry of Education and Sport of 5 February 2004, pertaining to the approval of school and pre-school curricula and textbooks, and to revocation of approval]', *Dziennik Ustaw*, no. 25 (2004), pos. 220.
  12. P. Zaremba, 'Przewodnik po świecie zaginionym [A guide to the lost world]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 December 2010.
  13. P. Wroński, 'Salwa z okopów "polityki historycznej" [A salvo from the trenches of historical politics]', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4 April 2011, opinion. See also A. Suchoński and Z. Kozłowska, 'Debate at the Institute of History, University of Wrocław, January 2013', *Klio* 26 (2013).
  14. 'Wałęsa znowu jest oburzony [Wałęsa is indignant again]', *Fakt*, 27 November 2010. Wałęsa indicated his intention to pursue legal action on a radio programme.
  15. K. Hartmann, ed., 'Zrozumieć historię—kształtować przyszłość; stosunki polsko-niemieckie w latach 1933–1949; materiały pomocnicze do nauczania

- historii; Projekt Interreg III a “Zrozumieć historię—kształtować przyszłość”, *Saksońskiej Agencji Oświatowej, Oddział w Budziszynie* (Wrocław: Gajt, 2007).
16. *Podręcznik do historii. Projekt polsko-niemiecki. Zalecenia Wspólnej Polsko-Niemieckiej Komisji Podręcznikowej Historyków i Geografów*, ed., [History textbook. Polish-German Project. Recommendations. Edited by the Joint Polish-German Textbook Commission of Historians and Geographers] (Warsaw: Neriton, 2013); *Europa. Nasza historia. Projekt polsko-niemiecki. Podręcznik. Klasa 1. Tom 1., Gimnazjum* [Europe. Our history. The Polish-German Project. Textbook. Grade 1. Vol. 1] (Warsaw: WSiP, 2016); vol. 2 (Warsaw: WSiP, 2017).
  17. Z. T. Kozłowska, ‘Książka uczciwa i zwięzła [An honest and concise book]’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 February 2008; for positive remarks on the book made by Prof. Andrzej Paczkowski, see *Dziennik* ‘Polsko-niemiecki podręcznik historii w szkołach [Polish-German history textbook in schools]’, 8 February 2008.
  18. M. Rzeszotarski, ‘Przyszłość w kraju bez historii [The future in the country with no history]’, *Biuletyn IPN* 86 (2008), 105–110; B. Kopka, ‘Kształtowanie historii [Shaping history]’, *Biuletyn IPN* 86 (2008), 110–111; see also B. Kopka, ‘Książka nieznośnie uproszczona [An unbearably simplified book]’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 20 February 2008; M. Rzeszotarski, ‘Listy do Rzeczpospolitej [Letters to Rzeczpospolita]’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 March 2008.
  19. M. Ruchniewicz and K. Ruchniewicz, ‘Listy do Rzeczpospolitej’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 29 February 2008; M. Urbanek, ‘Historia do uzgodnienia [History to be agreed upon (interview with K. Ruchniewicz)]’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 May 2008, opinion; K. Ruchniewicz and M. Ruchniewicz, ‘Wokół dyskusji na temat książki: “Zrozumieć historię—kształtować przyszłość. Stosunki polsko-niemieckie w latach 1933–1949” [On discussions surrounding the book: ‘Understanding History ...’]’, *Wiadomości Historyczne* 51, no. 4 (2008): 27–30.
  20. R. Szuchta, ‘Tematyka Holocaustu w najnowszych gimnazjalnych podręcznikach do nauczania WOS [The Holocaust in recent civic education textbooks for lower secondary school]’, *Wiadomości Historyczne* 53, no. 4 (2010): 34–38; part two in *Wiadomości Historyczne* 53, no. 5 (2010): 32–41.
  21. J. T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); J. T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation* (New York: Random House, 2006); J. T. Gross, *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
  22. See, for example, K. Porembska, ‘Żydzi? Nic nie wiem [The Jews? I know nothing]’, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 August 2001, Magazyn z książkami; B. Kopyt, ‘Tematy niepolityczne [Non-political topics]’, *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 April 2002.
  23. ‘Auschwitz i Holocaust—edukacja w szkole i w miejscu pamięci. II ogólnopolska konferencja naukowo-dydaktyczna [Auschwitz and the Holocaust—

- education in history and at sites of memory. 2nd national research and teaching conference], 12–13 April 2013 (Oświęcim).
24. A. Nowak, 'Prawdziwy koniec historii [The true end of history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 December 2008. See also A. Nowak, 'O historii bez końca [About history with no end]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 January 2009.
  25. Cf. M. Dyś, 'Siatka godzin nauczania historii w szkolnictwie ogólnokształcącym w Polsce w latach 1944–1989 [Weekly number of hours of history teaching in comprehensive schools in Poland, 1944–1989]', in *Edukacja 2010*, ed. G. Pańko et al. (Opole-Wrocław-Lublin: Instytut Śląski, 2011), 170–176. The author shows that the consistent decline in the number of history lessons taught in Polish schools had its origins in the communist era.
  26. J. Choińska-Mika and A. Radziwiłł, 'Końca historii nie będzie [There will be no end of history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 30 December 2008.
  27. 'Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 23 grudnia 2008 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz kształcenia ogólnego w poszczególnych typach szkół [Ordinance of the Minister of National Education of 23 December 2008 pertaining to pre-school and school curricula]', *Dziennik Ustaw*, no. 4 (2009), pos. 17.
  28. A. Leszczyński, 'Nie o historię, lecz o hucpę chodzi [It's not about history, it's about chutzpah]', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31 March 2012, Magazyn; see also T. Elbanowski, 'Herostrates z MEN [Herostrates from the Ministry of Education]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 February 2011.
  29. 'Ratujmy historię, ratujmy polski kanon [Let us save history, let us save the Polish canon]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 26 January 2009.
  30. For example, K. Hall, 'MEN i IPN razem dla historii [The Ministry of Education and the Institute of National Remembrance together for history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 January 2011; P. Zaremba, 'Elegia na koniec roku szkolnego 2010/2011 [Elegy for the end of the school year 2010/2011]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 June 2011; P. Zaremba, 'Zadbajmy o historię [Let us take care of history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 19 September 2011; B. Fedyszak-Radziejowska, 'Jak uczyć o historii [How to teach about history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 31 January 2011; *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 'Program jest do bani [The curriculum sucks]', interview with Robert Szuchta, 18 October 2011.
  31. O. Szpunar and B. Kuraś, 'Głód lekcji historii [The hunger for history lessons]', *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20 March 2012.
  32. K. Baranowska and E. Osińska, 'Rząd ma problem z historią [The government has a problem with history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 29 March 2012; A. Grabek, 'Głodówka z historią w tle [A hunger strike with history in the background]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 31 March 2012; A. Grabek, 'Z prezydentem o historii [With the president about history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 April 2012.
  33. A. Grabek, 'Z prezydentem o historii [With the president about history]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 13 April 2012.

34. Ibid.; J. Ojczyk, 'Zaufajmy szkole [Let us trust schools (interview with Katarzyna Szumilas, minister of education)]', *Rzeczpospolita*, 3 September 2012.
35. See, for example, T. Snyder, 'Poland vs. History', *New York Review of Books*, 3 May 2016, <http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/05/03/poland-vs-history-museum-gdansk/>; J. Szyndzielorz, 'Dispute over "Patriotism" Delays Opening of Gdańsk's New War Museum', *Guardian*, 28 January 2017; R. Donadio, 'A Museum Becomes a Battlefield Over Poland's History', *New York Times*, 9 November 2016.
36. F. Peters, 'Remaking Polish National History: Reenactment over Reflection, Imre Kertész Kolleg's Cultures of History Forum', 3 October 2017, <http://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/debates/poland/remaking-polish-national-history-reenactment-over-reflection/>. Peters also discusses the museum in Gdańsk.

## Further Reading

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# 38

## Romania

Mirela-Luminița Murgescu

### Introduction

Looking back at the year 1999, one may wonder how a textbook could cause such passion and bitterness, becoming a ‘national problem’ for a few weeks while a decent and respected historian became public enemy number one in Romania and his life became public property. It is equally surprising that an attempt to reanimate the scandal in 2004, as a result of a shift towards teaching integrated history, did not succeed in mobilising the public or politicians. Why did the debate become so animated in 1999, but not in 2004, 2006 or 2008, when there were also quite radical changes to the history curricula?

In 2000, with the scandal still fresh in my mind, I delivered a paper about the conflict, entitling it *Between Nationalism and Europeanism or How to Adjust Two Concepts for One Shoe?* I was of the opinion that the scandal was due partially to the clash between two diverging versions of collective identity. Today, enough time has passed to allow a more distant perspective from which we can better comprehend the hidden complexity of the conflict. Besides illuminating the dichotomy between European identity and national identity, or the political dimensions of the conflict, the dispute also raised pointed questions regarding the relationship between tradition and innovation in history teaching, and generally the relationship of the Romanians to their own past.

## Historical Background

Since the nineteenth century, with a short break during the first phase of communist rule, history education in the Romanian school system focused on the cultivation of national identity. This function was strengthened during the communist rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu (1965–1989). In the early 1990s, the first task in this field seemed to be to remove any residual communist ideology from history education, initially without challenging the national master narrative. Nevertheless, the post-communist democratisation of Romanian society also brought changes to the education system onto the agenda. These included curriculum reform and the transition from a single textbook to a system of alternative textbooks. At the same time, the liberalisation of the historical profession allowed several historians to challenge elements of the national master narrative and in some cases even its whole logic. Similar contestations came from certain intellectuals and politicians, who questioned the usefulness of the traditional ethnocentric Romanian history education within the new context of European integration. They declared that they supported its reformation towards more balanced teaching about the historical past of human society, but at the same time agreed to reduce the number of hours allocated to history in the secondary school curricula. These changes generated several conflicts and public debates, among the fiercest of which was the so-called history textbook scandal of 1999. During communism, the ideological grip of the state on education was enforced through the system of having a single textbook for each discipline. This system continued into the early 1990s and was considered normal by the public. However, in the mid-1990s, as part of post-communist liberalisation and with the support of the World Bank, Romania started the transition to alternative textbooks.

## The Debate on the ‘Outrageous Textbook’

The debate was generated in autumn 1999 by the new curriculum for the 12th grade (17–18-year-olds), and by one of the new alternative textbooks on the history of the Romanians.

In 1999, the transition in high schools to a new system was implemented in ninth grade (14–15-year-olds) only for all disciplines other than history, for which the Ministry of National Education decided to change all high school curricula and to immediately introduce alternative textbooks for grades 9–12 (14–18-year-olds). The change of curricula occurred in the spring of 1999,



so that the potential authors had less than half a year to produce their textbooks. In spite of warnings that such speed would undermine quality and would strengthen the resistance of teachers, the decision to replace all existing high school history textbooks in the autumn of 1999 was implemented. The lack of time and insufficient historiographical preparation of delicate topics resulted in *all* new textbooks containing theoretical misunderstandings, factual errors and displaying methodological shortcomings.

In this context, one of the textbooks for the 12th grade, published by a group of young historians from Cluj at the Sigma Publishing House,<sup>1</sup> made shockwaves beyond the education establishment due to its provocative way of presenting the main figures and events of Romanian history, and through its colloquial style. This textbook provided an opportunity for opposition politicians, journalists and historians who were defending the nationalist grand narrative to discredit the government, especially the Minister of Education Andrei Marga, and to focus public anger on any attempt to change the old historical canon.

The subject was introduced to the Senate on 5 October 1999 by Senator Sergiu Nicolaescu, a well-known director of historical action films that portrayed some of the main characters and events of Romanian history. During the time assigned for political declarations, he violently attacked the history textbook for the 12th grade published by the Sigma Publishing House, accusing it of only giving a few lines of information on Michael the Brave<sup>2</sup> while finding space to mention the TV star Andreea Esca, and stating that it preferred the term 'rebellion' rather than 'revolution' to describe the overthrow of the government in December 1989.<sup>3</sup>

The media immediately picked up the incident and transformed it into a public scandal. The main TV stations included it in their evening news programmes and the public channel TVR1 broadcast the opinions of several historians on the incriminated textbook during its news programme. The newspapers joined in, and for several weeks, this was one of the main topics of discussion in Romanian society; many discussions between relatives and/or friends included the questions: have you read that awful textbook? What is your opinion? For over a month, much of Romanian society was caught up in 'history fever'. The debate raged in several arenas: in the political sphere, in the historical profession and in the media.

As the scandal unfolded in Parliament, the minister of education, several historians and the coordinator of the textbook in question were summoned before the united education committees of the two chambers. In an atmosphere more reminiscent of a public trial, two official meetings of the united

committee, on 13 and 20 October 1999, were dedicated to this issue. Of course, parliamentary committee meetings were not the most appropriate place to discuss concrete historical topics, or whether one way of presenting history was didactically better than another. Concrete quotations from the textbook were taken out of context and used to express distance from received historical wisdom.

Besides these factual skirmishes, two issues of principle were widely discussed: single versus alternative textbooks, and what might be termed 'Europeanisation'. These themes were important because the Ministry of Education centred its defence on the option to select alternative textbooks, arguing that if a textbook was bad, the teachers would simply avoid choosing it. The Ministry argued that the existence of alternative textbooks was stipulated by education law and was an important part of Romania's shift from Eastern socialism to European (Western) values and patterns.<sup>4</sup> The opponents of the Ministry and of the Sigma textbook were uncomfortable with these issues and felt compelled to begin all their arguments by claiming that they were also pro-European and that they agreed with the basic principle of alternative textbooks, but not with the particular history textbook published by Sigma. As it soon became obvious that the textbooks were written according to the official curriculum, the critics also began to attack the new curriculum. The main argument was that it left too little space for the periods before 1800 (only 2 out of 12 chapters) and placed too much emphasis on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even including the 1990s. The critics also argued that it was impossible to deliver a balanced picture of such recent history and found evidence for their argument in the pro-government bias of the disputed textbook.

The debate in parliament had begun as an attack by political outsiders from almost all parties against the textbook and the Ministry, but gradually the front lines were drawn according to the divide between the government coalition and the opposition parties (mainly social democrats and nationalists). During this shift in the argument, the united education committees of the two chambers issued a controversial recommendation asking the Ministry to withdraw its authorisation for the disputed history textbook and to revise the curriculum.<sup>5</sup> The minister answered by refusing to ban the disputed textbook and nominated a committee of seven distinguished historians to suggest improvements; however, this did not stop the debate because the critics instantly questioned the neutrality and professionalism of the new committee.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the fact that the parliamentary education committees were unable to force the minister of education to comply, the President of the Committee

for Education, Science, Youth and Sports of the House of Deputies, Anghel Stanciu (from the nationalist *Partidul România Mare*), decided to move the battlefield from the committee to the plenary house. This allowed opponents to continue attacking the coalition government as anti-national: the textbook published by Sigma was falsely accused of yielding to the theories of Romanian ethnic genesis widely circulated in Hungarian historiography. In order to avoid the alignment of the majority behind the minister, Stanciu presented his motion as non-partisan and made great efforts to attract deputies from various parties. Finally, the motion was signed by 64 deputies and officially submitted to the Chamber of Deputies on 8 November. It was debated on 15 November and resulted in long and passionate arguments. Late in the evening, the motion to remove the textbook from schools was put to the vote, and it received just 66 votes in favour (less than 20 per cent of the members of the Chamber) with 129 votes against and 4 abstentions.<sup>7</sup> After this vote, the issue gradually disappeared from the political agenda.

Another major battlefield was within the historical profession itself. The debate revealed the different standards and diverging sensibilities of professional historians. Certainly, insiders had been well aware of such differences long before the 'scandal', but they rarely expressed them openly; the quarrel surrounding this textbook and the subsequent political and media pressure publicly exposed the discord between the historians.

The accusation by one distinguished historian that 'Mr. Andrei Marga has managed to widen the divisions of the Romanian historical community'<sup>8</sup> is both true and misleading. The divisions were already there and the fierce conflict between the historians was caused not only by personal disputes but also by diverging perceptions about the basic principles of the profession. Deference to the historiographical authority of the older generation and the attempt to preserve the role of history as a catalyst for national cohesion against external influences were central to a section of the historical profession, while others insisted on the right to diverse opinions as well as the right to question received historical wisdom based on more recent historiographical trends and to challenge the prevailing opinions of society. Both groups had institutional strongholds (the section for historical sciences of the Romanian Academy on the side of the former and the history departments of Bucharest and Cluj universities on the side of the latter) and both tried to use the prestige of those institutions in order to impress the public. At the same time, the politicians and the media wanted to use the authority of the established historians as arguments in their dispute.

The first to react to the attacks of the politicians and a large part of the press were the historians from the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, who issued a

statement in which they protested against the intrusion of non-specialists in the discussion on history textbooks and praised the disputed textbook for abandoning the obsolete manner of listing political events and for supplying a problem-oriented history, where ideas, mentalities and facts of civilisation had their due place.<sup>9</sup> The teaching staff of Bucharest University's history department followed with a protest against the climate of public trial introduced by some politicians and journalists to a debate which should have taken place mainly among specialists, with academic arguments.<sup>10</sup>

On the other side of the argument, the president of the section for historical sciences at the Romanian Academy (acad. Dan Berindei) expressed his criticism of the Sigma textbook and of the curriculum. He summarised his main argument in the following statement: 'A textbook should transmit certain basic things to the pupil; it must be a textbook of national education. This is lacking in this case. This is perhaps the key to the problem'.<sup>11</sup> Capitalising on this opinion, but also revealing an institutional conflict between the Romanian Academy and the Ministry of Education, the Romanian Academy Press Office issued an official statement a day later, which expressed concern about the fact that

some textbooks (such as that for the 12th grade published by Sigma Publishing House) present as apodictic, without arguments or convincing documents, distorted visions and mistaken assertions about principal events and preeminent personalities of the Romanian past ... The consequences will be extremely serious with respect to the pupils' schooling and their image of the Romanian people, history and culture.<sup>12</sup>

Members of the history departments of some of the new universities that had been established in 1990 also criticised the authors of the textbook and even the curriculum and the policy of the Education Ministry.<sup>13</sup> Finally, capitalising on the frustration of most history teachers, stressed by the simultaneous decline of their material status and of the social recognition of their discipline, one of the most vocal defenders of the nationalist master narrative, Ioan Scurtu, was elected president of the Romanian Society for Historical Sciences in November 1999, despite being opposed by the representative of the Education Ministry and by his colleagues from the history department at Bucharest University.

As indicated earlier, the textbook scandal was to a large extent determined by the media. The media brought it to national attention, nurtured it for over a month and forced many politicians and historians to express their opinions, even when they had not had chance to properly form any. Well-known jour-

nalists expressed their own opinions together with those of the specialists,<sup>14</sup> and most of the newspapers and TV channels embraced one or the other of the contending perspectives. Dramatic titles and direct accusations of anti-nationalism and of vested interests proliferated. Often, journalists expressed opinions which politicians would not have dared to assume. For example, in an editorial in the *Curierul Național*, Florin Antonescu openly attacked the Council of Europe recommendation 1283/1996 regarding the teaching of history, comparing it with communist attempts to rewrite history and concluding that ‘the obedience towards enlightening foreign countries’ leads to ‘the dissolution of national identity’.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the editor in chief of *Adevărul*, Cristian Tudor Popescu, argued against the principle of alternative textbooks from the start of the public dispute:

**How is it possible to conceive alternatives to Romania’s history?** There is still a Romanian Academy, there are still scientists, honoured historians—what can be more logical than a National Committee formed by such people who should agree on a **single** textbook, one single **teaching book** on Romania’s history for the pupils of this country.<sup>16</sup>

Yet, the media could not keep the issue on the front pages for very long. In fact, the ‘textbook scandal’ had been a headline for an unusually long time. But, after the vote in the Chamber of Deputies against Anghel Stanciu’s motion, the media soon had other more important problems, such as a government crisis or Romania’s inclusion in the enlargement process of the European Union, and the textbook issue was relegated to the sidelines.

## Consequences and Follow-Up

The textbook scandal left unhealed scars within the historical profession and history education in general. The prestige of history as a subject was severely damaged. The hostile reaction of many historians and history teachers to the reform of history education also compromised the attempts of some historians and professional associations to persuade Minister Marga and his successors to reverse their decision to diminish the number of teaching hours allocated for history in secondary education. Although the motion against the textbook had been unsuccessful in Parliament, both the curriculum and the textbook were slightly revised in 2000, with the inclusion of some of the events and historical figures that had been demanded by the public. The elections of November 2000 led to a change of government and the new Minister

of Education Ecaterina Andronescu decided to limit the number of alternative textbooks; furthermore, in September 2001, she banned the history textbook that had caused the scandal in 1999.

After several years of educational conservatism, a new phase of change started in 2004 and 2005. It focused on history education in high schools (14–18-year-olds) and shifted the focus from content to competencies. The curriculum demanded the abandonment of a chronological order and the restructuring of its content around five principal themes, which became sacred ‘content domains’: populations and historical spaces; people, society and the world of ideas; religions and religious life; state and politics; and international relations. This anti-chronological option went against the customary practices of history teachers and public perceptions of the specificity of history. There were protests, but these were significantly weaker and found less support than in 1999.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the controversies generated by the clauses in the National Education Law 1/2011 regarding the possibility of teaching history and geography in the languages of the minorities failed to foster a major debate. Selected journalists and politicians tried to stir up agitation, but both insiders and the general public perceived this as a mere politicking manoeuvre in order to divide the government coalition of the Democrat-Liberals and the Democratic Union of the Hungarians in Romania.

The low profile of these later debates reflects the declining prestige not only of history education but also of the education system and of the teaching professions in general.

## Documentation

### Senator Sergiu Nicolaescu’s Intervention (5 October 1999)

In terms of the content, gentlemen, I’d like to tell you that three lines are written about Michael the Brave: ‘Michael the Brave’s reign as Wallachian ruler distinguishes itself not only through the battles against the Turks, but also because he brings under a single rule’—his own personal rule—‘Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia’ and that’s it! At the same time in this history book we find the following about Andreea Esca: ‘One of the most likeable presenters, a news celebrity.’ I admit it is true, she is likeable and a good presenter, but ... in the History of Romanians ... In 1999 we come before the young generations with a history book which should be taken to a public place and burned, because it is most offensive to the Romanian people ... I don’t want to say that about

the communist regime, gentlemen, at least 12 pages are written, about who introduced collectivisation, all these things in details, with figures. And about Michael the Brave, you saw how much. There is no further mention of him.<sup>18</sup>

## **Senator Radu F. Alexandru**

Even if the book is mistaken, even if it is inspired by the worst intentions, once the fire is lit, it becomes a danger and a threat for the democratic state we want to live in.<sup>19</sup>

## **Excerpt from the Official Address by the History Department of Bucharest University, 19 October 1999**

Regarding the history schoolbook for the 12th grade published by Sigma Publishing House, the opinion of the specialists of the history department is that the text is uneven, combining lessons which are excellent from a didactic and scientific perspective, with less accomplished parts, deficient factually and theoretically. Without trying to downplay the shortcomings of this particular schoolbook, we consider that it does not endanger in any way the civic and national education of the pupils and that the differences with respect to the other schoolbooks reflect the diversity of opinions, interpretations and approaches current in historiography. Still, taking into consideration the fact that in this schoolbook, as well as in all the other alternative schoolbooks, there are several errors and disputable opinions, we suggest as a general rule that the errors should be corrected in all schoolbooks before printing the next editions.<sup>20</sup>

## **Excerpts from the Motion Regarding Educational Policy Promoted by Anghel Stanciu**

This whole endeavour by those that do not treat the historical past with respect seeks to dust off Roller's<sup>21</sup> old theories, reveal them as new historical discoveries, and amplify them in order to further their well-defined goal of moving us towards a doubtful European identity, not recommended by anyone, that will only bring harm to the country and its youth. A youth of the future belonging to a Romania integrated in European structures must first know who his ancestors were, the sacrifices that were made for his existence today, and to look with respect at our national past, because only so will he manage to perceive his true place, not mystified in the new Europe ... The Deputy Chamber ... requests a discussion and re-evaluation of the current history curriculum and



the development of a new curriculum that should be faithful to the ends stipulated in Articles 3 and 4 of the Education Law and required by international standards, and which also considers the provisions of law and the Romanian language as specified in Recommendation no. 1283/1986 [correct: 1996] by the Parliament Assembly of the European Council regarding history and the study of history. The chamber also requests the Government and the Ministry of National Education to withdraw authorisation for the use of the book edited by the publisher Sigma in 1999 as a history schoolbook for the 12th grade, until it is reviewed by the authors, according to specifications by specialists and in conformity with the [educational] ends provided by the law.<sup>22</sup>

### **Historian Ioan Scurstu (university professor, specialist in contemporary history and former general director of the national archives)**

Some people, who try to impose their ideas on others, come and tell us that these ideas are Western, modern, tied to the new spirit. I honestly say that to me these ideas are evocative of the 1950s, when exactly the same ideology prevailed, i.e. Marxist-Leninist teaching, comrade Stalin, dialectic and historical materialism. The historical fact, scientific in itself, did not prevail, but its ideology did. Nobody in the whole world says do not assert yourself as Romanian, do not say you are a patriot, do not say that you have national heroes and people who contributed to the development of world culture. Why should the French be accepted as nationalists in the European Union etc. and us not? Why shouldn't we be like the French, our bigger brothers? Unhappily, we have this tendency to lower our head and be obedient in order to please others ... This is what is happening now, it is bad-taste mimicry of certain peripheral currents which are present in the West.<sup>23</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The history textbook scandal of 1999 occurred in the context of a severe economic and social crisis. It mobilised segments of the public, of the professional classes and of the media against shifts in history education from an ethnocentric pattern towards a more open and democratic vision of the past. It also proved that unprepared educational reforms, which do not take into consideration the reactions of teachers and of the public, generate adverse reactions and ultimately fail to have the beneficial effects expected by their initiators. At the same time, in spite of the short-lived public passion for historical issues generated by the 1999 history textbook scandal, it accelerated

the decline of history education, damaging the prestige and the self-confidence of both the historical profession and of history teachers.

For Romanian society, the question remains: what do we expect from history teaching?

## Notes

1. S. Mitu et al., *Istoria românilor. Manual pentru clasa a XII-a* [History of the Romanians. Textbook for the 12th Grade] (București: Sigma, 1999).
2. Prince of Wallachia in 1593–1601, Michael the Brave managed in 1600 to briefly unite Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia, and since the mid-nineteenth century has been perceived as a symbol of the Romanian struggle for independence and national unity. For details, see: M.-L. Murgescu, 'Mythistory in Elementary School: Michael the Brave in Romanian Textbooks (1830–1918)', *Analele, Istorie* XLII–XLIII (1993/1994), 53–66; M. L. Murgescu, 'Trecutul între cunoaștere și cultul eroilor patriei. Figura lui Mihai Viteazul în manualele școlare de istorie (1831–1994) [The Past between Knowledge and the Glorification of National Heroes: Michael the Brave in Romanian History Textbooks]'. In *Mituri istorice românești* [Romanian Historical Myths], ed. L. Boia (București: Editura Universității din București, 1995), 42–71.
3. 'Monitorul oficial al României. Partea a II-a. Dezbateri parlamentare' (further MO), X 183 (1999), 9.
4. *Declarație a ministrului Educației Naționale, Andrei Marga, privind manualele de Istoria Românilor* [Statement by Andrei Marga, the minister for education, regarding Romanian history textbooks], M.E.N., Cabinet Ministru (10 October 1999).
5. MO, X, nr.35/C (1999), 6.
6. See, for example, I. Novăcescu, 'Tupeul ministrului Educației Naționale nu are limite: Andrei Marga a desemnat să îndrepte abominabilul manual al lui Mitu o comisie formată din istorici care susțin demitizarea istoriei românești [The Insolence of the National Education Minister has no Limits: Andrei Marga has Appointed a Committee of Historians to Correct the Dreadful Mitu Textbook, Who Support the Demystification of Romanian History]', *Cotidianul*, IX, 2492, 22 October 1999, 3.
7. MO, X, 219 (1999), 40.
8. F. Constantiniu, 'Sfârșitul istoriei [The End of History]', *Național* 3 (1999) 729, 28 October, 6. (All translations by the author unless otherwise stated).
9. *Declarație* [Declaration], 8 October 1999 (copy, personal archive).
10. *Protestul profesorilor Facultății de Istorie a Universității din București* [The Protest of the Teaching Staff of the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest]

(12 October 1999), published in some of the main daily newspapers on 13 October (*Adevărul*, *România liberă*, *Național*).

11. Interview published in *Adevărul* 2908, 12 October 1999, 9.
12. The statement was published in *Adevărul*, 2909, 13 October 1999, 10, immediately after the opposition protest from the teaching staff in the history department of Bucharest University.
13. The motion presented by Anghel Stanciu in the Chamber of Deputies included critical statements issued by the history departments from Timișoara and Constanța, MO, X, 219, 1999, 9.
14. One of the issues the media seized upon was the fact that some of the major journalists, such as Ion Cristoiu and Cristian Tudor Popescu, were unhappy about being personally invoked in the lesson about media evolution in the 1990s; in contrast with the other alternative textbooks, the Sigma textbook included several portraits of journalists (Mitu *Istoria românilor*, 140–141).
15. F. Antonescu, 'Mai marii Europei ne "recomandă" cum să ne scriem istoria [The Grandees of Europe "Suggest" How we Should Write our History]', *Curierul Național*, X (1999) 2629, 27 October, 1.
16. C. T. Popescu, 'Câte istorii are România? [How Many Histories has Romania?]', *Adevărul*, 2903 (1999) 6 October, 1.
17. I have explained elsewhere in more detail why a comparable public debate did not emerge in 2005–2006 (see M.-L. Murgescu, 'L'histoire à l'école au temps de transition. Les avatars de l'enseignement de l'histoire dans la Roumanie après 1989', *La revue française d'éducation comparée* 4 (2009), 71–84).
18. MO, X, 183, (1999), 9.
19. MO, X, 183, (1999), 10.
20. Official address by the history department of Bucharest University, 19 October 1999. Needless to say, Anghel Stanciu quoted only part of this address in the preamble to the motion (cf. MO, X, 219, [1999], 9).
21. Mihail Roller was a Romanian historian and propagandist who controlled Romanian historiography and the historical narrative in education during the formative years of the communist regime.
22. MO, X, part II, 219, 11.
23. 'Curierul Național', X, nr.2620, 16/17 October 1999, 3.

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# 39

## Russia

Victor A. Shnirelman

### Introduction

Like the USSR, of which it was once a part, Russia is an ethno-federal state that, in addition to its provinces, includes several ‘national’ (i.e. ethnically based) republics which are named after their ‘titular peoples’, that is, the territorially indigenous ethnic groups that may or may not constitute the majority of the republic’s population. The architects of the Soviet state dreamed of a combination of Soviet internationalism with local nationalisms expressed culturally, which would eschew chauvinism and exclusivity. Yet, as Christel Lane pointed out many years ago, ‘in practice “national” is always liable to change into nationalism’.<sup>1</sup> It is changes of this kind, observed in Russia during the last quarter of a century, that have resulted in ‘history wars’.

In the Soviet era, the ‘History of the USSR’ was a compulsory subject in all types of schools. The subject’s historical narrative presented a continuous development from prehistory through the Russian Empire which culminated in the Soviet state. By contrast, the regional histories of Soviet republics were not obligatory at secondary schools (years 6–9) and higher schools (years 10–11); but in the later decades of the USSR, they could be taught as short-term optional subjects (local studies) supplementary to the main syllabus. The system continued, largely unchanged, into post-Soviet Russia, with the principal change being that the Ministry of Education (ME) of the Russian Federation developed a new concept for public education in 1992, as a result of which regional history also became a compulsory subject in state schools within the national republics of the Russian Federation. These courses focused on the history of the titular peoples and presented the republics as their own states,

while the 'History of Russia' continued to be taught as an overall national history. The history curriculum was subsequently divided, unevenly, between federal and regional components, a state that remained until December 2007, when the regional component was eliminated by the passing of new education legislation.

## Russian Schools and Identity Politics

In the late 1990s, a 'civilisational' approach was applied to the state school curriculum in Russia which cast culture as highly durable and resilient to change and sought to inculcate in students a belief in its consistency and resistance to radical changes through the centuries. During this period, the previously obsolete notion of 'national character' also re-entered public discourse. These developments laid fertile ground for the idea of 'cultural incompatibility' which had been promoted by the European New Right since the 1970s and which is now considered by experts to be a manifestation of a new form of cultural or differential racism.<sup>2</sup> Whereas in the past, cultural racism was a bedfellow of biological racism although perceived as secondary and derivative, it has since been proved to be an autonomous, self-sustained ideology. It manifests itself in political rhetoric, mass media and works of fiction, and is aimed against 'aliens', 'foreigners' and 'migrants' who are essentially regarded as evil agents capable of spoiling and corrupting the dominant majority culture.<sup>3</sup>

The schools of the post-Soviet era became, and remain, favourable breeding grounds for cultural racism. Soviet schools had presented the social class struggle as a prime factor in social evolution; in post-Soviet Russia, this paradigm was replaced by the priority of ethnic and 'civilisational' values, or by the upholding of internal unity and solidarity based in nationalism. Whereas Soviet-era education aimed at the formation of 'new human beings' and 'builders of Communism' and placed much emphasis on the future, post-Soviet schools show a distinct concern with identity and with students' ties to their 'native' culture and history. Accordingly, the primary objective of history textbooks on both the national and republic levels is shaping identity, or, to put it differently, the promotion of loyalty to the nation state and to students' own ethnic group. At the level of individual republics, ethnocentric textbooks are dominant, while at federal level there are intense efforts to develop a national idea based on the image of a unique and homogeneous civilisation.

This is not to say that history textbooks intentionally aim to create ethnic confrontation or to invoke a 'clash of civilisations'. Yet, in emphasising the

persistence of civilisations and ethnic cultures and their alleged inertia, the textbook authors consciously or unconsciously impose ethnocentric values upon students through references to distinct oppositions between 'titled nations' or 'native peoples' on the one hand, and 'non-titled peoples' or 'non-natives' on the other. Individual human rights are thus downplayed or subordinated to the notion of ethnically based collective rights and responsibilities. At the same time, each ethnic group is represented as a cohesive whole ('collective body') encircled by well-established boundaries which make each culture appear to have nothing in common with any other. Such one-dimensional views of cultural patterns evidently distort a reality in which the world is characterised by cultural intercommunication and interaction, hybridisation and biculturalism. They foster the idea of an inevitable struggle between cultures or civilisations, a notion strengthened by the use in contemporary Russian federal-level textbooks of such terms as 'archetypes', 'national character', 'ecology of culture' and 'civilisational values'.

The approach described here can give rise to conflict on three different levels. Firstly, there is a trend towards neglecting or stigmatising ethnically non-Russian peoples in the federal textbooks on the 'history of Russia', many of which focus on 'Russian civilisation'. Secondly, within the individual Russian republics, certain historical processes or figures are viewed quite differently to the way they are presented in federal textbooks. Finally, histories from the national republics usually either neglect all ethnic groups except the 'titular peoples' or stigmatise the others in cases where there is a conflict of interests with the group in question. Furthermore, some minorities within the individual republics are engaged in a struggle for the status of 'indigenous people'. At the heart of such struggles are contrasting views of the ancestors of these groups and their links with the relevant territory. These factors all contribute to conflicts over history.

## **Textbook Production and Thematic Foci in the Transition from the Soviet Era**

In Soviet times, textbook production was controlled by the Communist Party and textbook content was designed by politically reliable scholars. By the end of the 1980s, this control had been abolished and since then individual authors and groups have led the way in writing textbooks, with a period in the early 1990s during which writers, poets and journalists, rather than historians alone, took part in these processes.



In 1989, the Ministry of Education (ME) of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic established a Federal Expert Council in General Education, which included a Historical Board (HB) made up of historians and educationalists whose task was to evaluate the manuscripts of history textbooks. The HB members were under instructions to reject manuscripts if they 'contained lies, misled readers, stirred up ethnic, racial or other discord, or provoked wars, conflicts and violence'.<sup>4</sup> The ME retained the power to accept or reject the evaluations and the advice of the HB. Approved manuscripts were officially stamped 'recommended' or 'permitted', which guaranteed the publishers massive orders from schools and large print runs. However, a textbook could still be published, and even officially recommended, if there was disagreement among ME officials, authors, publishers and the HB experts. This was a common occurrence in the early 1990s, when Prosveshchenie, a publishing house specialising in educational materials, lost its monopoly, and when textbooks reflecting different approaches to history—liberal, socialist, monarchist and statist-patriotic—began to appear. Ironically, contrary to the dreams of the architects of *perestroika*, textbooks were not suddenly free of ideology. The Marxist emphasis on class struggle was abandoned, only to be replaced by other ideologies. In 1995, the ME observed that the education system lacked 'a positive strategy' and was failing to effectively promote 'national values and orientations'.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, specialists expressed alarm over a growing gap between the values held by teenagers and those of their teachers. This values gap was considered to be caused primarily by the poor adaptation of teachers to the rapid pace of political and socio-economic change in Russia. Indeed, the chaotic conditions placed a special burden on teachers, who, during the entire post-Soviet period, found themselves not only in the lowest income bracket but sometimes without their salaries for months at a time.<sup>6</sup> Understandably, nostalgia for Soviet days was prevalent among those in the teaching profession, as, reportedly, were xenophobia and negative stereotypes of students from (ethnically) non-Russian backgrounds.<sup>7</sup>

An examination of textbooks published between 1990 and 1995 demonstrates that many textbook authors vehemently rejected communist ideology, a bias which resulted in highly emotional and negative rhetoric in their discussions of modern history. There was a rapid return from Soviet to Russian history; the textbooks focused on the new reading of political history and on the re-interpretation of the roles of its major figures. The history of the ethnic groups of Russia became a contentious issue in the late 1990s, when Soviet identity was defunct and a profound crisis of identity emerged, to which many sought a solution by addressing ethno-national and ethnocultural topics. During this period, Russia-centric textbooks that justified the monarchy and tsarist conquests became fashionable in the country's federal centre.

In Soviet history textbooks, the history of non-Russian ethnic groups could only be treated as a component of Russian history. Soviet officials objected to all other approaches.<sup>8</sup> However, the dramatic growth of ethno-nationalist movements between 1987 and 1990 demonstrated that it was perilous to ignore regional demands. Consequently, the education legislation passed by the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation in July 1992 stated that school curricula in history had to integrate and balance state (federal) and ethno-national/regional components.<sup>9</sup> In the period between 1992 and 1994, laws on education were also passed in several republics, but they tended to be biased in favour of regional interests.<sup>10</sup> Eventually, the ME granted the republics the right to study their own past in secondary schools and higher education institutions, alongside the history of the Russian state. This decision was first implemented during the 1993/1994 academic year. In the late 1990s, the ME had lost its remaining control over the regional education systems.

A shift in textbook policy that contrasted with the initial post-Soviet tendency discussed above occurred in 2000 and 2001, when the ME appeared prepared to reduce the diversity of educational materials and became actively involved in designing history textbooks.<sup>11</sup> In August 2001, history textbooks were discussed by the Russian Government and subsequently placed under state control once more. This move coincided with the launch of 'Patriotic Education of Citizens of the Russian Federation, 2001–2005', a state-sponsored programme calling for state schools to actively promote patriotism. Since the programme's introduction, several liberal textbooks have upset the central authorities and the promotion of patriotism became one of the major goals of school education. A rehabilitation of the monarchy and what in earlier periods was called 'the tsarist colonial policy' began. Textbooks based on a 'statist-patriotic approach' were in favour in the federal centre, where Russia was viewed as an 'independent and self-sustained civilisation'.

The year 2004 saw the adoption of the State Educational Standard in History, which tightened state control over the content of textbooks, placing the content of federal textbooks in the hands of major Russian historians, who subsequently began to work with educators from the Russian Academy of Education.

## The 'Civilisational' Approach

From the late 1990s onwards, a 'civilisational' approach, replacing social class values with cultural values, became popular in Russian education. Its advocates hoped that it would counteract social discord and encourage social cohesion based on shared culture. The approach, however, failed to prevent the

emergence of confrontational stances on history. Some textbook authors picked up an idea of a 'clash of civilisations' and began to teach students that 'cultural differences caused tensions between civilisations'.<sup>12</sup> For many advocates of this approach, who view civilisation as being based on religion, Russia is to be represented as an 'Orthodox civilisation'. Some authors depicted 'Russian (*rossiiskaia*) civilisation' as consisting solely of the 'Russian super-ethnos', thus obscuring the fact that many other ethnic groups besides (ethnic) Russians lived in the country. Certain textbooks opened with statements such as 'Our ancestors were Eastern Slavs'.<sup>13</sup> Others explicitly identified 'our ancestors' as ethnic Russians who were said to have built up the Russian state.<sup>14</sup> A popular textbook of the early 2000s about 'Russian (Eurasian) civilisation' focused primarily on 'Russian (*russkie*) values' and defined 'Russian (Eurasian) civilisation' as ethnic Russian and Orthodox. The textbook aimed at 'shaping (ethnic) Russian national self-awareness'<sup>15</sup> and entirely neglected non-Russian ethnic groups such as the Tatars and the Caucasian Mountaineers, whom other textbooks depicted as bloodthirsty enemies derailing the progressive development of the Russian state. A special place within this paradigm is reserved for the Jews, whose history in Russia is presented in a way that often portrays them as 'aliens' who provoke suspicion and distrust. By contrast, the content of these books reads as an apologia for the ethnic Russian people and their history. The West is sharply opposed to the East, with the two representing 'two different types of spirituality', and Russia is often depicted as a permanent victim of encroachments from the West.

## Russia-Centric Bias in Federal Textbooks: Xenophobia

The poor coverage of ethnic groups in federal textbooks was not due to the 'civilisational' approach alone. Federal textbooks barely provided space or scope to satisfactorily represent the original histories of the numerous ethnic groups living in Russia; this may be part of the reason why some authors deliberately presented the history of Russia as that of the dominant majority, that is, ethnic Russians, and why federal textbooks tend to this day to demonstrate a Russia-centric bias. Yet the real problem appears to lie not in the amount of space allotted to ethnic histories in textbooks, but in the nature of how various ethnic groups' contribution to the development of Russia is evaluated. Evidently, schools' reluctance to address ethnic issues deepened the tendency among pupils 'to treat the (non-Russian) ethnic groups of Russia as

the “fifth column”, a weak link that might break in a critical situation [thus] undermining the integrity of the state’.<sup>16</sup> This approach provokes xenophobia and indoctrinates students with cultural racism.

Tatar authors unanimously accuse federal textbooks of taking an ‘imperial’ approach that focuses on the state as the major agent of history, identifies it with ethnic Russians and presents all other ethnic groups as voiceless objects of history.<sup>17</sup> In 2008, Tatar activists made an unsuccessful attempt to sue the textbook authors Alexander Preobrazhensky and Boris Rybakov for their allegedly distorted depiction of the Tatar participants in the Battle of Kulikovo (1380) as cruel savages and even cannibals.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the Tatar authors also share an essentialist view of *ethnos*.

A set of very popular textbooks was written by Andrei Sakharov, the director of the Institute of Russian History until the end of 2010. His textbooks were based on a paternalistic paradigm which depicted the territorial expansion of Russia as a civilising mission, which was allegedly beneficial to non-Russians but which checked Russia’s progress. Sakharov argued, for instance: ‘*Rus*’, followed by certain Russian principalities, slowly but steadily absorbed the neighbouring Baltic and Ugri-Finnish tribes. [While] it was a misfortune for the latter to have become dependent upon their strong neighbour, it also represented a setback for *Rus*’ due to the incorporation of economically backward lands populated by pagan hunter-gatherers’.<sup>19</sup> Sakharov’s textbooks claim to identify two major factors that for centuries hampered the progress of the Russian people: the ‘backwardness’ of non-Russians and the ‘malice’ of the West. And according to another textbook author, Alexander Bokhanov, ‘the barbaric and cruel invasions by neighbours that Russia was suffering from for centuries devastated the country and hampered its quiet and progressive development’.<sup>20</sup>

## The Depiction of Minorities in Federal Textbooks

For the Russian Jews, the history of the early medieval Khazar Kaganate is very important, as it shows that the early period of Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe coincided with that of the Eastern Slavs<sup>21</sup> and thus demonstrates that the Jews are, like the latter, native people in that part of the world, despite this status being denied them for centuries. However, many Russian federal textbooks either present the Khazars as dangerous enemies of the Slavs, limit their reference to them to Khazaria’s destruction by Prince Sviatoslav, or omit any reference to Khazaria at all.<sup>22</sup> No history textbook mentions the tenth-century Khazar-Jewish community in Kiev, which provided us with the earliest document in Kiev’s history, written a hundred years before the first

Russian chronicle.<sup>23</sup> Some textbooks present Khazaria and Judaism only in negative terms, which doubtlessly encourages students to regard Jews with suspicion and hostility.<sup>24</sup>

When discussing the partition of Poland in the late eighteenth century, most textbooks fail to mention that a large Jewish community was incorporated into the Russian Empire as a result. Only a few textbooks give students any information about the anti-Jewish policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as discussing religious inequality and the privileged position of Russian Orthodox adherents in the empire. Likewise, the issue of pogroms is covered by only a few authors. Thus the absence of the Jews is a consistent aspect of most textbooks on Russian history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A potential result of this may be that students regard the Jews as 'strangers' who suddenly appeared in Russia from nowhere and brought about nothing but trouble.

The Kazan' Tatars are proud of their glorious past, in which their ancestors not only established their own state, the Kazan' Khanate, but ruled over a great empire, the Golden Horde. At the same time, in the Russian intellectual tradition, the Tatars were continuously depicted as being among the most cruel and treacherous enemies of *Rus'*. This tradition, which was revived in the 1940s, arouses anger and bitterness among the Tatars. All Russian federal textbooks treat both the Mongol conquest and the Golden Horde as a great tragedy in Russian history, describing the losses it inflicted as immense and deploring the experience of labouring under a heavy foreign yoke. Certain authors identify the conquerors with the Tatars (instead of the Mongols), which adds to the negative image of the Tatars' ancestors. Whereas some Tatar experts protest against this treatment of history, some others argue that referring to the conquerors as 'Mongols' would leave students unable to find their Tatar ancestors either in the Golden Horde or in the medieval Kazan'. At the same time, the Mishar Tatars, who live in the Republic of Mordovia, have undertaken significant efforts to distance themselves from the Golden Horde and identify their ancestors with the early medieval Burtas. This is due to the fear that negative attitudes surrounding the perceived oppression endured under the Golden Horde may be redirected towards them by students of other groups.

The Russian conquest of the Kazan' and other khanates in the late sixteenth century has always given rise to bad feeling on both sides. Most federal textbooks perpetuate the traditional view of pre-revolutionary and Soviet historiography and justify the conquests as acts of revenge for the persistent and devastating Tatar raids against Muscovy, commonly asserting that 'Russia put an end to the devastating Tatar raids'.<sup>25</sup> Some textbook authors claim that Muscovy was forced to conquer the former Golden Horde's territories 'against

its will'.<sup>26</sup> The subjugation of the Tatar khanates by Moscow *Rus'* is presented as an act of self-defence in a way that is calculated to generate pro-Russian and anti-Tatar feeling among students. Only in rare instances do federal textbooks discuss the seizure of Tatar lands by the Russian nobility and monasteries, the forced Christianisation and Russification of the Tatars and other peoples of the Volga region, the development of the Tatar enlightenment and the Tatar national movement.

Tatar educationalists complain that federal textbooks depict the Tatars of the sixteenth century as less developed and argue that they learned farming, handicrafts and trade from the enlightening Russians. They also assert that the books distort the nature of the relations between Muscovy and the Kazan' Khanate by blaming the latter for the devastating raids, whereas in fact there was a 'military-political rivalry'. In addition, they claim the texts fail to mention the Tatars among the Volga-Ural peoples who were absorbed by the Moscow State, and, finally, that they neglect to discuss forced Christianisation and the persecution of Islam. Tatar experts profess themselves particularly frustrated with the level of omission or minimisation which they perceive in these textbooks of the Tatar role in Russian history, such as their active part in the peasants' wars, the Kazan' Admiralty's role in the development of the Russian Navy, the Tatar merchants' role in trade with Central Asia, mass Tatar service in the Russian Army and, finally, the Tatar origin of many Russian noble families.<sup>27</sup> The cultivation of the stereotype of Tatars as eternal enemies of *Rus'* and as 'barbaric' people with a less evolved culture almost certainly has a negative impact on Russian-Tatar relations and undoubtedly causes frustration among Tatars.

Whereas many federal textbooks portray the Kazan' Khanate as the aggressor and the Moscow State as an innocent victim, Tatar textbooks depict the opposite. Tatar authors argue that their loss of independence was a disaster which hampered the progress of the Tatar people,<sup>28</sup> while Moscow educationalists respond by complaining that such an approach 'shapes a negative attitude towards the (ethnic) Russians'.<sup>29</sup> It is evident that the ethnocentric approach demonstrated by both sides has led to deadlock, which may be overcome by goodwill and by a radically new paradigm which is currently emerging.<sup>30</sup>

In many federal textbooks, the main initiators of the Caucasian War of the early nineteenth century are identified as Caucasian highlanders who are accused of having carried out plundering raids. For example, an influential textbook maintained that 'the highland princes were mainly guilty of the beginning [of the Caucasian War], yet it was ordinary highlanders and peaceful Russian peasants who mostly suffered from it'.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, students do not learn of the scorched earth policy implemented by

Commander-in-Chief General Alexei Yermolov, nor of the brutal actions of other tsarist generals who exterminated entire indigenous village communities. They learn nothing of the plans under Aleksander I to remove the highlanders from the Caucasus. Similarly, no textbook discusses the forced resettlement of tens of thousands of indigenous inhabitants to the Ottoman Empire in the period from 1859 to 1865. Instead, a student will be taught that Russia could not tolerate the disobedience of the Muslim rebels (*murids*) and had to use force. In this way, the neglect of certain important facts and a one-sided discussion of other facts result in the demonisation of the highlanders, whereas the policy of the Russian authorities is represented as a 'forced response'.<sup>32</sup>

Many federal textbooks on the history of Russia in the twentieth century point to the nationalist and separatist ideas espoused by the non-Russian national-communists, but fail to discuss ethnic Russian chauvinism. In addition, they treat the establishment of national-territorial autonomous regions as an infringement of Russian interests. When discussing the political repression of the 1930s, federal textbooks fail to acknowledge that it also encompassed non-Russians rather than being aimed only against the (ethnic) Russians or Slavs in general. In many textbooks, the deportation of certain peoples, including North Caucasians, in 1943–1944 is either neglected or noted in passing without any in-depth analysis. On occasion, the deportation of the Chechens and Ingush is qualified as legitimate retribution for anti-Soviet revolt. Some textbooks give highly questionable and incomplete explanations such as: 'Most of the deported peoples were punished for either real or assumed collaboration with fascists'.<sup>33</sup> The State Educational Standard in History does not require this painful topic to be addressed at all.

It is noteworthy that, when covering ethno-national issues and movements in their chapters on the disintegration of the Soviet Union, some textbook authors reproduce the arguments of ethnic Russian nationalists. They refer to ethnic Russians as the most powerless of all the ethnic groups, because they lacked their own ethnically based republic and Communist Party, and the results of their labour were allegedly used to provide other republics with financial resources.

## Textbook Wars

Textbooks from the Northern Caucasus (with the exception of Ossetia) tend to treat the Caucasian War of the nineteenth century as a glorious period of regional history and to demonise the tsarist generals. At the same time,



federal textbooks justify the Caucasian War and apply negative stereotypes to the highlanders, attributing to them an allegedly inborn 'militant spirit' and claiming that they 'brutally tortured infidels' and that Shamil's Imamatus was based on 'cruel rules'.<sup>34</sup> These textbooks generally present two explanations for the war, the first being that the highlanders were traditionally bellicose and carried out plundering raids and the second that they adopted Islam in its radical form (*Muridism*), which meant they could not be negotiated with. By contrast, the North Caucasians still perceive the Caucasian War as an anti-colonial national liberation movement, which image contributes to their pride and self-esteem. Thus, whereas the federal textbooks demonstrate fascination with the culture-centric (civilisational) agenda, the regional ones still focus on the social class and national liberation paradigms.

Whereas Soviet and Russian authors argued that the North Caucasian highlanders voluntarily joined Russia, North Caucasian scholars and intellectuals revised this approach in the 1990s and now claim that highlanders swore loyalty towards Russia in their own political interests, which did not represent voluntary subjugation to the Russian authorities. This view implies that the North Caucasians were subjugated by military conquest rather than having peacefully joined Russia.<sup>35</sup>

Federal textbooks generally focus on Russian princes, tsars and emperors as well as Orthodox priests as the major historical figures. In textbooks from the republics, by contrast, enlightenment figures are placed at the centre of historical events. Thus, students learn to respect those who worked for the past in the former case (due to a tendency among federal textbooks to glorify the Russian pre-revolutionary past in contrast to subsequent events), and those who worked for the future in the latter (because enlighteners worked for a progressive transformation of culture and society).

It is evident from this discussion that the replacement of the social class paradigm with the ethno-nationalist one, as has taken place in Russia, far from leading to reconciliation within Russian society, has precipitated, or at least has the potential to precipitate, even deeper divisions. Moreover, despite the ME's attempts to foster tolerance in schools, an imposition of 'civilisational' identity upon ethnic Russian students seems to have the opposite effect, essentially cultivating fertile soil for chauvinist attitudes.

There are also tensions with regard to textbooks in certain Russian provinces and neighbouring North Caucasian republics. For example, a textbook published in 1996 in Stavropol and specific to this region argues that the Slavs had already settled in the northern Caucasus by the early medieval period and that some 'Azov Slavs' established the 'early Cossack state of Kazakiiia' in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, textbooks

issued in the neighbouring Krasnodar Krai present the region of Kuban' as the homeland of the Russian Cossacks. In both cases, an appropriation and Russification of the medieval history of indigenous peoples is evident and appears to aim at legitimising the Russian presence in the region. This is met with protests by the local Adyghs, who claim that their ancestors lived there until the end of the eighteenth century, when they were forced out by the Russian army, and fear that the narrative as represented in the textbooks discussed above amounts to an attempt to cleanse the regional history of the 'true natives' and to exaggerate the Cossacks' historical role.<sup>37</sup>

Textbooks from the republics are likewise not without their own problems. They reflect various ethnic tensions, including those caused by struggles over contested territories. The Prigorodny district is a focus of discord between the Ossetians and the Ingush in the northern Caucasus: granted to Ossetia after the Ingush were deported in 1944, it was not restored to the Ingush after their return from exile in 1957. A bloody Ossetian-Ingush clash in the autumn of 1992 was one of the manifestations of this conflict. Ever since, the Ossetian history textbook has depicted the Ingush as bloodthirsty savages. The textbook claims that, as early as the eighteenth century, the north-eastern Ossetian territories became a target for the 'armed aggression of the Ingush tribes'.<sup>38</sup> The term 'armed aggression' is telling, as it was often used by the Ossetian authorities to describe the Ossetian-Ingush conflict, and thus makes a link for students between the recent bloody clashes and the remote past. The students learn to perceive the conflict as an endemic one rooted in the allegedly innately violent behaviour of the Ingush. For its part, the Ingush textbook argued that the contested territory had been owned by the Ingush since time immemorial and only left by them temporarily in retreat from powerful enemies.<sup>39</sup>

There is a further dimension to the Ossetian-Ingush conflict that is played out in textbooks: the symbolic representation of the remote ancestors of each 'side'. In line with their historiography, Ossetian textbooks indiscriminately associate the ancestors of the Ossetians with the early medieval Alans, who are depicted as a culturally cohesive and homogenous Iranian-speaking group. By contrast, the Ingush textbook refutes any association between the Alans and Iranian languages or culture, asserting that 'in fact, historic Alans had nothing to do with the Iranians'. The book comments that 'an ethnic name of the Alans had been used for the Old Ingush Koban' tribes since the beginning of the Christian era'.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the textbook develops a distinct and idiosyncratic view of the origins of Indo-European peoples, evidently related to the Ossetian claims to 'Aryan heritage': 'The remote ancestors of the Indo-European peoples who belonged to the Nostratic linguistic stock and exhibited Mongolian physical characteristics migrated from Central Asia to Europe

in the fifth millennium BC and gradually assumed the Caucasian (European) physical traits of the native Sino-Caucasian inhabitants of Europe'.<sup>41</sup> In this context, the remote Ossetian ancestors, to whom is initially attributed what the book clearly considers the less prestigious Asian physical appearance, are essentially depicted as having been beneficiaries of the North Caucasians' generosity, which helped them to obtain not only their 'higher' culture but even their new physical appearance.

The Kabardians and the Balkars are the titular peoples of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic in the northern Caucasus. They have an age-old dispute with each other over land, a conflict which was aggravated by the Balkar deportations of 1944 and their resettlement in the new territories upon their return. In the medieval period, the Kabardians had their own polity, whereas the Balkars lived in several isolated villages. The two groups consequently developed contrasting views of regional history and the disparities between their approaches created deadlock in disputes over public education. In 1995, a school textbook written jointly by Kabardian and Balkar authors was published in *Nal'chik*. In its first chapters, the Scythians were identified as Iranian language speakers, and the founders of the Maikop culture (early Bronze Age) were defined as the Abkhazian-Adyghe ancestors of the Kabardians.<sup>42</sup> But in the section that followed, both the Maikop populations and the steppe inhabitants of the Bronze Age onwards were unreservedly associated with the Turks. The Turks were celebrated both as the builders of the Sumer civilisation and as the bearers of both Scythian and Alan cultures.<sup>43</sup> The history textbook published in the neighbouring Karachay-Cherkess Republic suffered from the same internal contradictions: the Karachay section was based on the Turkic approach, while that on the Cherkess manifested the Adyghe view of prehistory and early history.<sup>44</sup>

Whereas neighbouring peoples in the northern Caucasus wage symbolic 'history wars' against one another, the Republic of Tatarstan is the site of a struggle between two different factions within the Tatar intellectual elite itself.<sup>45</sup> The 'Tatarist' view locates the ancestry of the contemporary Tatars in the Golden Horde; it aims at a cultural and linguistic consolidation of Tatar heritage throughout Russia under the aegis of the Kazan' Tatars and seeks symbolic prestige through references to the early nomadic Turkic empires (which flourished much earlier than Kievan Rus') and to the powerful Golden Horde, which dominated the Russian principalities in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. This 'Tatarism' competes with the 'Bulgarist' view, which pushes the roots of Tatar civilisation back to the pre-Mongol Bulgar state in the Middle Volga region. The 'Bulgarists' are concerned with the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan. They also seek to release

the Tatars from the negative image of them which was cultivated for centuries in Russia, centring on their participation in the destruction of Kievan Rus' in the early thirteenth century.

The two competing Tatar textbooks that were published in the 1990s contained opposing views. An attempt at reconciling these two ideas was made in the textbooks of the early 2000s, where the establishment of the Golden Horde was ascribed to the Mongol khans and the ancestors of the Tatars were associated with both the Bulgars and the Kypchaks. This said, the history of the Golden Horde is still presented as part of the Tatar people's history, and the Kazan' Khanate is sometimes identified as 'Bulgar-Tatar'. Furthermore, the Tatar ancestors are carefully separated from the Mongols, as though they bravely resisted the Mongol assault.<sup>46</sup> A further complication arises in the fact that the neighbouring Chuvash view the Volga Bulgars as their own ancestors and are unwilling to share this valuable heritage with the Tatars.<sup>47</sup> The Bulgar version of the Chuvash origins was taught in Chuvash schools for many years. Chuvash authors described conflict between the Bulgars (as the Chuvash ancestors) and the Tatars, the latter being said to have attacked the former during the medieval period, bringing about destruction and oppression. For the Chuvash, the Kazan' Khanate was populated by the Tatar-Kypchaks rather than the Bulgars. Yet, since there is not any contested territory, the Tatar and the Chuvash versions of history serve for 'internal consumption' only and do not clash.

Tatar-Bashkir relations are a different matter. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, some Tatar activists glorified the national liberation wars which took place from the late sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, giving the impression that they were waged jointly by the Tatars and all their non-Russian neighbours, including Bashkirs, against the Russian Empire.<sup>48</sup> This view was reproduced in Tatar textbooks.<sup>49</sup> The Bashkirs, however, did not identify with the Tatar heroes and martyrs, arguing that local non-Tatar people would not have struggled for the restoration of the Kazan' Khanate, where they were subjugated by the Tatars. The Bashkir historian Irek Akmanov recognised that the Tatars did on occasion take part in the revolts, but considered them to have played merely a subsidiary role and to have sometimes even helped the Russian army to suppress the revolts; he thus rejected what he considered to be the 'Tatarisation of Bashkir history'.<sup>50</sup> The highly emotional nature of the dispute is rooted in the tensions that characterise Tatar-Bashkir relations in the Republic of Bashkortostan, where the titular people, the Bashkirs, account for the minority of the population and the demographically strongest communities are represented by the Tatars and ethnic Russians, who suffer from discrimination.

## Conservative and Liberal Approaches

After the publication in the second half of the 1990s of a provocative liberal textbook for secondary schools, *History of the Fatherland in the twentieth century*, compiled by Igor Dolutsky,<sup>51</sup> the Russian authorities began to take an interest in the content of history textbooks. At a meeting with historians held on 27 November 2003, Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned what he called the ‘blackening’ of Russian history and called for the cultivation of a sense of pride in this history among students. The Russian Federation’s education ministry was charged with exercising control over the content of federal textbooks on the history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 2004, prominent Russian historians from the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) were directed to examine the textbooks; a year later, they were joined by educationalists from the Russian Academy of Education. The RAS committee was headed by Andrei Sakharov, a corresponding member (*chlen-korrespondent*) of the RAS and director of the Institute of Russian History until the end of 2010, under whose leadership liberal textbooks fell out of favour and conservative ones gained ascendancy.

A new wave of textbook rewriting commenced in 2007 and 2008, initiated by an all-Russian conference to discuss ‘urgent issues in teaching recent history’, which was held in Moscow in June 2007 and at which the key role of the state in historical education was emphasised. The conference was attended by the then Minister of Education and Science, Andrei Fursenko, and the First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Vladislav Surkov, who presented to the delegates two manuals for teachers—*The Modern History of Russia, 1945–2006: a Teacher’s Handbook*<sup>52</sup> and *Social Knowledge: The Global World in the Twenty-first Century*.<sup>53</sup> The former work described Stalin as the ‘most successful leader of the USSR’ and claimed that he had properly followed the logic of the country’s internal development and legitimised political centralisation and harsh policies with reference to the ‘unfavourable circumstances of the Russian state’s development’, namely ‘a severe climate’ and ‘a large territory’.<sup>54</sup>

After the conference, some of the participants met Putin, who denounced the alleged shortcomings in current textbooks and promised that new ones, with a clearer and more consistent concept of twentieth-century Russian history, would soon appear. He also repeated previous calls for patriotic education; in particular, he asserted that textbooks on history were allegedly compiled by authors ‘paid in foreign grants’, thus implying that they served foreign interests.<sup>55</sup>

In 2008, the Prosveshchenie publishing house released an anonymous memorandum on its website entitled 'On the concept of the lecture course in Russian history from 1900 to 1945'; the text referred to isolationism as one of the positive features of Russian history and blamed Western influence for Russia's historical misfortunes. Materials were subsequently published that referred to this concept; their authors replaced the notion of 'totalitarianism' with an emphasis on the motives and logic of the authorities' decision-making and, rejecting accusations of backwardness, claimed that Russia was backward only in what had been borrowed from abroad and which had nothing to do with Russia's civilisational core. These materials, in other words, employed a view of the authenticity of 'Russian civilisation' as a way of turning backwardness into cultural originality. 'Opposition between Russians and non-Russians' was listed in these materials as one of the perennial factors that made life in Russia difficult; the growth of revolutionary attitudes was explained as a 'response to Europeanisation' and the 'introduction of European ideas to intellectuals' rather than relating to an obsolete political arrangement. The authors approved political isolationism and justified Stalinist terror with a reference to the urgent interests of the country which had allegedly called for forced modernisation.<sup>56</sup>

These teaching materials revealed an aspiration to rehabilitate Stalinism and to foster an anti-Western stance. They combined facts with controversial interpretations; for example, while stressing political motivations, the authors constructed a rational foundation for Stalin's repressive acts and left aside any moral evaluation thereof. According to Elena Zubkova, this was the first state-sponsored version of Russian history that aimed to produce a positive image of Russia by all possible means.<sup>57</sup> David Brandenberger noted that these textbooks interpreted patriotism as loyalty to the state rather than to society.<sup>58</sup>

The opponents of this view of history argued that it was aimed, firstly, at justifying the harsh policies of the tsarist officials and the criminal actions of the Soviet rulers thereafter, and, secondly, at proving the existence of alleged long-standing political intrigues carried out by the West (especially Britain), and was therefore focused on championing an isolationist political course.<sup>59</sup> The American analyst Leon Aron has found evident traces of the former Soviet concept and considered this to have been imposed upon the authors by Putin, who adhered to the Soviet view of Russian history and was highly suspicious towards the West.<sup>60</sup> In response, the concept's editors tried to reduce its negative effect, and Alexander Danilov defined it as raw materials for discussion purposes only.<sup>61</sup> The harsh criticism the concept had attracted caused its authors to make a large number of revisions and remove an entire section devoted to debates on Stalin's role.

Many new textbooks on the history of Russia in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been published during the last decade. Whereas the textbook by Dolutsky referred to above informed students on alternative views of the recent past and discussed alternative solutions to economic and political problems, other textbooks have been more single-minded; although they acknowledged the brutal and inhuman nature of social policy, including mass repression, under Stalin, they argued that there was no other option for the country's rapid modernisation. While Dolutsky explained Soviet misfortunes with reference to the inefficient political management of the country, other authors claimed that this management was highly efficient, despite the advancements it produced being achieved at the expense of numerous victims. Some of these new textbooks contradicted themselves in, for instance, pointing to the great speed of successful industrialisation in the 1930s while simultaneously recognising that the USSR was not well prepared for the war, and omitting to discuss the reasons for this failure.<sup>62</sup> On other occasions, textbook authors maintained that all the peoples of the USSR came together in the struggle against the Nazi invasion, then discussed, further on in the narrative, the collaborationists and 'national units' in the *Wehrmacht* (an issue usually receiving only a brief mention). Textbooks, in discussing Hitler's programme of genocide against the 'Russians and other people', very rarely mentioned the Holocaust. Filippov's textbook, discussed above, blamed the Stalinist authorities' ineffectiveness for the unsuccessful start to the war and at the same time called Stalin the 'genuine leader of the nation'.<sup>63</sup> Having recognised that mass collectivisation was brutal and unfair, the authors maintained that 'what was mostly important was fast growth in the volume of grain for sale'.<sup>64</sup>

While discussing many of the same facts referred to in Dolutsky's textbook, most of the other textbooks reproduced the Soviet interpretative cliché. For example, the annexation of the Baltic States, Western Belarus, Western Ukraine and Bessarabia was presented as a restoration of the original territory of the Russian Empire. The Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty of 1939 was depicted as an essential measure in response to the dishonest policies of the Western powers. The textbook compiled by Alexander Filippov, discussed at some length above, rejected the concept of 'totalitarianism', declining to compare the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany on this basis because the two states were based on quite different ideologies. The authors acknowledged that the USSR was a non-democratic state, but argued that it was 'an example of a better, just society for many millions of people in the world'.<sup>65</sup> This textbook contained what was essentially an apologia for Putin's presidency, with no evident criticism.



Despite all these shortcomings and distortions, Filippov's textbooks were more temperate than the aforementioned 'concept'. Initially, just 1000 (part one) to 12,000 (part two) copies were in circulation, but additional print runs then followed, resulting in up to 500,000 copies. Even so, they are by no means popular in contemporary schools. Many teachers still principally use the textbook compiled by A. A. Danilov and L. G. Kosulina, which has also been published in several editions.

## Conclusion

'History wars' in Russia are the manifestation of a struggle for political goals defined in ethnic terms: increase in political status, access to natural and financial resources, improvement of social conditions and extension of ethno-political territory. In such an environment, history provides important symbolic resources which are used to express vital political and social demands in coded language and to legitimate these demands with reference to the merits of current citizens' heritages and ancestors.

These 'history wars' are waged at three different levels within Russia: firstly, federal textbooks are often in opposition to those of ethnically non-Russian peoples; secondly, textbooks issued in the neighbouring republics within Russia often contradict one another; and finally, republican histories find themselves in dispute with those of local ethnic minorities. Such conflicts predominantly arise through the neglect or complete omission of certain sensitive topics relating to particular, stigmatised groups and in interpretations of history which privilege the dominant majority at the expense of minorities, rather than openly discriminatory or hateful language. Whereas there was once a fourth level of confrontation in this field, between liberal and conservative approaches, the liberal approach has now essentially been banished from textbooks. This does not mean, however, that it has entirely left schools, where many liberal-minded teachers continue to practise.

The elimination of the regional component to school history in December 2007 gave rise to a clear change; now, if regional histories are taught in schools at all, then their status is merely as a minor supplement to general historical or geographical lecture courses. In the 2015/2016 academic year, a new generation of textbooks was issued in three sets, by the only three publishing houses that had gained the ME's permission—Prosveshchenie, Drofa and Russkoe slovo.

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## Notes

1. Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society—the Soviet Case* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 141–142.
2. On cultural racism, which essentialises ethnic cultures and builds up durable walls between them to the extent that they are viewed as incomprehensible, see Robert Miles, *Racism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); Pierre-Andre Taguieff, *Sur la Nouvelle Droite* (Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1994); Victor A. Shnirelman, 'Incompatibility of cultures: From scientific concepts and schooling to actual policy'. In: *Anthropology and Archaeology of Eurasia*, 48, no. 1 (2009), 67–103.
3. Teun Van Dijk, *Elite Discourse and Racism* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1993).
4. *Istoriki chitaiut uchebniki istorii. Traditsionnye i novye kontseptsii uchebnoi literatury* [Historians are reading history textbooks. Traditional and new concepts of education literature]. Ed. by Eimermaher C., Bordiugov G. (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2002), 203.
5. A. M. Vodiansky, 'Istoricheskoe i obshchestvovedcheskoe obrazovaniie: strategii razvitiia [Education in history and sociology: Development Strategy]'. In: *Prepodavanie istorii v shkole*, 3 (1995), 55. All translations by the author unless otherwise stated.
6. I. Prelovskaya, 'Shkole prikhoditsia tugo, no reforma prodolzhaetsia (Schools suffering hard times, the reform is going on)'. *Izvestiia*, 28 August 1992; Stephen L. Webber, *School, reform and society in the New Russia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 68–72, 96–98.
7. Ye Panova, "'Chuzhoi" za shkol'noi partoi: predstavleniia uchitelei ob etnicheskikh razlichiiakh ["Alien" at the school desk: teachers' views of ethnic differences]'. In: *Racist discourse in Russian education*, ed. V. Voronkov, O. Karpenko, and A. Osipov. (St Petersburg: Aleteia, 2008), 115–138.
8. R. G. Pikhoia, *Sovietskii Soiuz: istoriia vlasti, 1945–1991* (Soviet Union: history of power, 1945–1991) (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia gosudarstvennoi sluzhby, 1998), 290.
9. M. N. Kuzmin, A. A. Susokolov, V. K. Batsyn, M. B. Yeshich, *Kontseptsia natsional'noi shkoly: tseli i priority sodержaniia obrazovaniia* [A concept for ethnic schools: aims and priorities of the content of education] (Moscow: Institut natsional'nykh problem obrazovaniia, 1994), 29; Stephen L. Webber, *School, reform and society*, 32–33, 133.
10. For example, see V. D. Danilov et al. *Natsional'naia shkola Rossiiskoi Federatsii: respublikanskii zakony ob obrazovanii* [Ethnic schools in the Russian Federation: republican laws on education]. (Moscow-Cheboksary: Ministerstvo obrazovaniia RF, Ministerstvo obrazovaniia, nauki i vysshei shkoly Chuvashskoi Respubliki, 1994).

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# 40

## Rwanda

Denise Bentrovato

### Introduction

Rwanda is a small country in the heart of the African continent that is principally known today for the brutal violence that erupted in its recent history.<sup>1</sup> From the late 1950s up to the mid-1990s, members of the country's Tutsi minority were the victims of recurrent episodes of targeted violence. The first such incident occurred during the so-called 1959 Revolution, a watershed event that had brought to power an emergent Hutu elite at the expense of a previously dominant Tutsi oligarchy. After a series of violent outbursts in the 1960s and 1970s, internecine violence resumed during the 1990–1994 civil war. The conflict was sparked by a cross-border incursion launched by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Uganda-based rebel movement that was mainly composed of Tutsi refugees who were unable to return to Rwanda. In April 1994, the assassination of the country's Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana set in motion Rwanda's infamous genocide, during which the Tutsi in particular were systematically massacred by their neighbours in a frenzy steered by Hutu extremists. This tragic event ended three months later, following the RPF's military victory and subsequent accession to political power.

This chapter illustrates how, in Rwanda's highly divided and politicised setting, the country's history has been a matter of particular contention. Through the decades and to this day, this history has been written and rewritten, and taught and re-taught, by successive regimes and their opponents in accordance with their specific political agendas.<sup>2</sup> In the post-genocide period, as the new government distanced itself from the discourse and policies of the ousted

regime, it introduced a temporary moratorium on the teaching of Rwanda's history in schools. What followed was a long process of historical reconstruction and curriculum and textbook revision by the state, which eventually resulted in the imposition of what has been widely considered as an enforced collective memory of the still largely controversial national past.<sup>3</sup>

## Context and Historical Background

Between independence and the 1994 genocide, the country's history had been written by the dominant Hutu elites, with an eye to supporting ethnicist politics aimed at legitimising their position of power vis-à-vis the Tutsi minority. Influenced by colonial ethnography, the official historical narrative, which is now discredited by many scholars, was based on a belief in the primordialism of ethnic differences and antagonism and on an ideology of Hutu victimhood. Until 1994, the state presented the ancient past as a time of conquest and of secular feudal oppression of the autochthonous Bantu Hutu majority by a foreign Hamitic race of Tutsi invaders. According to this narrative, the ancestral division and tension between the two groups deepened further during colonisation: by choosing to collaborate with and to favour the Tutsi, the colonial powers were said to have aggravated an existing situation of injustice against the legitimate owners of Rwanda. Against the backdrop of the perception that the Tutsi minority had long exercised 'tyranny', the 1959 'social revolution' was celebrated as a victorious 'liberation struggle' of the subjugated Hutu masses and as a national triumph that had brought democracy and social justice to Rwanda. Hutu propagandists depicted the 1990–1994 war as the final struggle between Good and Evil in the context of an ongoing combat deemed necessary to preserve the gains of the revolution. Negationist arguments, which extremist militants and their supporters continue to propagate today, denied the genocidal nature of the massacres perpetrated against the Tutsi and explained away the ensuing 'inter-ethnic' violence as the result of a 'spontaneous' outburst of rage among the Hutu population following the RPF's 'war of aggression' and their assassination of the president. In addition to its minimisation and justification of the anti-Tutsi violence, this narrative demonised the Tutsi-dominated RPF as an aggressor that had infringed upon the sovereignty of Rwanda in order to quench its thirst for power and as a murdering force that had committed abominable crimes, including genocide, against innocent Hutu. This Manichean and antagonistic historical narrative was widely disseminated in Rwanda, especially through the media. Jean-Pierre Chrétien's ground-breaking analysis of the state propaganda of that time

revealed the media's abundant ideological mobilisation of the past.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes explicitly urging the population not to forget or ignore their history, newspapers in particular made extensive use of historical references intended to educate the masses on the 'correct' history of Rwanda, which had the effect of nurturing feelings of 'ethnic' belonging and of resentment and fear towards 'the Tutsi enemy'. Intellectuals and academics are reported to have played a significant role in authenticating and propagating historical clichés in support of the official ideology.<sup>5</sup> As André Sibomana observed in 1999, it was perhaps 'not a coincidence that one of the brains behind Hutu extremist ideology, Ferdinand Nahimana [RTLM<sup>6</sup> Director of Programmes], was a historian'.<sup>7</sup> Schools are likewise believed to have significantly contributed to the transmission of an 'official, stereotypical, simplistic and erroneous version of Rwandan history'.<sup>8</sup> Its emphases included a history of successive migrations, the issue around the country's ethnic majority and minority, the 1959 Hutu liberation from what were depicted as the oppressive Tutsi invaders, and the perceived menace posed by the 'terrorist' Tutsi refugees. In this way, history education in pre-genocide Rwanda appears to have been aimed at providing historical justification for claims of 'ethnic' differences and for the overwhelming power of the Hutu and at warning against a return to Tutsi rule. A Rwandan teacher who was interviewed after 1994 has stated the view that '[t]he contents of the history course ... had a direct bearing on the genocide of 1994'.<sup>9</sup>

## Current Debates: Documentation

In the post-genocide period, Rwanda's history became the object of renewed and passionate debate. In recognition of the perceived negative role of historiography and history teaching in fuelling internal division and tensions, concerned Rwandans immediately acknowledged a thorough re-examination, demystification, and an update of the country's history as being of paramount importance to the country's post-war national reconstruction. It was against this backdrop that the teaching of Rwandan history in schools was suspended as early as 1995, a temporary moratorium in response to the fact that the old curriculum and textbooks were considered to present a distorted, biased, and antagonistic image of Rwandan history and society. The government's intent was to develop a revised school history curriculum in accordance with the values of the new era.<sup>10</sup> What ensued was a long process of simultaneous rewriting of history and education reform, which eventually culminated in the official reintroduction of the teaching of Rwandan history in schools.

With the aim of reassessing the country's history, debates were organised from the mid-1990s onwards by a number of individuals and institutions, including the Office of the President,<sup>11</sup> the National University of Rwanda (NUR),<sup>12</sup> the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC),<sup>13</sup> and the well-respected local NGO Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP).<sup>14</sup> The aspiration often formulated during such discussions was for the Rwandan people to achieve a shared and objective reading of the past and regain ownership over a history that had long been distorted for political purposes. Specifically, frequent calls were made for the revision and 'correction' of the 'false' 'ethnicist' version of history and for its replacement with a more 'truthful' and 'unifying' account of the nation. During the NURC's first summit in 2000, for instance, there were explicit demands for the development and teaching of a new history of Rwanda with the aim of promoting unity and reconciliation. Recommendations formulated on this occasion included 'writing the history of the country on the basis of extensive research so that Rwandans can learn the truth about their history; teaching history so that Rwandans can be reconciled based on a true unity; ... [and] teaching history in all schools as soon as possible'.<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, in a post-genocide context characterised by a highly divided and traumatised society and by the existence of divergent and often antagonistically opposed memories of the conflict, the task of rewriting and teaching a widely accepted national history has proved particularly daunting. As Catharine Newbury has observed, 'not surprisingly in such a polarised atmosphere, historical reconstruction is itself highly contested'.<sup>16</sup> Pointing to the challenges of writing history in post-genocide Rwanda, Nigel Eltringham, among others, further recognised that the 'desired impartiality is almost impossible to achieve. However creative (and careful) a writer attempts to be there will always be room for accusations of bias towards one side or the other'.<sup>17</sup>

The controversies in post-genocide Rwanda have primarily related to (1) identity and ethnicity, (2) origins, migrations, and settlement, (3) the nature of traditional social relations and the impact of colonisation, (4) the decolonisation process and the 'Hutu Revolution', and (5) the 1990–1994 war and genocide and the aftermath thereof. Contention on such issues has been openly expressed outside the country in particular, as manifest in the international proliferation of divergent arguments and views. Within Rwanda, however, the reconstruction and renewal of the historical narrative appears to have turned into a tightly controlled process that eventually resulted in the circulation of canonical representations of the past in the public sphere. Since the mid-1990s, despite the existence of various open controversies requiring further deliberation, the incumbent political leadership has engaged in intense

politics of history which has given birth to a new official historical narrative and seen it vigorously propagated as the only truthful account of the country's past. Largely unifying and nationalist in nature, the new narrative contrasts starkly with the content and aims of the formerly official and now competing discourse. In particular, in pursuit of the intent to provide historical justification for a policy that has outlawed 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' labels in the name of 'unity and reconciliation', it summons the past to testify to the alleged irrelevance and indeed danger of such identities in the Rwandan context. In accordance with this aim, the current government has been adamant in promoting a view of the past which emphasises the ancient unity and harmony of the old Rwandan nation and directs the blame for the outbreak of internal conflict towards the colonisers due to their actions in introducing notions of ethnic division and concomitant tensions among 'the Rwandan people'. The narrative espoused by the current leadership accuses selfish, corrupt, despotic, and racist regimes under foreign influence of perpetuating ethnicist colonial practices and hence of having given rise to four decades of bad governance and violence. The 1959 watershed is currently portrayed as a terrible national tragedy which marked the beginning of a history of systematic discrimination, oppression, persecution, and ultimately genocide against the Tutsi. Directly implicating the former colonial power and local Hutu elites in post-colonial violence, President Paul Kagame maintained in 2003 that, '[o]nce terror and mass murder were introduced in 1959 under the auspices of the Belgian Administration, subsequent regimes tried genocide in their exercise of power. The period 1959–1994 is indeed a history of genocide in slow motion'.<sup>18</sup> In this narrative, while blame is apportioned to the colonisers, the former Hutu regimes and their followers, as well as to a passive and even complicit international community, the RPF receives high praise for having heroically fought and defeated the murderous regime through its 'war of liberation' and for having subsequently made enormous achievements in rebuilding the country and the nation in the interest and to the benefit of all Rwandans.

It is this account of history which dominates today's public domain. The government has propagated its narrative via a large variety of channels. In addition to public speeches, government documents, state-controlled media, official genocide memorialisation practices, and trials of alleged perpetrators, educational structures have been important vectors of the dominant discourse. These structures have been spearheaded by *Ingando*, or 'solidarity camps', which since 1996 have provided for the 're-education' of large sections of Rwandan society as part of the NURC's civic education programme.<sup>19</sup>

The role of schools in propagating official historical discourse was limited by the suspension in 1995 of the teaching of Rwanda's history. Although the



Ministry of Education (MoE) issued revised syllabi in the second half of the 1990s, reluctant teachers apparently maintained an effective moratorium. Merely provided with simple lists of topics, and lacking adequate references, guidance, and training, teachers are reported to have been hesitant to address the country's highly sensitive and controversial history in the classroom.<sup>20</sup> In recognition of the challenges surrounding the teaching of national history in Rwandan schools, the new curricula reiterated calls to 'teach only established facts and discard hypotheses', 'to review the existing books and correct the history of Rwanda', and 'to organise urgently [*sic*] seminars on the history of Rwanda for all history teachers in the country'.<sup>21</sup> In 2003, in response to these and related challenges, the American NGO Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) and Berkeley University launched a resources development project and began holding teacher seminars in order to support the work of the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). The proposed history resource book was finally published in 2006 under the title *The Teaching of History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach*. At that time, the American project partners documented the fact that the introduction of the proposed democratic teaching methods and critical methodology in history teaching faced significant resistance in a country where deviating from the official line had become increasingly perilous.<sup>22</sup> In the view of some, what the government intended to promote was an 'unquestioning acceptance of common lessons' in a setting in which there was 'no room for multiple points of view'.<sup>23</sup> In 2008 and 2010, after having distanced itself from the collaborative project, the NCDC published its own new and detailed history curricula, thereby formally embedding the official historical discourse in schools. At primary level, state ideology has largely been taught through the newly introduced subject of social sciences; at secondary level, it has been transmitted through the revised history curriculum<sup>24</sup> and through political education. The history course now also uses officially approved educational materials, the first to be issued since the end of the genocide. Notable among them is the MoE's teacher's guide *The History of Rwanda. A Participatory Approach*, published in 2010.<sup>25</sup> In line with the state narrative, the new school history syllabus (1) idealises the distant past by emphasising the social cohesion of Rwanda's traditional society and by omitting references to ethnicity and to successive migrations; (2) emphasises the colonisers' primary responsibility for the destruction of Rwandans' ancient unity; (3) teaches that post-colonial regimes exacerbated colonial-era divisions and initiated a history of anti-Tutsi violence and discrimination; (4) legitimises the RPF invasion as a 'War of Liberation' that ended the 'genocide against the Tutsi' and ousted a dictatorial and murderous regime; and (5) praises the many achievements of the post-genocide government.

As a result of the government's intensive educational efforts, the Rwandan population, including the younger generation,<sup>26</sup> appears to have widely embraced the new official narrative as the 'true' history of Rwanda. This notwithstanding, several observers have questioned the genuineness of this apparent acceptance of the hegemonic discourse on account of its 'top-down nature' and of the strictly enforced 'censorship of alternative accounts'.<sup>27</sup> Existing research reveals a situation in which, while they might be echoed in public, the regime's 'definite ideas about Rwandan history ... are not in harmony with those held by many Rwandans'.<sup>28</sup> It is alleged that, despite the form of collective memory imposed by the government, alternative versions of 'the truth' have continued to circulate more or less clandestinely within Rwanda and more freely abroad.<sup>29</sup>

The official account of the country's history, in addition to its lack of parity with the views held by many Rwandans, has also been widely discredited by critics for its partly erroneous, simplistic, and biased content. In a particularly disapproving tone, René Lemarchand contended in 2009 that the Rwandan government has 'continue[d] to manipulate the historical record for the sake of an official memory'<sup>30</sup> which he has described elsewhere as 'manipulated' and 'enforced'.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, Johan Pottier and Filip Reyntjens have spoken of a campaign of 'disinformation' orchestrated by the current regime for the purpose of maintaining its position of power.<sup>32</sup> This reported manipulation relates particularly to the politicised representation of the war and of the genocide, which is widely believed to have found expression in one-sided memorialisation and justice processes. According to critics, in exclusively focusing on addressing the crimes committed against the Tutsi (by Hutu), such processes have produced a narrative which has institutionalised a belief in the innocence and victimhood of the Tutsi and in the collective guilt of the Hutu. Speaking of an 'assassination of Hutu memory', which he claims has been 'airbrushed out of history',<sup>33</sup> Lemarchand, among others, has condemned the official narrative for its remarkable silence with regard to the many Hutu victims and survivors and to the crimes perpetrated by RPF soldiers and by Tutsi individuals both during and after the war.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, numerous observers have pointed out that a sincere discussion of the past and the present that might promote genuine reconciliation has been fundamentally hampered by a policy of 'enforced ethnic amnesia'.<sup>35</sup> Commended by some as a strategy for the overcoming of divisions, the government's unitarist discourse has been denounced by others as being both self-serving and dangerous. According to Lemarchand, '[t]he imposition of an official memory, purged of ethnic references, is not just a convenient ploy to mask the brutal realities of ethnic discrimination. It institutionalizes a mode

of thought control profoundly antithetical to any kind of inter-ethnic dialogue aimed at recognition and forgiveness'. He concludes: '[t]his is hardly the way to bring Hutu and Tutsi closer together in a common understanding of their tragic past'.<sup>36</sup> In a similar vein, Sarah Warshauer Freedman et al. have argued that, '[i]n Rwanda, the policy of denying the reality of ethnicity and the inability to discuss ethnicity comfortably make it hard for everyday citizens to process what happened during the genocide and to talk about lingering fears and dangers. Unless that policy is addressed and remedied, the teaching of Rwanda's history will be flawed, and the potential for further destructive conflict will remain a concern'.<sup>37</sup>

Today, various studies seem to suggest that a loosening of the current strict controls on the production of the historical narrative in Rwanda is unlikely to occur any time soon. Many concerned observers have deplored a situation which zealously seeks to guarantee a monopoly on the truth and to rigorously enforce it through an increasingly wide range of repressive legal constraints. There has been specific criticism of a series of laws on broadly defined concepts of 'divisionism', 'revisionism', 'negationism', and 'genocide ideology' and of their alleged use as tools for the criminalisation of any deviation from the official discourse on history and identity and of any questioning of the government's policies and human rights records. Referencing a context in which the enforcement of the government's 'truth' has obstructed any honest appraisal of the country's past, André Guichaoua concluded that '[t]he memory war will ... continue, because the work of truth-seeking has not been brought to completion'.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

Two decades after the genocide, Rwanda appears to have miraculously risen from the ashes of death and destruction. Besides massively investing in the country's reconstruction and development, the post-genocide government has worked to rebuild a severely torn and traumatised nation. Particularly by propagating an official discourse that invokes a specific version of the country's history, the government has intensively 'educated' the Rwandan population, and especially its young people, towards the abandonment of old ethnocentric views and the embracing of a proud national identity and a commitment to unity and reconciliation for the sake of internal peace and cohesion. Despite the laudable nature of these intentions, strong concerns have been expressed with regard to the government's 'absolutist' approach to history, consisting of the imposition of a single and one-sided historical account

and the simultaneous censorship and outlawing of alternative narratives and restriction of debate on the past and the present. While this approach has been justified by the government as being necessary to prevent renewed inter-necine violence and to promote peace and reconciliation, critics believe that the government has, in so doing, failed to break with previous authoritarian practices and has thus countered rather than promoted the attainment of its stated objectives.

The way forward towards long-term peace, these critics have argued, lies in the promotion of open dialogue in a context of guaranteed freedom of speech in which differing experiences and views are expressed, shared, acknowledged, and accepted. An unrestricted exchange of opinions and insights is deemed crucial to the construction of an inclusive collective memory that is widely and genuinely embraced by the population rather than forcibly imposed through manipulation and fear. Historians and educationalists have proposed the promotion of a democratic and participatory approach to historical narratives as a desirable way to teach a reformed history syllabus. History education, where it allows and encourages students to critically and constructively explore, analyse, and discuss multiple historical accounts instead of merely inculcating an official and definite 'truth', is considered to have an important role to play in the creation and consolidation of a peaceful and democratic society.

Voices have spoken up with vehemence both in favour of and against a change of direction. The question remains as to whether post-genocide Rwanda is ready to expose itself to, and to positively meet, the inevitable challenges posed by democracy. It may be that caution is warranted in the immediate aftermath of mass violence; in the longer term, however, any society that wishes to rebuild itself on a solid foundation in order to avert a relapse into violent conflict will eventually have to respond to the imperative need to openly and genuinely face its past. Rwanda will be no exception to this rule.

## Notes

1. Besides Hutu and Tutsi, Rwanda's population is also composed of a small minority of pygmy Twa, a group that historical accounts have tended to neglect.
2. On Rwanda's politics of history and memory, see, inter alia, V. Jefremovas, 'Contested Identities: Power and the Fictions of Ethnicity, Ethnography and History in Rwanda', *Anthropologica* 39 (1997) 1–2, 91–104; C. Newbury, 'Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda'. In *Genocide, Collective*

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3. For a more extensive treatment of these issues, see D. Bentrovato, *Narrating and Teaching the Nation: The politics of education in pre- and post-genocide Rwanda* (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2015).
  4. J.-P. Chrétien et al., *Rwanda: Les Médias du Génocide* [Rwanda: The Media of the Genocide] (Paris: Karthala, 1995); J.-P. Chrétien, *Le Défi de l'Ethnisme: Rwanda et Burundi, 1990–1996* [The Challenge of Ethnism: Rwanda and Burundi, 1990–1996] (Paris: Karthala, 1997), 148, 347–353, 359.
  5. J.-P. Chrétien et al., *Rwanda*, 97/109.
  6. The infamous *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*.
  7. A. Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Gilbert and Hervé Deguine*, trans. Carina Tertsakian (London: Pluto, 1999), 81.
  8. A. Obura, *Never Again: Educational Reconstruction in Rwanda* (Paris: UNESCO IIEP, 2003), 101; African Rights, *The Heart of Education: Assessing Human Rights in Rwanda's Schools* (Kigali: African Rights, 2001). For an in-depth analysis of school history teaching in post-colonial Rwanda, see J.-D. Gasanabo, *Rwanda: Enseignement de l'Histoire Nationale de 1962 à 1994: Quelle Construction de l'Image de l'Autre?* [Rwanda: Teaching of National History from 1962 to 1994. Which Construction of the Image of the Other?] (Saarbrücken: Editions Universitaires Européennes, 2010), and D. Bentrovato, *Narrating and Teaching the Nation*.
  9. African Rights, *The Heart of Education*.
  10. MINEPRISEC (Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire)/MINPRISUPRES (Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche Scientifique et de la Culture), *La Politique et la Planification de l'Education au Rwanda* (Kigali, 1995). See also J. Rutayisire (then head of the National Curriculum Development Centre), J. Kabano & J. Rubagiza, 'Redefining Rwanda's Future: The Role of Curriculum in Social Reconstruction'. In *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, ed. S. Tawil and A. Harley (Geneva: International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, 2004).
  11. Government of Rwanda, *Report on the Reflection Meetings Held in the Office of the President of the Republic from May 1998 to March 1999* (Kigali: Office of the President of the Republic, 1999); Republic of Rwanda, *The Unity of Rwandans—Before the Colonial Period and Under the Colonial Rule—Under the First Republic* (Kigali: Office of the President of the Republic, 1999).
  12. D. Byanafashe, ed., *Les Défis de l'Historiographie Rwandaise* [The Challenges of Rwandan Historiography] (Butare: Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda, 2004).
  13. National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, *Rapport sur le Sommet National d'Unité et de Réconciliation* [Report of the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation] (Kigali: NURC, 2000), 39, 42–47.

14. Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace, *Sustaining Peace in Rwanda: Voice of the People* (Kigali: IRDP, 2003); Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace, *History and Conflicts in Rwanda* (Kigali: IRDP, 2006).
15. NURC, *Rapport sur le Sommet National d'Unité et de Réconciliation*, 46–47. Translated by the author. A few years later, a group of NUR academics was commissioned by NURC to write a 'new history of Rwanda' and to produce a handbook that would also serve as a manual to be used in schools.
16. G. Newbury, 'Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda'.
17. N. P. Eltringham, 'The Blind Men and the Elephant: The Challenge of Representing the Rwandan Genocide'. In *The Ethics of Anthropology: Debates and Dilemmas*, ed. P. Caplan (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 106.
18. P. Kagame, 'Beyond Absolute Terror: Post-Genocide Reconstruction in Rwanda', 'Beyond Terror' address to the Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, 7 March 2003.
19. On *Ingando*, see, for instance, C. Mgbako, "'Ingando' Solidarity Camps: Reconciliation and Political Indoctrination in Post-Genocide Rwanda", *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18 (2005), 201–224; J. Kearney, 'A Unified Rwanda? Ethnicity, History and Reconciliation in the *Ingando* Peace and Solidarity Camp'. In *Education and Reconciliation. Exploring Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations*, ed. J. Paulson (London: Continuum, 2011), 151–178; S. Thomson, 'Re-education for Reconciliation: Participant Observations on the *Ingando* Camps'. In *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, ed. S. Straus and L. Waldorf (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 331–339.
20. A. Obura, *Never Again*, 3/18/99–106; African Rights, *The Heart of Education*, 9–21; S. Warshauer Freedman, D. Kambanda, B. L. Samuelson, I. Mugisha, I. Mukashema et al., 'Confronting the Past in Rwandan Schools'. In *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, ed. E. Stover and H. M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 248–265; S. Warshauer Freedman et al., *Education for Reconciliation: Creating a History Curriculum after Genocide. Final Narrative and Financial Report* (Berkeley: University of California, 2007), 5.
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22. S. Warshauer Freedman, 'Education for Reconciliation: Creating a History Curriculum after Genocide', *Connected* 1 (2006), 14–18; S. Warshauer Freedman, *Education for Reconciliation*; S. Warshauer Freedman, H. M. Weinstein, K. Murphy and T. Longman, 'Teaching History after Identity-



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23. S. Warshauer Freedman et al., 'Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts', 675.
  24. Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education/NCDC, *History Program for Ordinary Level* (Kigali, August 2008); Ministry of Education/NCDC, *History Program for Advanced Level. Secondary School* (Kigali, June 2010).
  25. Republic of Rwanda, Ministry of Education, *The History of Rwanda: A Participatory Approach* (Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 2010). A new round of curricular revisions has taken place after the most recent update to this chapter in 2015.
  26. See D. Bentrovato, *Narrating and Teaching the Nation*; M. Hodgkin, 'Reconciliation in Rwanda: Education, History and the State', *Journal of International Affairs* 60 (2006) 1, 199–210.
  27. S. Buckley-Zistel, 'Nation, Narration, Unification? The Politics of History Teaching after the Rwandan Genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research* 11 (2009) 1, 31–53 (here 31). See also S. Buckley-Zistel, 'Transitional Justice, National Memory and History Teaching in Rwanda', paper presented at the 4th European Conference on African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden, 15–18 June 2011.
  28. S. Warshauer Freedman et al., 'Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts', 665.
  29. See, among others, N. P. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004).
  30. R. Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 105.
  31. R. Lemarchand, 'The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda', occasional Paper of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007), 2.
  32. J. Pottier, *Re-imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); F. Reyntjens, *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996–2006* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
  33. R. Lemarchand, 'Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation in Rwanda'. In *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs. Annuaire 2006–2007*, ed. F. Reyntjens and S. Marysse (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 23/27/29.
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  36. R. Lemarchand, 'Genocide, Memory and Ethnic Reconciliation in Rwanda', 30.
  37. S. Warshauer Freedman et al., 'Teaching History after Identity-Based Conflicts', 685.
  38. A. Guichaoua, *Rwanda: De la Guerre au Génocide: Les Politiques Criminelles au Rwanda (1990–1994)* [Rwanda: From War to Genocide: Criminal Policies in Rwanda (1990–1994)] (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2010), 583.

## Further Reading

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# 41

## Senegal

Ibrahima Seck

### Introduction

Gorée is a small island off the coast of Senegal, just 20 minutes from Dakar by ferry. Every year the site is the destination of thousands of tourists, and the government of Senegal always takes care to include it in the itinerary of officials visiting the country. Thousands of pupils also visit the island each year as a mandatory field trip intended to teach them more about the Atlantic slave trade. Gorée is certainly the first site in the Atlantic world where the issue of slavery has become the focal topic of a very successful museum, called the 'House of Slaves'. Since the 1990s Gorée has been the target of criticism that has questioned its place as a transit point in the Atlantic slave trade, thus generating a controversial debate involving historians around the world. The present chapter examines the place of slavery and the various forms of slave trading in French-speaking African historiography, along with the critiques that have been levelled at the approach. I attempt to understand, within the framework posed by the dynamic of rereading African history in the wake of the anticolonial movements, how African historians' questioning of historical colonial knowledge in the 1950s was carried over into the textbooks used in Senegal's postcolonial schools. From the example of Senegal, I examine the treatment given to the question of slavery and the slave trade in the history curricula and textbooks of postcolonial education, especially those used in secondary schools. I analyse their content, identify their relationship to the output of historiography, assess the contribution that the transmitted knowledge has made to the forging of a collective memory and what I call the 'Gorée syndrome', and finally propose new directions for teaching the issue of slavery.

## The Historical Context

In 1946, when French citizenship was extended to all inhabitants of the French colonies, Jean Capelle was sent to Dakar to oversee the application of French curricula and the transformation of the advanced primary schools (*écoles primaires supérieures*) into middle-school colleges (*collèges d'enseignement secondaire*). Two decades later—that is, after Senegalese independence—these curricula were still being followed in schools throughout the former French empire in sub-Saharan Africa. In the 1960s the newly independent French-speaking African countries founded the African and Malagasy Union (*Union africaine et malgache*, UAM), which was eventually replaced by the African and Malagasy Common Organisation (*Organisation commune africaine et malgache*, OCAM). This cooperative institution, which has since become the International Organisation of La Francophonie (*Organisation internationale de la francophonie*, OIF), was the framework in which participating members discussed the future of African education, the curricula of which were still largely inspired by France.

In March 1965, the education ministers of Africa's French-speaking countries met in Bamako, together with the Minister for Cooperation, Raymond Triboulet, who represented France. Among other proposed steps, including the Africanisation of history and geography curricula, France pledged to provide teaching staff for primary schools through to higher education. A conference of experts was convened in Abidjan on 22 and 23 April 1965, presided by Amadou Mahtar Mbow of Senegal, then a professor of history and geography at Dakar's *École normale supérieure* and a future director general of UNESCO. A commission made up of professors Mbow, Jean Devisse, Hubert Deschamps, Yves Person and several others was formed to elaborate the new curricula, which were to be introduced at the start of the 1965–1966 school year. A conference of African and Madagascan education ministers met in Paris from 24 to 28 April 1967 to officially ratify the curriculum project that had been adopted earlier by experts meeting in Tananarive. Thus, educators, historians and others speak of the 'Tananarive curriculum', which was scheduled to be applied at the start of the 1967–1968 school year. A working group directed by Mbow, Devisse and Ki-Zerbo was appointed to compile the necessary documentation while the textbooks were being written.<sup>1</sup>

In 1966 French publishers, notably Nathan and Hatier, rushed into this new market and published the first textbooks devoted to African curricula. I shall limit my analysis to the textbooks produced by the editorial staff directed by Mbow, Ki-Zerbo and Devisse, especially since these authors largely

contributed, directly or indirectly, to the drafting of African history in an academic vein. The group produced three textbooks in all for the sixth, fifth and fourth levels (roughly 12–15 years old) for the *Histoire* imprint of the French publisher Hatier. The introduction to the first chapter of the fourth-level textbook ('The Slave Trade and Its Consequences'), published in 1975, comes straight to the point (page 5) on the major role played by European nations, Americans and Arabs, and, secondarily, 'the complicity of African chiefs themselves'. The slave trade is defined as 'the trade in Blacks torn from their families, sold as slaves, and transported mainly to America, starting in the late fifteenth century'. This definition excludes de facto the 'Blacks' who were subjugated inland on the African continent. A few lines later, the authors recognise that 'slavery existed in African societies well before the arrival of Europeans, but the slaves were few and most of them worked as servants, and in the end they were thought of as members of the family'.<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason perhaps that domestic slavery is totally absent from the fifth-level textbook, which is devoted to the period that is generally presented as the 'Golden Age' of sub-Saharan Africa, the period of the great 'medieval' empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhai and so on. On page 9 of the textbook for the fourth level, the participation of African elites in the trade is explained by a 'desire for power', if not 'the lure of products imported by European ships'. Alongside these infantilised kings, the agents who directly produced the captives are completely disembodied, more intangible than even ghosts: providing no precise details whatsoever, the authors speak of 'beaters [who] travelled up and down the continent's interior and brought back, sometimes after months of being away, caravans of captives towards the trading posts'.

This reading of the slave trade reflects a form of academic writing that retained for quite some time a tendency to ascribe Africa's development from the fifteenth century onwards almost exclusively to exogenous factors. In terms of domestic slavery, Mbow thinks that the institution did not fit into the authors' overall vision as a factor in the evolution of Africa and the accumulation of capital. However, from the point of view of rewriting these textbooks, he does recognise that a revision must make room for the phenomenon, even though it cannot be as decisive a factor as foreign intrusion in the evolution of African societies. Those who designed the colonial curricula were very clear-eyed in their pedagogical aims. The same holds for those who fashioned the first African curricula, which were designed as a kind of antidote to the colonial programme. The most significant reform of history curricula, after the 1978 reform (reinforcing the Africanisation of the curricula) and the 1982 reform (the Senegalisation of the curricula), was the reform undertaken in 1998. This latter effort marked a definitive break with an approach that

consisted of 'list[ing] the subject matter without the reader being made explicitly aware of the skills that were to be instilled in the pupil'. According to the actors involved in the reform, for the first time since the colonial period 'a form of writing for the teaching curriculum based on explaining pedagogical aims' was introduced.<sup>3</sup> The 1998 curricula were 'consolidated' in 2004, although the textbooks have yet to be delivered, for Senegal never produced any to accompany the reforms instituted between 1978 and 1998.

The trans-Saharan and Atlantic slave trades still occupy an important place in the new curricula, whose major innovation is the introduction of development activities, especially ones in which learners create specialised dossiers on the subject. At the fourth level, for example, the second part of the curriculum is entirely devoted to 'the Atlantic slave trade and its consequences' and ends with either an activity involving a visit to the House of Slaves [*Maison des esclaves*] on Gorée Island or putting together a dossier on 'Gorée in the slave trade'. This choice poses a problem. It is not uncommon to see, on Gorée, pupils and teachers who have come from the furthest reaches of Senegal merely to conform to a scholastic obligation that has a whiff of pilgrimage and which the tour guides of Gorée have ironically dubbed 'dust tourism' (*tourisme poussière*). This phenomenon is no accident. Teaching activities, sustained by historiography and the discourse of commemoration and memorialising, have come to overshadow the local slave system while highlighting coastal sites like Gorée, Elmina and Ouidah at the expense of inland sites like Galam, Kumasi and Abomey, thus sidelining one of the essential moments of the slave industry. This is what we call the 'Gorée syndrome', whose deconstruction must involve new directions in historiography and pedagogy that would help dissipate the thick fog surrounding the process of producing captives destined to be enslaved and the modes of subjugating them as they were once practised on the African continent.

## The Debate Over the Deconstruction of the 'Gorée Syndrome'

Writing African history and teaching the subject in the colonial context had a profound impact on the orientation of the knowledge produced by the early generations of French-speaking African historians. For I. Thioub, the main site for the production of this form of history was the University of Dakar, where, until the early 1970s, historiography, along with the curricula that were followed in schools, instructed pupils more about France's presence in

Africa than about the internal dynamics of African societies. That trend was interrupted when French teacher-researchers revolutionised research in African history, responding to a strong demand while at the same time opening up the prospect of writing African history from the inside. Given that colonial ideology excluded Africa and African societies from the field of history, African historians immediately focused their research on anticolonial struggles, transforming the academic writing of history into a scientific and openly militant project.<sup>4</sup> For several years now, a growing number of voices have been raised within Africa, questioning the direction of the African historiography produced by the pioneers of the discipline. On the question of slavery, critics blame these pioneers for taking an approach anchored in victimhood that overlooks the indigenous systems of domination while also cloaking the internal mechanisms for producing captives for the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately it is as if African historians, consciously or not, had managed to circumscribe forbidden knowledge, comparable in its principles to the knowledge that had been concealed in the colonial context. As far as Senegal is concerned, the island of Gorée lies at the heart of the debate.

In December 1996, an article in the French daily *Le Monde* echoed a school of thought that disputes the legitimacy of Gorée as the main memorial site of the Atlantic slave trade.<sup>6</sup> The title of the article comes from an interview with the then keeper of the Gorée Museum of History, Dr Abdoulaye Camara, who characterised as ‘myth’ the story visitors to the famous House of Slaves are told, before retracting his assertion. One year earlier, during an Internet debate, the famous historian Philip Curtin of Johns Hopkins University had deemed the building a ‘shrine of emotion’ and not a serious museum. He saw the island itself as a place of passage for a few hundred slaves annually and asserted that the total number amounted to 30,000 slaves at most for the entire period of the Atlantic slave trade. Some historians were quick to vent their anger at what they considered to be a position comparable to denying the existence of the Nazi camps.<sup>7</sup> The controversy led to a conference on Gorée’s place in the Atlantic slave trade. The event, held in April 1997, was mounted by the African Institute of Basic Research (*Institut fondamental d’Afrique noire*, IFAN), and the proceedings were published the same year.<sup>8</sup> But a scientific debate is never closed. In March 2007, ten years after the Gorée conference, the question shifted to the Sorbonne, thanks to Jean-Luc Angrand, author of *Céleste ou le temps des Signares*. It was a move meant to spell ‘the end of the myth of Gorée’s House of Slaves’, deemed an ‘invention’ by Pierre André Cariou, the head doctor in the French Navy who served on Gorée in 1940, in a historical novel unpublished to date.<sup>9</sup> Angrand, the initiator of this movement had also posted on his personal blog a vitriolic attack in

five European languages, including French, against Joseph Ndiaye, the initiator and keeper of Gorée's House of Slaves:

No! Mr Ndiaye, the signares did not dance on the first floor of the fake house of slaves (the real name of which is the 'Anna Colas House'), as you have told numerous gullible tourists. Your 'mentor' Mr Cariou called that house the 'House of Slaves' (a house that was all the same a refuge for numerous Africans whom the signares saved at the last minute from deportation) purely to entertain the few visitors to Gorée in the 1940s. Your position is indefensible, it is time for you to open your eyes and stop enjoying the tears of tourists from America and the Caribbean, whom you couldn't care less about. From now on the world of researchers and the media from every corner of the planet know the magnitude of what was at first due to 'your ignorance' and later, as the money poured in, became a shameful falsification of history whose only aim has been to keep the shop going. Go on, Mr Ndiaye! Have the courage to free yourself from the chains of a lie and offer your apologies to the many descendants of the victims of slavery.<sup>10</sup>

Joseph Ndiaye (1922–2009), a former airman in the French Colonial Army and a veteran of the Second World War, played a clear role in the visibility of the island as a site of prime importance in the Atlantic slave trade, a significant point that earned Gorée its classification as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After his retirement he was for many years a benevolent keeper of the House of Slaves until his official appointment as curator in 1962 by the president of Senegal, Leopold S. Senghor. It is indeed true, as Thioub and Bocoum stressed during the Gorée conference, that 'this tragic success proved such an obvious "fact" that little thought was given to questioning scientifically how important Gorée's place and role in the slave trade were'. The same two authors made another, more edifying, observation: 'The discourse commemorating this function of the island has never claimed to obey scholarly rules in the production of knowledge and therefore cannot be measured by that yardstick'.<sup>11</sup> Although he has overlooked this tacit epistemological understanding, Angrand is more the bearer of a different memorial position, one of whose objectives, it would seem, is to correct the collateral damage that Joseph Ndiaye's view has done to Goréens of mixed-race ancestry, from whom Angrand is in fact descended. The following excerpt from Jean Serre's introduction to Angrand's book provides abundant support for the above:

Finally, Jean-Luc Angrand has the merit of taking on a myth that is firmly rooted and developed for tourists, in other words that Gorée was a centre in the business of shipping slaves to America. In fact, there never was any slave trade



on Gorée—the island held only a few purchased slaves and they were perpetuated over the years through marriage. The *signares* took pains to protect and watch over their servants, house slaves and those that they trained as construction workers, shipwrights and sailors to provide for their business, various tradesmen, even jewellers. Gorée's famous 'house of slaves', where one pities the fate of the poor unfortunate plantation slaves, victims of the trade in human chattel, is in fact nothing more than the house of Anna Colas Pépin, one of the author's forebears; and the prison, warehouses for goods.<sup>12</sup>

The *signares* (from the Portuguese term *senhora*) were African women united with European officials and traders through temporary marriage. They owned slaves and were involved in trade. As for the door of no return, one of the House of Slaves' central components, it is important to recall that its symbolism has not been used solely in Gorée. In Ghana, Elmina also has its door of no return. In Ouidah, where the slave trade was not accompanied by the impressive monumentality visible on the former Gold Coast, the UNESCO Slave Route programme raised a monument in the form of a giant gate facing the sea to provide material support for the symbolism of the voyage of no return. The doors are part of a staged display and mark its emotional high point, without which being present at these commemorative sites would have no meaning for the vast majority of their thousands of visitors. Finally, it is important to stress the true meaning of the House of Slaves, which only represents a symbol in which memories of slavery have crystallised. It was not enough to have the island alone as a support for remembrance; it was also important to have a building to represent a slave prison, with a portion of this discourse embedded in every nook and cranny.

In terms of teaching, the quotations above allow us first to identify the paths that the deconstruction of the 'Gorée syndrome' should never venture down. In no way should this effort consist of excoriating those who have contributed to the phenomenon. It has to be done within a strictly scientific framework, dispassionately and without favour. The Gorée conference allowed numerous historians to clarify the site's role in the Atlantic slave trade. I would like to return to this debate to highlight a few confusing points that are at the root of misunderstandings. The first involves the erroneous definition of the Goréan space, which is too often limited to the bit of rock rising up in the sea. 'Gorée' meant above all its natural harbour, the entire maritime space protected by the Cap Vert Peninsula as far as the point called Rio Fresco (Rufisque), also known for some time as the Bay of France (Baie de France). Rufisque was the first permanent trading post of the French before even Saint-Louis in Senegal. For security reasons, Rufisque declined following the

conquest of Gorée in 1677, coming at the expense of the Dutch presence in the region. The island's harbour offered excellent mooring and easy access for taking on wood and water from the continent. With the benefit of the surrounding water and the sure protection it provided, Gorée also formed for the French Company a natural warehouse where goods and captives were brought after being processed on the coast. Hence the second point of confusion, namely trying to see in Gorée some function of the slave market, which can only lead to underestimating its place in the Atlantic slave trade. From that point of view, Pruneau de Pommegorge, for example, stressed in the mid-eighteenth century that 'trade on this island is rather light; one hardly draws two or three hundred Blacks per year'. These captives belonged to the *signares*, who acquired them for their own service or to sell to the French Company. However, according to the author of *Description de la Nigritie*, in exceptional situations, notably during times of war in the neighbouring kingdoms, supply might increase significantly.<sup>13</sup> This estimate has been picked up by authors like Joseph Roger de Benoist, who erroneously speaks of a slave trade of 20–30 Blacks annually, quoting Pruneau de Pommegorge.<sup>14</sup> In fact, this error evaporates before the warning formulated as an appeal to decency by one philosopher during the Gorée conference: 'It is intolerable, morally and historically, to judge the appalling human tragedy that the African slave trade was and consequently the symbolic value of its points of reference, by the number of human beings it carried off. Even if there were but one person, that person would have been one too many because he or she alone would have symbolised the shame for all of humanity'.<sup>15</sup>

The deconstruction of the Gorée syndrome, as I see it, basically consists of lifting the veil that conceals the internal dynamics of the slave trade on African soil. Development activities in class that take the form of dossiers on the slave trade or visits to historical sites ought to focus above all on the nearby milieu of the pupils. This pedagogical approach involves inviting learners to think by putting all available information at their disposal, including what goes against a positive view of the role played by African elites in the Atlantic slave trade. Thioub voices the validity of this approach by turning back on Joseph Ki-Zerbo a symbolism that was dear to the late eminent historian:

'The iron band [that] girdled the entire coast of sub-Saharan Africa' (Ki-Zerbo, *A General History of Africa*, 212) was only the terminus of a vast net the fashioning of which native actors were actively involved in according to how they saw their own interests. To read the Atlantic slave trade from the band and ignore the rest of the net is at best to refuse to understand and explain its historical implications, and at worst amounts to rehabilitating the memory of groups that

profited from it and cannot be reduced to the Other defined by the colour of his or her skin.<sup>16</sup>

Many African warlords were deeply involved in the slaving business. This allowed the members of the continent's ruling class to obtain European commodities, which distinguished them from ordinary people. Above all, firearms were in high demand for their ability to provide security and as tools for empire building, and higher-quality iron was much sought after for domestic needs. Often used in negotiations, alcoholic beverages ultimately became an essential part of trade. In return, the African traders offered cowhides, gum arabic, beeswax and gold, but captives became the most important component of trade. Their labour was much needed in the Americas. Slave traders also bought food, wood and water to ensure the nourishment of the human cargo throughout their passage.

Many centuries before the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade, captives were exported across the Sahara Desert and the Indian Ocean, but this early slave market could not meet the huge demand of the Americas. Since captives were typically obtained through wars, a reliable solution to the problem was to generate permanent warfare between nations. The European companies invested in these wars and backed those who most aided their interests. Locally, political successions were turned into devastating civil wars. The foreign companies supported the contenders, whom they could later use as dedicated allies for the slave trade. The French philosopher and political activist Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794) was quite aware of these intrigues:

It is the infamous commerce of the brigands of Europe that generates between the Africans almost continuous warfare, whose only motive is to make prisoners destined to the trade. Often the Europeans themselves foment these wars with their money or their intrigues, which make them guilty not only of the crime of enslaving people but also of all the murders committed in Africa in preparation of this crime.<sup>17</sup>

This voice from the past reminds us that African warlords counted on the support of external forces that the African peoples did not control. In this generalised chaos, it was quite suicidal for any African ruler to refuse to be involved in the Atlantic slave trade. To a degree, this is also reminiscent of the situation in postcolonial Africa, when figures such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, the Congo's Patrice Lumumba or Burkina's Thomas Sankara—leaders who dared to say no to exploitation and alienation—were either exiled or killed through coups d'état orchestrated by foreign economic interests.

## Conclusion: For a New Pedagogical Approach

Senegal's school curricula, especially those used in secondary schools, have helped to mould a collective memory that is resolutely focused on the coasts at the expense of the interior, where subjugated manpower was produced. Thus, more than ever, it is necessary to make inland slavery an integral part of school curricula. Promoting a selective memory of Africa's past cannot be a judicious pedagogical approach, since it does not provide all the pieces needed to understand a painful past that continues to erupt in Africans' daily lives, often in a tragic way. Beyond colonisation's aftereffects, it is probably time to consider searching, in the torment caused by the various forms of the slave trade, for the seeds of the endemic violence affecting the continent today like something fated to be. Now more than ever, African communities should integrate in the education of their children any and all knowledge that may shed light on the continent's problems and break the vicious circle of violence, marginalisation and poverty. Greater interest must also be taken in Africans who were deported beyond the Sahara Desert and the oceans, in order to understand the true reasons of their deportation and to have a better grasp of the phenomena of creolisation. Learners need to know that that deportation had nothing to do with the colour of their skin because racism was initially nothing but one of the tools used to justify a morally unjustifiable fact. The harm, however, has become so embedded in people's minds that millions of Blacks are still relegated to the fringes of human identity, posing a challenge to the greater part of their human rights.

## Notes

1. A. Sow, 'L'enseignement de l'histoire au Sénégal, des premières écoles (1817) à la Réforme de 1998' (PhD dissertation, UCAD-FLSH: Faculty of Arts and Letters, Department of History, 2004); Amadou Mahtar Mbow, interview with the author, Dakar, 27 December 2007.
2. New scholarship has revealed that the number of Africans enslaved on the continent was higher than the number of those deported out of the continent. See P. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery. A History in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
3. A. Sonko, minister of national education, preface to the new history and geography curricula of Senegal, Dakar, May 1998.
4. I. Thioub, 'L'historiographie de "l'École de Dakar" et la production d'une écriture académique de l'histoire'. In *Le Sénégal contemporain*, ed. M. C. Diop (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 110–111.

5. I. Thioub, 'Regard critique sur les lectures africaines de l'esclavage et de la traite atlantique', *Revue Historiens-Géographes du Sénégal* 8 (January 2009): 16–29.
6. E. de Roux, 'Le mythe de la Maison des esclaves qui résiste à la réalité', *Le Monde*, 27 December 1996.
7. S. Mintz, 'Re: Goree', 24 March 1998, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/log-browse.pl?trx=vx&list=h-slavery&month=9803&week=d&msg=nrT8s1JLw/8KQrk/Myh%2Blw&user=&pw=>.
8. D. Samb, *Gorée et l'esclavage, actes du Séminaire sur Gorée dans la traite atlantique: mythes et réalités (Gorée, 7 April 1997)*, Initiations et Études Africaines 38 (Dakar: IFAN-CAD, 1997).
9. P. A. Cariou, *Promenade à Gorée*.
10. J. L. Angrand, 'Letter to Joseph N'Diaye', quoted in I. Seck, 'Déconstruire le syndrome de Gorée', paragraph 4, 26 March 2013, [http://www.leral.net/Déconstruire-le-syndrome-de-Goree\\_a78643.html#](http://www.leral.net/Déconstruire-le-syndrome-de-Goree_a78643.html#).
11. I. Thioub and H. Bocoum, 'Gorée et les mémoires de la traite atlantique'. In *Gorée et l'esclavage*, ed. D. Samb, 199–216 (Dakar: Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, 1997).
12. J. Serre, 'Prix de l'Académie des Sciences d'Outre-Mer', 15 December 2006, <http://jeanlucangrand.blogspot.com/>, accessed 29 June 2016.
13. A. E. P. de Pommeroy, *Description de la Nigritie* (Amsterdam/Paris: Maradan, 1789), 102.
14. J. R. de Benoist, 'Typologie et fonctions des captivités goréennes'. In *Gorée et l'esclavage*, ed. D. Samb, 121–35 (Dakar: Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, 1997).
15. D. Samb, 'Introduction'. In *Gorée et l'esclavage*, ed. D. Samb, 11–17 (Dakar: Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, 1997).
16. I. Thioub, 'Regard critique', 28.
17. N. de Condorcet, *Réflexions sur l'esclavage des nègres* (Neufchâtel: Société typographique, 1781), 11.

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## Serbia

Marko Šuica

### Introduction

Nearly two decades on from the fall of Milosevic's regime and democratic changes in Serbia (2000), only a small amount of progress has been made on the revision of history teaching and its position in the general system of education. This means that debates, teaching topics and critiques that were current in the last decade of the twentieth century are still in circulation. The country's major transformation in the concept and structure of its history education and textbooks provided strong feedback that occurred during the wartime destruction of socialist Yugoslavia. At that time, changes made in history education and interpretations of history were part of wider preparations for the war.<sup>1</sup> Pre-existing, ideologically connoted values and desired outcomes were transferred from their original ideological background, that of communism, to a new nationalist agenda. The first noteworthy instances of public debate challenged the dominant concept of tendentious history teaching based on nationalistic stereotypes and xenophobia, the construction of 'eternal enemies' and praise of the educators' own nation. In such a strictly controlled educational and textbook publishing environment, the voices raised against chauvinistic and nationalistic perceptions of the past belonged to a few individual young historians or emerged from initiatives within the NGO sector.<sup>2</sup> Their observations and remarks did not open a genuine two-way debate due to the unwillingness of the other (totalitarian) side to engage in such substantial debate. While many things have changed, some controversies continue to shape notions of history and history teaching and open dialogue in current Serbian public discourse.<sup>3</sup> The unclear political situation in



the country—the issue of Kosovo’s independence and the uncertainty around Serbia’s accession to the EU—impact Serbian public discourse, creating interest in historical identity issues of national significance. Today, the role of history teaching in Serbian politics can largely be perceived as strategic: either as a primary tool for the protection of national homogeneity or as an essential component in the establishment of a European identity and democratic values that do not exclude the national dimension of history.

## Historical Background

After the launch of the educational reform process in 2002, which saw many important issues raised, history teaching in Serbia set a course towards modern European teaching standards—including such aspects as the revision of curricula, the introduction of multiperspectivity into teaching, the inclusion of controversial issues around the recent past in the curriculum and the production of new textbooks—followed by the launch of seminars and debate on the issues.<sup>4</sup> The regressive political changes in Serbia in 2004 blocked the reform process and likewise impacted history teaching.<sup>5</sup> From that period onwards, the discussion space on history teaching in Serbia was dominated by two opposing camps, whose influence in shaping approaches to history teaching has increased in the context of the ongoing political turmoil in the country. The continuing debate might be better described as a general response to socially and politically current issues present in history textbooks and divergencies in approaches to history teaching than as a constructive academic discussion likely to result in feasible educational objectives and obtainable solutions.

Current debate on history and history teaching in Serbia has several equally important strands covering a range of topics, with participants from diverse political, social and academic backgrounds. The social or political influence of the debate itself depends on the social reputation and role in society of those engaged in the discussion. In this concise review I have chosen to focus on three key issues in contemporary Serbian public discourse.<sup>6</sup>

## The Debate

### The Second World War and the 1990s War

The first issue I discuss is related to the reassessment of the recent past within the wider historiographical framework in Serbia. This discourse has been

defined more by the public and political setting than by professional, structured debate among academics. The potential for politicians and others invested in maintaining a sense of national identity to use history as a political and social tool for cementing cultural structures is still the dominant factor when it comes to determining what is considered 'functional history'. The crucial dispute in this sense revolves around the reassessment of the role of communist and anti-communist, fascist and anti-fascist movements and their protagonists in Serbia and Yugoslavia during the Second World War.<sup>7</sup> First, this issue is linked to revisiting the role of Serbian royalist guerrilla forces (the Chetnik movement) during the Second World War and providing a more balanced view of the hitherto superior moral image of partisans. The post-communist process of setting and shaping a nationalist Serbian historical identity during the recent wars in the former Yugoslavia gave rise to academic and public debate on the rehabilitation of the Chetniks. The principal idea brought to bear in this discourse reflects the denial of their collaboration with Nazi occupying forces during the Second World War and emphasises a view of their activities as action for the liberation of the people and fatherland. The unofficial rehabilitation of Second World War royalists became a manipulative tool for the recruitment of paramilitary units and volunteers for the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s. After the democratic changes in 2000, the revision of the Chetnik movement's historical role almost surreptitiously entered the new generation of history textbooks<sup>8</sup> and subsequently curricula, without broad and vigorous academic debate. Behind this change in patterns of memory was the view that the communist historiography, previously accepted as orthodox, was exclusive; it distorted the historical reality by shaping the educational and ideological background to the needs of the winning side in the civil war, a distortion that took place within the wider Second World War framework. The post-communist space was quickly filled with a number of differing ideas on what Serbs should commemorate, value and remember, especially in the public sphere.<sup>9</sup> Established state and public holidays marking events from the socialist revolution and the Second World War were abolished and replaced with different ones. A new national identity was born, built on distant historical events from national history with highly resonant connotations. The role of the state and the political sphere in this transformation was crucial. This shift also affected history curricula and textbooks. Some modern historians, who had previously engaged in anti-war discussions on the misuse of history teaching, saw in this shift in collective memory a dangerous tendency that threatened to bring confusion upon not only the country's scheme of public holidays but also the whole system of moral values in Serbian society.<sup>10</sup> In response to the awaken-

ing of a firmly conservative anti-communist perspective, these historians have stressed that this kind of uncompromising approach towards sensitive issues in collective memory and hasty reinterpretations of controversial past events, delivering them to young minds unaccompanied by a thought-through educational concept of critical learning, opens a space for dangerous manipulation with the potential for far-reaching negative effects on society. Such manipulative dealing with the metaphysical space of national recollection is a good example of how the memory of the past might be used in the service of unifying national identity. This controversial practice of presenting to students a 'new version' of history without any kind of professional balancing mechanism was also apparent in the sphere of history teaching and the publication of supplementary teaching material. A small group of historians from the new generation collated a selection of historical sources and published the *Chetnik Reader*, a collection of supplementary teaching materials designed for young pupils.<sup>11</sup> The idea behind this attempt to rehabilitate the Chetnik movement was that there existed an unrevealed 'real' national history of the Second World War, ready to be discovered. In other words, a political issue was transferred to the field of history teaching and the general purpose of education. In the view of Dubravka Stojanovic, one of the main protagonists in this debate, the previous one-sided image of communists in history textbooks has been replaced with a biased image of the Chetniks.<sup>12</sup>

There are similar issues in relation to the presentation of the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia. The same historians who defended 'the honour of [their] profession' against ethnocentric and nationalistic hysteria during the Milosevic era have stressed that a similar matrix is still in operation in teaching and the narrative discourse to this day. They emphasise that, in the same manner, Serbia and the Serbian people are often presented as a unique collective body beyond reproach with a strong sense of historical justice. The first history textbook of this new generation, published in 2001,<sup>13</sup> was criticised by the democratic press for its lack of explanation concerning the breakup of Yugoslavia, the establishment of Milosevic's authoritarian rule and its lethal consequences.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, certain extreme nationalist politicians belonging to the dismantled Milosevic regime publicly criticised the 'impersonal' presentation of the Yugoslav war in the same textbook. In their opinion, the new approach—although it was far from presenting a balanced, critical, open-minded perspective—lacked a sufficient sense of Serbian victimhood and condemnation of Serbian enemies, including the Vatican and the Catholic Church.<sup>15</sup> At that time (2001–2002), this kind of public discourse seemed to have reached its conclusion; now, however, after a prolonged period of transition, the debates have been partially reignited and continue to

attract public attention. Recent debates launched after the publication of new history textbooks were also related to the issue of victimhood and self-perceptions in history teaching.<sup>16</sup>

## **The Conceptual Debate: How Should History Be Perceived and Taught?**

The second key issue I discuss is more conceptual and refers to the didactic models on which the history teaching process may be founded. Two opposing camps of historians have engaged in this discussion. The first faction stands for an ethnocentric idea, predominantly focused on the protection of national identity and promoting narrative as the core of history teaching. The second bloc speaks in favour of teaching from multiple perspectives and of more interactive didactics of history. The clash between these opposing views became visible particularly in the use of new teaching materials, concrete didactic concepts and ideas on the role of the teacher in the classroom. The two sides of this debate see the primary aims and desired outcomes of history education from opposite viewpoints, which might be summarised as a traditional and anachronistic narrative model on the one hand versus practice based on modern teaching concepts on the other<sup>17</sup>; the debate is ongoing. The major dispute commenced with the recent publication of alternative educational materials for history: the four-volume work 'Teaching Modern Southeast European History' by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE).<sup>18</sup> Dubravka Stojanovic, the Serbian editor of this publication, was the first who had to defend the concept of multiperspectivity applied in the creation of these teaching materials. She pointed to the enduring ethnocentric standpoints of Serbian historians and textbook authors who are not ready to accept diversity and pluralism in the presentation of history through the teaching process.<sup>19</sup> The debate over the principal objectives of history readers issued by the CDRSEE had a political agenda disguised in expert discussions on methodology. This hidden political substance became obvious in the distinctive and harsh critiques published in print media and especially in the behaviour of the Ministry of Education in its approval of these challenging teaching materials. The primary dispute revolved around how many historical truths actually exist. The group of historians upholding the ethnocentric model rejected the idea of presenting multiple perspectives in history teaching. They supported an exclusive, monolithic definition of history as an almost closed narrative with non-questionable historical truths about the nation and its historical role.<sup>20</sup> The impact of the

debate was so strong that the Ministry of Education withdrew its support for the seminars for teachers planned as training in the use of the CDRSEE teaching materials.<sup>21</sup> The reaction and argumentation of the ethnocentric group of historians show that, 'when [history teaching is] methodologically deprived of the central position of one's own nation, and when this nation is put into comparative relation to others, it is perceived as a loss and defeat'.<sup>22</sup> This debate could be described not only as a clash of two didactic concepts in history teaching but also as a collision between two opposing perceptions of the nation, society and history and their complexity.

## **The Battle of Kosovo: Historiography, History Teaching and the Role of Social Agents**

One specific pseudohistorical debate is constantly present within Serbian society. It revolves around distant but highly sensitive historical issues related to the mythical perception of perhaps the most powerfully resonant event in the nation's history, linked to the geopolitical place of Kosovo in relation to Serbia. The Battle of Kosovo (1389) represents one of the strongest components of Serbian national identity and collective memory. The medieval clash between the Serbian nobility and the Ottomans serves as a powerful symbol and tool for a number of political, social and cultural ends. The current debate among a number of social stakeholders gives rise to far-reaching political effects.<sup>23</sup> The Serbian Orthodox Church takes the leading role in preserving the mythical core of the event, which is not described in relevant historical sources. Although school curricula and textbooks provide a historical narrative of the event based on relevant research and historical sources, the Church persistently supports the old, abandoned legend that the battle was lost due to treason among the Serbs. The real historical person Vuk Branković, a figure in epic oral tradition, was transformed into a traitor, an ethnic equivalent to Judas. This role of antihero was a very important factor in shaping Serbian national identity and moral values in the later centuries under Ottoman rule. To this day, the Church rejects the findings of modern historiography and continues to make use of the powerful manipulative tool embodied in the eternal trope of the 'traitor among us'. The debate on this issue is conducted indirectly, with academic and educational circles backing the findings of historical research (i.e., critical historiography) but not engaging in any kind of open debate. Meanwhile the Church, with the support of extremist nationalist and populist movements—organisations that promote traditional patriarchal systems of values deeply rooted in mythical perceptions of nation and

national history—clings to epic poetry as the only and unquestionable source of information about this distant event.<sup>24</sup> The magical power of this historical event derives from its crucial message of laying down one's life for a higher cause, a message that almost took physical form on the battle's 600-year anniversary in 1989, in the infamous speech made by Slobodan Milosevic at the anniversary rally.<sup>25</sup> At that time, the symbolic significance of the battle and the issue of treason were successfully used as the main motivational instruments for the national drive towards homogenisation in the run-up to the collapse of former Yugoslavia. Even today, more than 20 years later, the situation is substantially unchanged. The impact of unofficial but continual debate was visible in a 2010 survey conducted by experts from Belgrade University. The results from this questionnaire on the significance of history to the Serbian general public show that the adult population of Serbia singled out the Battle of Kosovo as the most important historical event in the whole of Serbian history. Of the population surveyed, 39 per cent believed that the alleged betrayal of one Serbian knight—an entirely fictitious event—actually happened and thus determined the outcome of the battle: the defeat of the Serbs and the Ottoman conquest of the medieval Serbian state.<sup>26</sup> This result is all the more striking because for generations, history curricula and textbooks used in schools have been presenting a quite different historical reconstruction of the events, founded on relevant historical sources.<sup>27</sup> An additional problem in this matter derives from inconsistencies between the curricula for history and for Serbian language and literature. Pupils first learn about the Battle of Kosovo through the subject of literature; in other words, they first obtain information on this topic from mythical, epic narrative constructs, and only later do they gain knowledge from the subject of history. Teachers of Serbian language and literature are frequently unaware of the impact of the images they are creating in their lessons by leaning exclusively on the later oral tradition, which diverges entirely from the historical evidence. This means that the image framed within the epic narrative learnt in literature classes, with the additional support of the Church as a social agent, overshadows outcomes in history teaching. Furthermore, making references to endangered national identity and the real issues around Kosovan independence, the Church produces its own insights into events and historical phenomena. A book, written in a highly accessible style and dedicated to the martyrs of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, has seen a print run of 100,000 copies.<sup>28</sup> In this book, the highest current church authorities claim that historians who say there was no treason in the battle are lying and that the truth comes from the mouth of the people/nation, which means oral poetry. This populist and highly incendiary discourse has great social and political influence; the day on which the Battle of Kosovo occurred

is now a national holiday with a clear and commemorative patriotic meaning.<sup>29</sup> Its current significance is even greater in view of the ongoing political dispute around the independence of Kosovo.

## Documentation

Of the issues I have discussed, the debate over the use of CDRSEE teaching materials was the most turbulent and had an intense public and educational impact. At a certain point, the effects of this debate led to a change in attitude and behaviour on the part of the Serbian Ministry of Education, which withdrew its support for the dissemination of the CDRSEE teaching materials. The sides involved in this polemical debate focused on the structure of the educational concept embedded in the publication and the possible consequences of its implementation in the classroom. The first reaction came as a voice raised against the 'anti-Serbian' and 'anti-historical' concept of this international educational project by the authors of the official Serbian history textbook for the eighth year of schooling. The debate was published in the weekly press and therefore exposed to a wider public audience. The textbook authors' principal arguments were publicised in a text titled *Balkan History with an Oxford Accent*, an allusion to the head of the CDRSEE project, Kostas Karas. In the sub-heading, the authors of this publication set forth the view that the '[h]istorical readers [issued by the] CDRSEE ... are full of omissions, mistakes and malicious interpretations of Balkan history'. In their words, the project's '[m]ethodological novelty is the idea of multiplicativity [sic], described by Dubravka Stojanovic as a method that does not offer the one and only truth [or] explanation of what happened in the past, acceptable for everyone'. The critics of these teaching materials go on to say:

There is something wrong with this theory, because the truth is the only one, indivisible and implacable. If one event is observed from many sides, which has been the rule since critical historiography came into existence, the evidence is that there are many views but not different truths. This unscientific approach led the authors of this material to make many mistakes, and we are going to focus on some of them. We would need to write an entire book to make all the criticisms we could make.

At the end of the article, the authors conclude that the materials are



obviously ... propaganda material that should not be in use in our schools and which should be reviewed again. We notice one more interesting detail. Although those behind this project are Greek, so far these books have been published only in the English and Serbian languages! Translation into the languages of the rest of the Balkan peoples will be provided when the money is provided, if it will be provided at all.<sup>30</sup>

The response from Dubravka Stojanovic, editor of the Serbian CDRSEE edition, was rapid and passionate. In an article titled 'Disarm History!'<sup>31</sup> she explained the concept, genesis and educational idea of these regional teaching materials, which were intended for use in all Balkan countries. Concerning the idea of one truth expressed by the critics of the materials, she says: 'If there were only one truth, in historiography one book would be enough'. She continues:

This attack shows the perception of historical reality, which was the reason why sixty historians from the region raised their voices and took part in this project. Powerless and frustrated ethnocentrism is scared of knowledge about the other, afraid of the notion that our truth is not acceptable to others.

Throughout the debate, she tries to explain the benefits of using multiperspectivity in history teaching. In doing so she does not neglect to criticise the attitude of Serbian textbook authors towards the responsibility of their own nation in the Second World War.

More disturbing is the fact that history textbook authors who wrote about twentieth-century history have a problem with the chapter on the Holocaust presented in these books [the CDRSEE material]. They euphemistically refer to concentration camps at Sajmište and Banjica (Belgrade) as prisons. The most serious concern lies in the fact that the authors of this attack on the alleged 'Oxford accent' of the initiator of this project, Kostas Karas, use this metaphor to evoke the spectre of intrusive Western interference in Serbian and Balkan history.

She concludes that history teaching in Serbia acts as a self-sufficient entity and is, at the very least, upsetting: 'The most worrying thing in all this is the discrepancy between the Ministry of Education and the authors of the new history curricula, because it is another sad proof that essential and well-designed reforms [to history teaching] stumble precisely where those reforms should be implemented'. The debate continued in the next issue of the weekly magazine in which the original article and the reply appeared.<sup>32</sup>

In 2006, the daily press also took up the discussion on the pros and cons of the joint CDRSEE history teaching materials. The scope of the debate encompassed discussion on the attitude of the Ministry of Education. In an article titled 'Disarmament of History', published by the daily newspaper *Danas* on 21 January of that year, the journalist Lidija Valtner attempted to create a confrontation between two opposing standpoints on the material, introducing the Serbian editor Dubravka Stojanovic and the university history professor Radoš Ljušić, at that time Head of *Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva* (state textbook publishing house), who took a clear stance against the concept and content of the CDRSEE history readers.<sup>33</sup> Although he considered the general idea of the materials to be good and necessary, he set out his belief that it had been done poorly and that there was a big discrepancy between the original idea and the final outcome. Referring to Stojanovic's statement on the twisting of the historical truth, he refers to her example in relation to the Holocaust chapter from the volume on the Second World War. He denies the assertion presented in the CDRSEE book on the Second World War that

prisons [in the period of Nazi occupation] in Belgrade were transformed into concentration camps ... It may appear this way to the editor from Croatia; however, Serbian and Yugoslav historiography to this day considers them prisons rather than concentration camps. According to this nebulous historical reader, Belgrade [was] the only town in the world with two concentration camps! And that is not true. On the other hand, the largest concentration camp in the Balkans—Jasenovac—is not mentioned at all in this 'tolerant' reader.

Reflecting the historical dimension of the entire edition, Ljušić stated his impression that the materials' presentation of regional history was distorted and adjusted to the needs of reconciliation:

If the history of the Balkans is presented in this manner, and if it is intended to serve as the model for history teaching, than it would be better not to teach history. All four books are written in such a way as to present more negative than positive examples about Serbs, whereas this is not the case with other nations, especially Greeks. Participants in the Greek Revolution are considered modern freedom fighters, while Serbian freedom fighters are not mentioned at all. It seems as if the creators of these so-called readers, these additional teaching materials, wanted to present Serbs as the only militant nation in the Balkans, while the others were innocent and good, respectful nations. Pure politics.

In his view, the root of this approach, which he considers problematic, is its starting point: 'the idea that there are multiple truths, whereas in fact the

truth is one and only'.<sup>34</sup> In the article in the same publication reflecting the opposite opinion, Stojanovic states her belief that hearing all sides involved in past conflicts shows that we have formed a mature relationship with the past.

In the 10 March 2006 edition of the newspaper *Večernje novosti*, one article headed 'Genocide against Greek Hens' showed the full complexity of the debate on the use of controversial teaching materials in day-to-day practice in schools. The two principal standpoints presented in this text derived from the same political background. The text demonstrates the inconsistency evident in state institutions' approach to this issue. Radoš Ljušić, the previously mentioned director of the Serbian state textbook publishing house, who was appointed by the Serbian government, explicitly states that the '[h]istory readers published by CDRSEE are foolishness. They are classic anti-Serbian books!'<sup>35</sup> Ljušić comments that the Ministry of Education and institutions governed by the state (such as the publishing house that published the CDRSEE material) should not be involved in the production of these types of publications. He repeats his remarks made in the previous interview, concluding that the approach taken by the materials does not, in his view, reflect the substance of history and of civilisation itself. He also suggests, invoking his authority as the main person responsible for publishing textbooks and teaching materials,<sup>36</sup> that 'our children' should not learn about the past from these publications. In the same article, the apparently uncertain and hesitant stance of the Serbian Ministry of Education demonstrates a lack of understanding of the issues around the introduction of new independent teaching materials in schools and a conspicuous absence of any strategy on these matters. Vesna Fila, a representative of the Ministry of Education, states that the intention of the Ministry was to 'follow procedures; for which reason it forwarded the CDRSEE materials to the Institute for the Improvement of Education, without taking up any position concerning this problem'. Three out of the four books published by CDRSEE were licensed for use in schools, while the most controversial book, on the Second World War, was rejected as inappropriate. The fact that the books were published only in English and Serbian at that time was, according to Fila, the wish of 'the people from the Stability Pact and Center for Southeastern Europe, who wanted us first to see them and implement [them] in practice ... These materials are free and they should be distributed to teachers through schools'. Teachers are not obliged to use them if they do not want to.<sup>37</sup>

Despite criticism from nationalist historians, authors of textbooks and some teachers, further dissemination of these materials was followed by a large number of teacher training seminars on their use.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

Being a country in transition and facing a multiplicity of difficulties, Serbia today remains weighed down by its historical burden from previous eras. Controversies surrounding the reassessment of recent history and debates in national day-to-day politics concerning commemoration of certain historical events continue to ignite vigorous public discussion. History teaching, including the didactics of the subject and textbook publishing, is permanently under the scrutiny of a range of social and political stakeholders, all of whom are ready to protect their interests. The periodic debate on history teaching takes place between conservatives who resist reform, and those who seek to introduce new methods and infuse history teaching with a social and humane spirit. Many sensitive issues related to the perception of history and history teaching in Serbia are yet to come onto the agenda of public and academic debate.

## Notes

1. D. Stojanović, 'Slow Burning: History Textbooks in Serbia, 1993–2008'. In *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, Studien zur Internationalen Bildungsmedienforschung 124, ed. A. Dimou (Hanover: Georg-Eckert-Institut, 2009), 141.
2. D. Stojanović, 'History Textbooks Mirror Their Time'. In *Warfare, Patriotism, Patriarchy*, ed. R. Rosandić and V. Pešić (Belgrade: Centre for Anti-war Action, 1994), 81–111.
3. D. Stojanović, 'Value Changes in the Interpretations of History in Serbia'. In *Civic and Uncivic Values: Serbia in the Post-Milosevic Era*, ed. O. Listhaug, S. P. Ramet and D. Dulic (Budapest/New York: CEU Press, 2011), 221–241.
4. O. Nikolić, 'Najsporniji udžbenici istorije [The most controversial are history textbooks]', *Glas javnosti*, 5 August 2002; O. Nikolić, 'Kako da se predaje i uči istorija u školama u 21. veku: Nacionalni pečat na evropskom ramu [How history is taught and learned in twenty-first-century schools: National hallmark on the European framework]', *Glas javnosti*, 26 October 2003; O. Nikolić, 'Istorijska distanca doprinosi razumevanju [Historical distance fosters mutual understanding]', *Glas javnosti*, 3 November 2003.
5. A. Dimou, 'Politics or Policy? The Short Life and Adventures of Educational Reform in Serbia (2001–2003)'. In *'Transition' and the Politics of History Education in Southeast Europe*, Studien zur Internationalen Bildungsmedienforschung 124, ed. A. Dimou (Hanover: Georg-Eckert-Institut, 2009), 159–201.

6. More recently, due to the various circumstances affecting Serbia's state and society in the process of transition, the focus has partly shifted away from the historical debates that are the subject of this chapter. In the context of the commemoration in 2014 of 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War, there was increased focus on the various perceptions and impacts of the Great War, such as the losses sustained by Serbia during the four years of the war, the role of women in the war, the consequences of the war for the fate of Serbian statehood and particularly the ascription or refutation of Serbian responsibility for the triggering of what was at the time the most extensive war in history.
7. D. Stojanović, 'Tumačenja istorije, sistem vrednosti i kulturni obrazac [Interpretation of history, systems of values and cultural patterns]'. In *Ulje na vodi, ogledi iz istorije sadašnjosti Srbije* [Oil on water: essays on the history of contemporary Serbia], ed. D. Stojanović (Belgrade: Čigoja štampa, 2010), 125–159; Stojanović, 'Value Changes', 232–238.
8. D. Kovačević et al., *Istorija za 8. razred osnovnih škola* [History textbook for the 8th grade of elementary schools] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstava, 2001); K. Nikolić et al., *Istorija za III razred gimnazije prirodno-matematičkog smera i IV razred gimnazije opšteg i društveno-jezičkog smera* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstava, 2003); S. Rajić et al., *Istorija za 8. razred osnovnih škola* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstava, 2005).
9. Stojanović, 'Tumačenja istorije', 135–143. Recently the debate has been reignited on several occasions, such as a round-table discussion on the project 'Smelost sećanja' (*Boldness of commemoration*), which involved authors from ten southern European countries and was held by the Goethe-Institut in Belgrade on 7 February 2011.
10. Ibid., 138–146.
11. K. Nikolić, *Ravnogorska čitanka* [Reader on Ravna Gora] (Gornji Milanovac: Dečje Novine, 2005).
12. Stojanović, 'Tumačenja istorije', 132–133.
13. Kovačević et al., *Istorija za 8. razred osnovnih škola* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstava, 2001).
14. S. Kostić, 'Odlaganje emotivnog prtljaga [Leaving emotional baggage]', *Vreme*, 20 September 2001, 41.
15. M. Šuica, 'Public Reactions to the New History Textbook for the Eighth Year of Schooling in Serbia', *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 24, no. 3 (2002), 325.
16. M. Šuica, 'I jedna žrtva je strašna [Every victim is a terrible fact]', *Politika*, 13 May 2007.
17. Council of Europe, 'Recommendations Rec (2001)15 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on History Teaching in Twenty-first-Century

- Europe', accessed 5 June 2017, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/history-teaching/Results/AdoptedTexts/Recommendation2001/RecommendationIntro\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/history-teaching/Results/AdoptedTexts/Recommendation2001/RecommendationIntro_en.asp).
18. *Istorijske čitanke 1–4, Nastava moderne istorije Jugoistočne Evrope, dodatni nastavni materijali* (Belgrade-Solun: Prosvetni pregled – Centar za demokratiju i pomirenje u jugoistočnoj Evropi, 2005); 'Teaching Modern Southeast European History: Alternative Educational Materials' (Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, Thessaloniki). The material consists of four separate sets of teaching materials based on different visual and literary sources introducing multiperspectivity: (1) the Ottoman Empire; (2) Nations and States in Southeast Europe; (3) the Balkan Wars and (4) the Second World War.
  19. S. Ast, 'Učenje o bolu [Learning about the pain]', *Vreme*, 8 December 2005, 22.
  20. K. Nikolić and S. Rajić, 'Balkanska povest sa oksfordskim akcentom [The Balkan past with an Oxford accent]', *NIN*, 15 December 2005, 46.
  21. D. Stojanović, 'Balkan History Workbooks—Consequences and Experiences', *European Studies* 7, 158.
  22. *Ibid.*, 160.
  23. M. Šuica, 'Percepcija Osmanskog carstva u Srbiji [Reception of the Ottoman Empire in Serbia]'. In *Imaginarni Turčin*, ed. B. Jezernik (Belgrade: XX vek, 2010), 285–299; M. Šuica, 'The Image of the Battle of Kosovo (1389) Today: A Historic Event, a Moral Pattern, or the Tool of Political Manipulation'. In *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, ed. R. J. W. Evans and G. Marchal (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 152–175.
  24. According to official Serbian historiography—that is, academics, university professors and researchers dealing with this issue (e.g., Sima Ćirković, Rade Mihaljčić, Momčilo Spremić, Miloš Blagojević, Marko Šuica)—the betrayal in the Battle of Kosovo did not occur. The input into this case of pseudohistoriography and creators of propaganda are often left without any response from academic circles. I have argued against the adoption of mythical stereotypes: M. Šuica, 'Vuk Branković u delu Lj. Kovačevića [Vuk Branković in the work of Lj. Kovačević]', *Glas Odeljenja istorijskih nauka SANU* CDXIV, no. 15 (2010): 9–15.
  25. 'Speech Made by Slobodan Milosevic on Kosovo Field, 28 June 1989', *Politika*, 29 June 1989.
  26. The survey's findings are published in D. Stojanović et al., *Novosti iz prošlosti, znanje, neznanje, upotreba i zloupotreba istorije* [The News from the Past, the knowledge, the ignorance, the use and the misuse of history] (Belgrade: Beogradski centar za ljudska prava, 2010), 133, 139.
  27. S. Marjanović-Dušanić and M. Šuica, *Istorija za 2. razred gimnazije opšteg i društveno-jezičkog smera* [History textbook for the 2nd year of gymnasium,

- general and social-linguistic course] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2002); R. Mihaljčić, *Istorija za 6. razred osnovne škole* [History textbook for the 6th grade of elementary school] (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2002).
28. R. Nikčević, ed., *Sveti knez Lazar i Kosovski zavet* [Saint Prince Lazar and the Kosovo vow] (Cetinje-Belgrade: Svetigora, Kompanija Novosti, 2007).
  29. Šuica, 'Percepcija Osmanskog carstva u Srbiji', 289–290.
  30. Nikolić and Rajić, 'Balkanska povest sa oksfordskim akcentom', 46–49.
  31. D. Stojanović, 'Razoružati istoriju [Disarm history!]', *NIN*, 22 December 2005, 44–45.
  32. K. Nikolić and S. Rajić, 'Beograd—grad koncentracionih logora!? [Belgrade—the city of concentration camps!?]', *NIN*, 29 December 2005, 90–91.
  33. L. Valtner, 'Razoružavanje istorije [Disarmament of history]', *Danas*, 21 January 2006.
  34. Ibid.
  35. 'Genocid nad grčkim kokoškama [Genocide against Greek hens]', interview with Prof. R. Ljušić, *Večernje novosti*, 10 March 2006.
  36. At that time, *Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva Republike Srbije* held the monopoly on the textbook market in Serbia and was the only publishing house with permission for textbook publishing.
  37. 'Genocid nad grčkim kokoškama'.
  38. Annual report 2007, CDRSEE 21. Today the implementation of this and similar supplementary teaching material in Serbia is supported by official history teaching standards that foster multiperspectivity, critical thinking and the use of a range of sources, some of which contradict one another, in the teaching and learning of history. See: *Obrazovni standardi za kraj obaveznog obrazovanja za nastavni predmet istorija* [The Educational Standards for compulsory education in the subject of history] (Belgrade: Zavod za vrednovanje kraliteta obrazovanja i vaspitanja, 2010).

## Further Reading

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# 43

## Slovakia

Slávka Otčenášová

### Introduction

Narratives presented in official history textbooks reflect the political agenda of the day and the desire of the political elite to create a collective identity of the citizenry and to develop its loyalty towards the country they live in. Thus every change of political regime makes it necessary to reinterpret the past and to reconstruct national history in such a way that the current state or the current ambitions and political programmes of the elite can be seen as the natural, legitimate and most desirable result of historical development. This chapter describes the case of a history textbook that was recommended by certain Slovak politicians for use in all primary and secondary schools across Slovakia in the mid-1990s and which became one of the most controversial books published in Slovakia. It caused debates among the public and representatives of academia and was even discussed at the level of European Union (EU) institutions.

### Historical Background and Context

In Czechoslovakia, history education as well as historical research and historiography were under the control of the Communist Party until 1989. There was no public debate questioning the interpretation of the past and no public discussions took place on the content or form of history education. The years 1989 and 1993 brought significant changes to Slovak society. The transition from one political regime to another, which started in 1989, and the

dissolution of Czechoslovakia followed by the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993, encouraged the reassessment of the past and opened up space for new interpretations of history. The preceding 40 years of communist rule, and especially the years which followed the Prague Spring of 1968, were marked by strong ideological pressure, party censorship and self-censorship in each sphere of public life, including historical research and historiographical production. Closed borders prevented access to western historiographies for decades. The fall of the Eastern bloc at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s brought new challenges for Slovak historiography. For historians it meant not only distancing themselves from the ideological constraints of the previous era, but also an emerging need for answers: how to redefine the new concept, the 'essence' of Slovak history, how to overcome the limitations placed on the historical sciences in the past and how to explore and interpret the national past in new social and political conditions. Liberation from ideological pressure did not automatically mean that Slovak historiography became fully rehabilitated. Long-term isolation from worldwide developments in historical writing had caused serious deficiencies in the application of current theories and methodological approaches to historical writing. Initially, the predominant agenda of Slovak historians was not the implementation of new methods and theories in historical research but mainly the search for a new national historical master narrative. This was a natural outcome of the breakup of Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the Slovak Republic in 1993. Political elites demanded the reconstruction of the national past in line with the rising nationalism and isolationism that characterised the first half of the 1990s and sought presentations of Slovak history that were believed to legitimise the newly established state. This led to a search for examples from the past which would somehow emphasise Slovakia's tradition of independence and underline the heroic past of the Slovak nation. And a focus on what was unique and exclusive in Slovak history often went hand in hand with the creation or revival of historical myths as well as the negative stereotyping of others.

The end of the Cold War and the establishment of the new state left history teachers unprepared to face the new situation. Although primary schools had been gradually provided with newly written teaching materials and history textbooks since the beginning of the 1990s, it took a long time for historians to produce new textbooks for secondary schools and teachers were required, in some cases until as late as the beginning of the 2000s when a whole set of new textbooks was finally published, to use the textbooks produced during communism in Czechoslovakia. These old textbooks were the joint products of Czech and Slovak historians. There was always one textbook for each particular

grade and one edition was published in the Czech language and one in the Slovak language. World history was interpreted within the limits of the Marxist periodisation of history as the struggle between classes, that is, the oppressors and the oppressed: the former being the feudal rulers and capitalists, the latter the serfs and the workers. The next important topic in history textbooks was the tradition of revolution in history. The presentation of national history was of a more peculiar character. Communist textbook writers gave up the interwar idea of Czechs and Slovaks as one nation and instead chose to create an image of a plebeian people, the true revolutionaries, where collective identity was based on a mixture of national and class-based principles. These old textbooks published in the 1980s in line with the communist interpretation of the past remained in use in secondary schools in Slovakia throughout the entire 1990s as there were no new textbooks for these types of schools produced during that time. The parts of the texts that were seen as most problematic in terms of Marxist propaganda were simply crossed out and students were expected to learn from the remaining texts.

## Debate and Documentation

In 1996, when the textbook by Milan S. Ďurica was introduced into history education, a series of new history textbooks that were written during the first half of the 1990s by historians from the Slovak Academy of Sciences was already in circulation. These were used in primary schools across Slovakia, but the old communist textbooks published in the 1980s were still in use in secondary schools. A state project was launched at this time, which aimed to influence history education. The Ministry of Education, then in the hands of the ultra-right-wing Slovak National Party, distributed a book titled *A History of Slovakia and the Slovaks (Dejiny Slovenska a Slovákov)*<sup>1</sup> to each student in all primary and secondary schools. The book was written by an émigré Slovak historian and Catholic priest, Milan S. Ďurica. He was regarded as a representative of the radical extremist wing of the World Congress of Slovaks and labelled as ‘erudite enough, yet often opting for the manufacturing of political myths’.<sup>2</sup>

Two editions of the book were released within two years. The first edition, published in 1995, was paid very little attention by the public or academia. Only two reviews were published about the book in Slovakia, one being positive and the other rather negative.<sup>3</sup> According to the journalist Peter Greguš, the book was not a scientific work and it did not stand out among the other works of exiled historians which sought to negate the outcomes of professional scientific

research in Slovakia.<sup>4</sup> However, a year later, the Ministry of Education ordered a further 90,000 copies to be produced and the book was claimed by the Ministry to be a 'special-purpose text', a handbook designed to be used alongside history textbooks in use in schools at that time, according to the individual teacher's wishes. Slovak authorities decided to finance the publishing of the book from the European Union programme Phare, the aim of which was to help the integration of Slovakia into the EU.

*A History of Slovakia and the Slovaks* was a rather unusual book to be used as didactic material. It was actually an overview of national history written in the style of a chronicle, beginning with the first century AD and ending on 31 December 1995. The narrative entries were next to the selected dates and it was written as a kind of chronological guide to Slovak history. The book was officially claimed to be an instrumental didactic text. The interpretation of history in Ďurica's book was influenced by the book *Slovenské dejiny* (Slovak history) published in 1939 and written by František Hrušovský, who was the most influential historian of the Slovak state during the Second World War and whose work contained propaganda legitimising the politics of that state. Hrušovský's interpretation of history was relatively widespread among the exiled Slovak historians, including Ďurica, and the works of these historians in exile became known and were promoted in Slovakia throughout the 1990s.

Despite the first edition going largely unnoticed among historians and the general public, the second edition of *A History of Slovakia and the Slovaks* caused plenty of critical reaction within Slovak society after it was distributed in large numbers to primary and secondary schools. Some parts of society found the history textbook far too nationalistic. The author of the textbook was accused of myth production, a selective utilitarian approach, fabrication and a xenophobic interpretation of the past. The book was criticised mainly for its interpretation of medieval history, which was seen by the majority of Slovak historians as an attempt to invent a tradition of the nation and its statehood. It was also criticised for its glorification of the pro-Nazi Second World War Slovak state, as well as for spreading a negative image of 'others', mainly of Hungarians, Czechs, Jews and non-Catholics in general. The main voices against the book were historians from the Slovak Academy of Sciences, who addressed an open letter to the Minister of Education Eva Slavkovská.<sup>5</sup> Protests came also from the Slovak Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters, from representatives of the Jewish community living in Slovakia and from members of political parties in opposition to the government. A number of objections were publicly raised against the narratives presented in the book.

Július Bartl, in his review of the book published in *Historický časopis*, a flagship journal of the Slovak historical sciences, stated:

Apart from objective, factual and date-related mistakes, there are also incorrect interpretations, unfinished narrations of facts and events, or there is a withholding of particular equipollent facts related to the described event. This is evidence for either an unprofessional or a biased attitude of the author. The only positive aspect of this work is the effort of the author to overcome older Czechoslovakist interpretations of Slovak history and to eliminate the interpretations of Slovak history from a Czech or pro-Czech point of view. However, this can lead to opposite extremes and to a search for the Slovakhood of the Slovaks where it did not and could not exist.<sup>6</sup>

An open letter to the Minister of Education Eva Slavkovská from historians of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (signed by Ľubomír Lipták, chairman of the Scientific Board of the History Section of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and Dušan Kováč, director of the History Section of the Slovak Academy of Sciences) was published in the daily newspaper *Práca* on 19 April 1997; it stated that Ďurica's book was not an appropriate school textbook, as it 'did not meet basic academic standards'<sup>7</sup> and 'it revived old and long outdated myths and contained a great number of untruths and fabrications ... and it did not belong in schools for both educational and moral reasons'.<sup>8</sup> The main problems related to the interpretations of the past in the book that were listed in the open letter were its approval of the politics of the Second World War Slovak state and an inappropriate depiction of the tragedy of Slovakian Jews during the Second World War as well as anti-Semitic passages; anti-Czech propaganda stemming from a xenophobic description of a common Czechoslovak past; and a biased and fanatic 'Catholic' perception of Slovak history.<sup>9</sup> The historians concluded:

Thanks to professional historiography, contemporary Slovak society is able to see these religious conflicts in their wider historical context, without bias or antagonism. Unfortunately, Ďurica's book seeks to implant in Slovak society a confessional hatred and separateness that has long been overcome. We realise that our book market is flooded with a great number of pseudoscientific and fraudulent publications, a tendency that one surely cannot prevent. What is intolerable, however, is that such an unprofessional publication as this one has been financed from public funds and distributed to public schools. We consider it to be our moral and professional duty to notify the public about this. We cannot pretend that nothing is happening for we feel responsible for the guidance and education of future generations.<sup>10</sup>

As the historian Ivan Kamenec put it, 'this book caused an even stronger polarisation of an already split Slovak historiography'.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, there were also some promoters of the book who voiced their support for the author and textbook, such as representatives of *Matica slovenská*, which is a

public state-funded cultural and scientific institution focusing on topics connected with the [Slovak nation](#) and has a nationally oriented centre for historical research, as well as the Slovak National Party, the Ministry of Education and some Catholic circles. According to Peter Greguš, 'the debates on the textbook were to be described as hectic and the attitude of some politicians in this dispute confirmed the fact that state power in Slovakia often desires from historians mainly an approval of its own legitimisation and praise of the acts of politicians'.<sup>12</sup>

Since this book had been financed by European Union funds, the problem was discussed at an international forum. In the summer of 1997 and in reference to the ambitions of Slovakia to join the EU, Hans van den Broek, the EU External Relations Commissioner with special responsibility for the [Enlargement of the European Union](#), urged the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zdenka Kramplová, to remove the controversial book from school education, stating 'it can create misunderstanding about what's being thought in Slovakia about the war period and anti-Semitism'.<sup>13</sup> However, the Ministry of Education objected to the EU demands and the request was claimed to be 'a fact that can be interpreted as interference into the internal affairs of Slovakia and a serious attempt to discredit her internationally'.<sup>14</sup> The Slovak National Party expressed the opinion that they had 'no reason to change their [positive] opinion of the book ... which is a precious and objective summary of the history of Slovakia'.<sup>15</sup> The Slovak prime minister finally conceded that some parts of the book contained inaccurate information about history and that the book would not be used as a school history textbook. Consequently, the Ministry of Education issued an announcement in June 1997 that it had ordered the immediate withdrawal of the book *A History of Slovakia and the Slovaks* by Milan Ďurica from circulation as a school textbook. However, the public turmoil around the book was not over yet. The Christian-Social Union of Slovakia organised a press conference on 24 September 1997 with the aim of defending Ďurica's book, labelling its opponents 'Marxists' and 'Czechoslovakists'. This controversial textbook has not disappeared completely. A positive reference to Ďurica's book was made in 2009 in an article by the former MP Roman Hofbauer on the web page of Slovak Brotherhood ('Slovenská pospolitost'), a far-right group. Hofbauer defends Ďurica as the most erudite person to write such a textbook and depicts the opponents of the book as enemies of Slovakia and Slovaks.<sup>16</sup>

## Conclusion

The textbook controversy described above reflected the political and social situation in Slovakia following its declaration of independence in 1993. Milan S. Ďurica's book became the school history textbook due to a decision made

by the Ministry of Education, without having been approved by the committees of historians and educators who were in charge of making such a decision. Sections of the public complained that the book contained many anti-Hungarian, anti-Czech and anti-Jewish references and that it did not provide a truthful image of the past. Its interpretation of medieval history, where the author had searched for examples to prove a tradition of independent Slovak statehood, was particularly criticised. Interpretations of twentieth-century Slovak history were also seen by many as problematic, since the author was heavily influenced by Second World War Slovak historiography, celebrating the Second World War Slovak state. On the other hand, nationally oriented sectors of the public and certain like-minded institutions, as well as the Ministry of Education, the Slovak National Party and some Catholic circles, defended the book and the interpretation of the past which it provided. The issue of the truthful interpretation of the past was the main agenda on both sides. What was neglected in the whole issue was the meaning of history education. It was obvious that in the mid-1990s the view of Slovak historians, as well as of officials at the Ministry of Education, was that history classes were supposed to provide a master narrative for students on their national past. History education was strictly seen as a way of promulgating a single story of the past. The idea that history classes should serve as ways of developing students' critical thinking skills and that the role of history education is to make students aware that historical narratives are multi-layered and that they have to be critically questioned, that myths and stereotypes have to be deconstructed or that the past can be approached and perceived from different perspectives, was not sufficiently addressed in public debates.

The defining factor of the whole controversy was the authoritarian approach of the Ministry of Education, which introduced the controversial textbook into school education without prior consultation with scholars. The Ministry disregarded any objections from protesting historians or representatives of the Jewish community and did not take part in any constructive dialogue with any representatives from the academic or educational communities. It was only after the intervention of European Union institutions abroad that the Slovak government reluctantly withdrew support from the publication's use in schools.

## Notes

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# 44

## Slovenia

Vilma Brodnik

### Introduction

After the introduction of a multi-party parliamentary democracy in 1990 and Slovenian independence in 1991, there are no longer any topics relating to key events in Slovenian history which are still deliberately overlooked or avoided. Topics that have proved contentious in the past include Slovenian history during the First and Second World Wars and the post-war period until Slovenian independence. Over the past 20 years, these periods in Slovenian history have been researched, interpreted and reinterpreted in detail, and research is still being conducted. Consensus has been reached on most topics, and they have consequently been included in history curricula and textbooks<sup>1</sup> as part of the last two curricular revisions in 1998 and 2008.

### Historical Background

One of these much-researched topics is the history of Slovenia during the First World War, in which neither historians nor teachers have noted any major differences in interpretation over the last 20 years, suggesting that the historical evaluations of the period during the first 20 years of Slovenia's independence have been reasonably objective. In Yugoslavian history curricula and textbooks, the Isonzo Front in the Soča Valley was overlooked, while the Salonica Front and the role of the Serbian army were highlighted. However, the Isonzo Front between the Habsburg monarchy and Italy is of key importance to Slovenian history. Discussions of this topic in schools emphasise the fact

that, to serve the interests of the major powers, Slovenia's western border was moved deep into Slovenian territory, resulting in around 340,000 Slovenes consequently living in Italy and being exposed to fascist terror and compulsory Italianisation.<sup>2</sup>

There are, however, a great number of differences in the interpretation of the history of the Second World War and the years following it. We therefore focus in this chapter on matters such as the Civil War during the Second World War, the summary execution of members of the Slovenian Home Guard immediately after the Second World War and the evaluation of the characteristics and effects of the post-war communist system and the independence of Slovenia.<sup>3</sup>

## Debate and Documentation

During the Second World War, the Slovenian territories were divided among four occupying forces. Nazi Germany controlled the northern territories, fascist Italy controlled the central part of Slovenia including Ljubljana (Italy had already annexed the western part of what is today Slovenia as a result of the 1920 Treaty of Rapallo), Hungary occupied eastern Slovenia and the Ustashe Croats controlled the far south. In Yugoslav times, in the spirit of establishing good relations between the Yugoslav nations, discussing Ustashe Croatia as the fourth occupier of Slovenian territory was taboo; the subject was only included in history curricula and textbooks as a result of the most recent curriculum revision in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

The largest resistance movement fighting the occupying forces was founded by the Anti-Imperialist Front (*Protiimperialistična fronta*) on 27 April 1941 and comprised a coalition of the Slovenian Communist Party (*Komunistična partija Slovenije*), the liberal part of the Sokol Gymnastics Society (*telovadno društvo Sokol*), the Christian Socialists (*krščanski socialisti*) and a group of intellectuals. In accordance with Soviet instructions, the war between Western and fascist countries was labelled as imperialistic, which served as the catalyst for a communist revolution. Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941; the Anti-Imperialist Front was renamed the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People (*Osvobodilna fronta slovenskega naroda*) and immediately commenced armed resistance against the occupying forces. Following the Soviet model, the armed forces of the Liberation Front were named partisans. The Communist Party of Slovenia assumed control of the Liberation Front as a means of taking power and furthering its objective of carrying out a communist revolution, which most pre-war political parties were against. Pre-war

political parties joined forces in the Slovenian Covenant (*Slovenska zaveza*), which became the National Committee (*Narodni odbor*) soon after the capitulation of Italy, and appointed the Slovenian Home Guard (*slovenski domobranci*) as the Slovenian army. The Home Guard operated under the control of Nazi Germany and comprised the Voluntary Anti-Communist Militia (*Prostovoljna protikomunistična milica*) who were also called Village Guards (*vaške straže*), and the Slovenian *četniki* (members of the Royal Yugoslav Army), who were aligned with fascist Italy. Armed conflicts occurred between the partisans and the Home Guards. As a result, Slovenian historians have engaged in years of debate as to whether a civil war took place on Slovenian soil during the Second World War. Those historians who argue that no civil war took place state that, in their view, Slovenian armed forces operating under the occupiers cannot be seen as independent military units, the existence of which is a precondition for civil war. Other historians reject this assessment of the situation and assert that the partisans operated under the command of the Soviet Union. Ultimately, the view that a civil war was fought on the territory of Slovenia during the Second World War prevailed. The history textbook used in the fourth year of academic secondary schools puts it thus:

The climate was one of constant suspicion, mutual accusation and irreconcilable hatred on both sides. Especially in the Ljubljana region, the civil war became ever more bitter, while at the same time spreading to the Gorenjska and Primorska regions, albeit on a lesser scale. There was no civil war in the regions of Štajerska and Prekmurje. Most of the men and boys joining the Home Guard had been forced to take sides and joined the Home Guard due to their opposition to and fear of communism. They saw their collaboration with the Germans as necessary and the lesser of two evils. They hoped the western allies would be victorious and that after the war they would be able to change sides.<sup>5</sup>

The Civil War reached its tragic conclusion immediately after the end of the Second World War, when 18,000 members of the Home Guard sought refuge with British forces in southern Austria, only for 12,000 to be returned under assurances that they would be transferred to Italy. Partisan units killed most of these 12,000 members of the Home Guard, including their families, in mass summary executions. The mass execution of Slovenian members of the Home Guard was a taboo topic in Slovenian history, although the event lived on in people's memories. The first mention of the killings in the media occurred in 1975 in an interview with Edvard Kocbek, the leader of the Christian Socialists, who had been a member of the Liberation Front.<sup>6</sup> Kocbek was not only a politician but also a notable writer and poet who was a proponent of existentialism and is considered one of the greats of Slovenian

literature. Only after the democratisation of political, social and cultural life in Slovenia in the 1980s did the summary executions become the subject of public discussion. The essay by the philosopher and sociologist Dr Spomenka Hribar entitled *Krivda in greh* (Guilt and Sin) was originally meant to have been published in 1984 but fell victim to censorship by the authorities. This did not, however, prevent photocopies of the essay being distributed among Slovenians both at home and abroad. In her essay, the author became the first to draw attention to the mass killings as a crime and to emphasise the importance to the nation of reconciliation.<sup>7</sup> According to data from 20 September 2017, the total Slovenian victims of the Second World War and the period immediately following it (post-war killings) numbered 99,822, which represents 6.7% of the Slovenian population. The list of victims of the Second World War is publicly available on the website <http://www.sistory.si/zrtve>. This figure is important for an objective historical assessment of the Second World War but also has a great moral and ethical significance for the reconciliation process. The topic was first included in history textbooks in 1993 and was revised for the history curricula and textbooks issued in 2008. The authors of the textbook for the fourth year of academic secondary schools also refer to the mass killings as crimes:

After the War in Europe had officially been declared over, the vast majority of the 12,000 returned fighters were simply massacred, mostly in Kočevski Rog and at Teharje near Celje. Despite the fact that the war was over, neither the political nor the criminal responsibility of the prisoners was determined prior to their execution. The decision to take such criminal action was taken at the highest political level of the Communist powers in Yugoslavia. In part, this decision was fuelled by revenge; however, the main reason lay in the desire to incapacitate and frighten the political opposition, which might otherwise have played a role in any subsequent fighting between the Communists and Western allies.<sup>8</sup>

Despite this unambiguous statement, the textbook's authors and editors provide the following question for students: 'Was the summary execution of returned members of the Home Guard immediately after the war justified?'<sup>9</sup> This question potentially permits students to attempt to justify the mass killings and may lead students to attempt to justify breaches of law and other domestic and international legal documents. At the same time, the question is not in accordance with the curricular goals specified in the history curricula for secondary schools, according to which students should 'condemn mass violations of human rights',<sup>10</sup> which this event clearly represents, since the members of the Home Guard and their families were sentenced without impartial judicial trial and because women and children were also killed. The

contents of the most recently published revised textbook were reviewed and any potentially disputed passages removed.<sup>11</sup>

Another area of contention is that of the *foibe* mass killings. The victims of the *foibe*, so called because the bodies of those massacred without trial by Yugoslav forces were tossed into karst sinkholes known as *foibe*, are a specific category of victims of post-war extrajudicial massacres. The number of victims has not yet been ascertained; however, estimates put the total between 2000 and 3000 in the areas of Trieste and Gorizia, which were under the control of the Slovenian authorities (not including the Croatian part of Istria). The victims were mainly Italians. To this day, the issue triggers emotional reactions among the general public and the research community in both Slovenia and Italy, with regard to both the number of victims and the reason for the massacres. Slovenians frequently feel that the Italian side ‘forgets’ the Italian policies of assimilation to which Slovenians under Italian fascist rule were subject after 1918; the Slovenian argument that the massacres represented ‘just punishment’ of fascist criminals, meanwhile, founders on the fact that not all victims were fascist criminals—indeed, some victims were Slovenians. Therefore, the *foibe* must be viewed in the wider historical context of the 27-year fascist occupation of western Slovenia and the 2-year fascist occupation of part of Central Slovenia including Ljubljana.<sup>12</sup> Up until 2008, the topic of the *foibe* was not included in Slovenian textbooks or curricula, and neither was the fascist occupation of Slovenia included in Italian textbooks and history curricula. However, the history of national minorities in Slovenia, including the Italian minorities, was included for the first time in the revised secondary school history curricula from 2008 and appeared in the revised secondary school history textbook from 2011.<sup>13</sup>

The third topic whose status is not yet finally evaluated and which causes unease among teachers is life in the post-war communist system. In the revised curriculum for academic secondary schools, the post-war communist system is described as totalitarian.<sup>14</sup> The corresponding textbook presents the party’s totalitarian rule through the words of Edvard Kocbek, the leader of the Christian Socialists, who joined the Liberation Front of the Slovenian People only to be cast aside after the war. Kocbek evaluates the political circumstances in Slovenia after the party assumed power in the following terms:

The Communist Party holds all power, both legislative and executive, has a decisive impact on the courts and military, it controls the secret police, it heads official political organisations, and appoints the secretaries of LF committees, which have de facto decision-making power in all towns, counties and districts. The party controls all mass organisations, including the LF (Liberation Front), AFW (Antifascist Front of Women) and USY (Union of Socialist Youth). It also



controls all the press; it manages trade unions and sports, and is especially involved in schooling and education. Members of the party control all key nationalised economic operations. No independent organisation exists outside the party. As a result, the party's power is total.<sup>15</sup>

Historians see the party as having made use of Kocbek to draft as many Catholics as possible into the partisans during the Second World War and then having discarded him as soon as this goal was attained. The party eliminated all political opposition by means of extrajudicial trials and, later, staged political trials, thus assuming total power. In the years immediately after the war the Communist Party, acting in line with the Soviet model, monopolised power, nationalised all means of economic production, eradicated entrepreneurship, established state control of manufacturing and services, ideologised and censored culture and banned opposition media.<sup>16</sup> Ties with the Soviet Union loosened after the Informbiro conflict of 1948, which resulted from Stalin's growing opposition to the independent politics of Tito's Yugoslav communists and the fact that the Soviet Red Army had no physical presence in Yugoslavia. Yugoslav communists who agreed with the Soviet Union were imprisoned and interned in concentration camps, the one at Goli Otok being the most prominent. The topic of these communist concentration camps was initially overlooked by school history books and was first addressed in the 1980s. Yugoslavia renewed its friendship with the Soviet Union in 1953 when Khrushchev came to power. However, it never again attempted to copy the Soviet model of communism; rather, it attempted to establish its own model of socialism. At the same time, Yugoslavia was never a member of the Eastern Bloc; it helped establish the Non-Aligned Movement and maintained good relations with the West and the USA. The Yugoslav model of socialism is sometimes referred to as 'socialism with a human face', a system of socialist self-governance. Dr Spomenka Hribar gives the following intriguing assessment of the system: 'According to its genotype, the previous system was most certainly communist, however, on the level of its phenotype, it was somewhat more flexible; the term "humane socialism" is not just an empty phrase'.<sup>17</sup> State property was eliminated in favour of property held by society, concentration camps were closed, forced labour was eliminated, private property was allowed in agriculture and other industries under certain circumstances, the Socialist Association of Working People was established in an attempt to attract as many people as possible to take an active part in public life, censorship was lifted, consumerism was established and foreign travel was permitted. This notwithstanding, although information from other countries was reasonably widely available, especially in Slovenia, the party still held political monopoly.<sup>18</sup>

Despite greater ideological pluralism, no deviation from Marxist ideology was allowed, as demonstrated by the curricular objectives and history curriculum in force from 1945 to 1991, in which history had an important role in instilling the Marxist spirit and ensuring conformity with a Marxist view on the world. Only one political party was allowed, namely the Communist Party, and there was no freedom of speech or the press. Historians' assessments of the post-war political system are diverse. There is consensus that the political system from the end of the war to around 1952 was totalitarian, but views on later periods vary. Some historians take a highly favourable view of Yugoslavia's 'humane socialism', emphasising various elements and positive features of it which were not present in communist systems developed in countries in which the Soviet Red Army was present. However, other historians focus on the monopoly of the Communist Party and the persecution of political adversaries or, at the very minimum, their debarring from political and professional activities:

Even though totalitarianism in Slovenia took harsher and milder forms during its 45-year history, in the end pure totalitarianism won through. Until its very end, the regime remained willing to crack down on its ideological enemies. It produced secret laws and rules, and the party retained all the advantages it had violently assumed on behalf of the working class and socialism. The only change occurred in the autumn of 1989, with the deletion of the provision on the leading role of the Association of Communists from the Slovenian constitution. However, until the very end, the Communist Party employed the secret police as its own private repressive authority.<sup>19</sup>

The dissident Dr Jože Pučnik is often cited as an example of political persecution. He was twice convicted in political trials for writing articles which were critical of the government. After being incarcerated, he emigrated abroad, where he obtained his doctoral degree. In 1989 he returned to Slovenia and became the leader of the Democratic Opposition of Slovenia (DEMOS coalition), which won the first multi-party elections in Slovenia after the Second World War.<sup>20</sup>

An objective evaluation of the socialist system between 1952 and 1989 would most likely lie somewhere between the two ends of the spectrum of perspectives on this time and would be characterised by an objective presentation of the advantages and disadvantages of living in this era.

Debates concerning the post-war socialist system will doubtless continue in future years, in both the political and historical arenas. Part of the cause of the continuing debates is that in 1998, the Slovenian National Assembly rejected

two documents which would have allowed Slovenia's left wing to distance itself from and criticise the communist revolution and provide a statement of national reconciliation.<sup>21</sup> In addition, in 2009, the National Assembly merely took note of, rather than accepting, the resolution of the [European Parliament](#) from 2 April 2009, on European conscience and totalitarianism. The adoption of these documents would significantly contribute to the reconciliation of historical differences, hatred and resentment whose seeds were sown among Slovenians during the Second World War and whose origins date back to the late nineteenth century. In 2017, a central state monument was set up in the capital, Ljubljana, commemorating all victims of wars in Slovenia in the twentieth century. It represents an important step in the reconciliation process.

Many factors contributed to Slovenia's decision to declare its independence. One of them was the severe economic crisis and the escalation of national differences in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, another was the process of democratisation that resulted in the first multi-party elections since the Second World War, which were won by the DEMOS coalition in April 1990.<sup>22</sup> DEMOS took decisive steps towards Slovenia's independence. The first step was a plebiscite for Slovenian independence, which took place on 23 December 1990. The vast majority of Slovenians opted for independence. The result of the plebiscite conferred on the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia the obligation to put constitutional and other legislative requirements for independence in place within six months of the results being proclaimed and take the measures necessary for the realisation of the country's independence, which came about on 25 June 1991. Slovenian citizens displayed unity, determination and courage in establishing their own independent state, which has since been admitted to European and international associations.<sup>23</sup>

There is sometimes debate among politicians and historians concerning who deserves more credit for Slovenia's independence, politicians from DEMOS (the democratic coalition and opposition of political parties, which won the first multi-party election after 1945) or other leading politicians in the post-socialist era. A cross-party declaration invited all persons entitled to vote to participate in the plebiscite of 23 December 1990. This joint declaration was signed by the president of the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, the president of the Executive Council of the Republic of Slovenia (both members of the DEMOS government) and the president of the chairmanship of the Republic of Slovenia, who was the state's most senior politician at the time (and formerly a member of the Slovenian Communist Party). The role of all these political stakeholders in Slovenia's independence is also considered in discussions of independence in the textbook we have been investigating in this chapter.<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusion

In the 20 years that have passed since Slovenia gained sovereignty, independence and a pluralised political system modelled on parliamentary democracy, key research has been conducted on all the significant topics from twentieth-century Slovenian history which had previously been overlooked or presented from a unilateral perspective. More detailed research based on the study of various archive records and other historical documents continues. These topics have been included in curricula and textbooks in the wake of four curricular revisions, which took place in 1990/1991 just after Slovenian independence, in 1996 and 1998 and most recently in 2008.<sup>25</sup> A consensus has been reached among historians concerning the depiction of most of these topics; however, various debates are still being held in the context of the contemporary political situation, debates reflected both in history as an academic discipline and in history teaching.

## Notes

1. In Slovenia, textbooks are reviewed and approved by the *Strokovni svet za splošno izobraževanje* (Council for General Education), which is part of the *Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport Republike Slovenije* (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia). *Regulations for the Approval of Textbooks* (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, 2006, 2010, 2011).
2. E. Dolenc & A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4: Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije* [History 4: Textbook for the 4th Grade of Grammar School] (Ljubljana: DZS, 2002), 80. All translations by the author unless otherwise specified.
3. To a certain degree, this selection of topics reflects my subjective judgement; however, it is also based on my eight years of teaching experience in general upper secondary school from 1989. I then became an educational advisor involved in the development of history curricula, a role in which I continue to this day. In this chapter, I investigate the presentation of these topics in history textbooks used in academic secondary schools as well as in key historical texts, containing historical sources as well as analysis. I also outline the controversies among historians concerning the topics discussed.
4. *Učni načrt. Gimnazija: Zgodovina. Splošna gimnazija, Obvezni predmet: 280 ur* [Curriculum: Grammar School. History. General Grammar School: Compulsory Subject: 280 Hours] (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod RS za šolstvo, 2008).

5. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4: Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije* [History 4: Textbook for the 4th Grade of General Upper Secondary School] (Ljubljana: DZS Publishing House, 2002), 153.
6. B. Pahor and A. Rebula, *Edvard Kocbek—Pričevalec našega časa* [Edvard Kocbek—Witness of Our Time] (Trieste: Zaliv, 1975), 146–150.
7. S. Hribar, *Krivda in greh* [Guilt and Sin] (Maribor: ZAT, 1990), 26–27.
8. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4: Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije* [History 4: Textbook for the 4th Grade of General Upper Secondary School] (Ljubljana: DZS Publishing House, 2002), 155.
9. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4*, 155.
10. *Učni načrt. Gimnazija. Zgodovina. Splošna gimnazija, Obvezni predmet: 280 ur* [Curriculum: General Upper Secondary School: History. General Upper Secondary School: Compulsory Subject: 280 Hours] (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod RS za šolstvo, 2008), 40.
11. See A. Gabrič and M. Režek, *Zgodovina 4: Učbenik za četrti letnik gimnazije* [History 4: Textbook for the 4th Grade of General Upper Secondary School] (Ljubljana: DZS, 2011).
12. N. Troha, 'Foibe—koliko resnic: Genocid ali kaznovanje fašističnih zločinov', *Zgodovina v šoli* 3–4 (2003) ['Foibe—How Many Truths: Genocide or Punishment for Fascist Crimes', *History in School Journal* 3–4], 28–35.
13. *Učni načrt. Gimnazija. Zgodovina. Splošna gimnazija, Obvezni predmet: 280 ur* [Curriculum: General Upper Secondary School: History: General Upper Secondary School: Compulsory Subject: 280 Hours] (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod RS za šolstvo, 2008), 40; Gabrič & Režek, *Zgodovina 4*, 228.
14. *Učni načrt. Gimnazija. Zgodovina. Splošna gimnazija, Obvezni predmet: 280 ur*, 40–41, 45.
15. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4*, 208.
16. A. Gabrič, 'Boljševizacija Slovenije', *Zgodovina v šoli* 3–4 (2008) ['Bolshevism in Slovenia', *History in School Journal* 3–4], 21–43 (here 25).
17. S. Hribar, 'Gledam črno, vidim črno [I look black, I see black]', *Dnevnikov objektiv*, 23 April 2011.
18. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4*, 222. See also: J. Fischer, ed., *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije*, part 2 [Slovenian Modern History: From the 'United Slovenia' Programme to the Modern Recognition of the State of the Republic of Slovenia, Book 2] (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, Mladinska knjiga, 2005), 930–971.
19. V. Simoniti, 'Permanentna revolucija, totalitarizem in strah [Permanent Revolution, Totalitarianism and Fear]'. In *Temna stran meseca: Kratka zgodovina totalitarizma v Sloveniji 1945–1990* [The Dark Side of the Moon: A Short History of Totalitarianism in Slovenia], ed. D. Jančar (Ljubljana: Založba Nova revija, 1998), 25–36 (here 35–36).

20. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina* 4, 245.
21. Both documents were proposed in 1998 by Borut Pahor, but both were rejected by left- and right-wing political groupings alike. More: S. Hribar, 'Intervju [Interview]', *Mladina*, 20 July 2012.
22. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina* 4, 244–245. See also: B. Repe, *Slovenci v osemdesetih* [Slovenians in the 1980s] (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije [Historical Association of Slovenia], 2001), 3–38.
23. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina* 4, 245–246. See also: R. Pesek, *Osamosvojitve Slovenije: ali naj Republika Slovenija postane samostojna in neodvisna država?* [Independence of Slovenia: should the Republic of Slovenia become an independent state?] (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2007), 201–275, 327–393.
24. E. Dolenc and A. Gabrič, *Zgodovina* 4, 245–246.
25. *Učni načrt za predmet: Zgodovina. Gimnazijski program* [Curriculum for History: Programme for General Upper Secondary School] (Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo in šport, 1992); *Učni načrt za zgodovino v gimnaziji* [History curriculum for General Upper Secondary School] (Ljubljana: Zavod RS za šolstvo, 1996); *Učni načrt za zgodovino v gimnaziji (modul 280 ur)* [History Curriculum for General Upper Secondary School (Module 280 Hours)] (Ljubljana: Nacionalni kurikularni svet, Predmetna kurikularna komisija za zgodovino, 1998). *Učni načrt. Gimnazija. Zgodovina. Splošna gimnazija, Obvezni predmet: 280 ur* [Curriculum: General Upper Secondary School: History. General Upper Secondary School: Compulsory Subject: 280 Hours] (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod RS za šolstvo, 2008).

## Further Reading

- Spazzali, R. *Foibe. Un dibattito ancora aperto* [Foibe. A Reopened Debate]. Trieste: Lega nazionale, 1990.
- Troha, N. *Komu Trst. Slovenci in Italijani med dvema državama* [Trieste to Which Side? Slovenians and Italians Between Two States]. Ljubljana: Modrijan, 1999.
- Učni načrt. Gimnazija. Zgodovina. Splošna gimnazija, Obvezni predmet: 280 ur* [Curriculum: Grammar School. History: General Upper Secondary School: Compulsory Subject: 280 Hours]. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, Zavod RS za šolstvo, 2008.

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## South Africa

Johan Wassermann

### Introduction

South Africa has a long tradition of using history as a tool to create national identity. This was especially the case under apartheid, when school history was employed to further the idea of white superiority. This was achieved by the use of textbooks in which the content foregrounded white history and trivialised black history. The content was underpinned by a Christian Nationalist philosophy and a methodology based on the rote learning of history in an uncritical manner. History was a series of undisputed facts generally about ‘big men’.<sup>1</sup> Although challenged in some academic circles and by the rise of People’s History from the 1980s onwards,<sup>2</sup> this hardly impacted on the sway apartheid history had on the subject at school level. The final national school-leaving examination invariably saw to it that the status quo was supported in terms of content studied and methodology employed. In the process, all South African learners, black and white, were socialised under the apartheid system of history education.<sup>3</sup>

### Context

The end of apartheid in 1994 brought about a paradigm shift in the education system and in the teaching and learning of history. Christian Nationalism was replaced by outcome-based education. The rote learning of undisputed facts was replaced by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), intended to promote critical enquiry and the inclusion of multiple perspectives.<sup>4</sup> However, it



would be naive to assume that school history after 1994 became a neutral and all-inclusive subject. In fact, the post-apartheid history curricula were what Apple and Christian-Smith would call the product of complex power relations and struggles among different groups.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, the dominant group was the government of the day, under the African National Congress (ANC), which could, as a consequence, shape history curricula and related textbooks to suit its agenda. One of the groups that felt marginalised in the process was the white South Africans, particularly Afrikaners. As a result, in many instances, they deserted history as a school subject on a large scale.<sup>6</sup>

Roughly in the same position was the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) under its leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi. In the lead-up to the first full-fledged democratic elections in 1994, the IFP was involved in a bloody civil-war-like black-on-black conflict with the ANC for political supremacy. In the process, thousands of people were killed or uprooted.<sup>7</sup> The conflict was resolved only one week before the elections took place, when, after an emergency meeting with President F. W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, Buthelezi decided that his party would participate in the upcoming election.<sup>8</sup>

In the wake of this conflict, South African cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro (aka Zapiro) drew a cartoon titled 'Negotiating in Liquid Assets', which appeared in *Mail & Guardian*. In the cartoon, as a reference to the IFP's involvement in the 1994 pre-election violence with the aid of sectors of the apartheid government, Buthelezi is shown dipping his pen in the blood of the victims of the violence at urban townships such as Thokoza, Katlehong and KwaMashu—in order to sign the accord to participate in the 1994 elections. At the time, the IFP and Buthelezi, favourite satirical subjects for Zapiro, took no notice or action.<sup>9</sup> The cartoon in question then disappeared among the others he produced on a weekly basis. However, 13 years later, in 2007, the cartoon became a serious subject of contention.

## The Debate

The first rumblings from the IFP regarding the cartoon came about when Oxford University Press (OUP), like other publishing houses, distributed free promotional copies of their new products, including *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book*, as a marketing strategy. This took place in anticipation of the implementation of the final phase of the NCS-History for Grade 12 in 2008. The textbook contained, on page 200, the cartoon drawn by Zapiro 13 years earlier (see the documentation section below).<sup>10</sup> Mangosuthu Buthelezi raised the issue with then Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor.

Buthelezi objected to the way he—and by implication his party—was, with reference to the cartoon, depicted in the publication by OUP. In his complaint, Buthelezi focused on the cartoon only and ignored the accompanying question, which asked: ‘Explain what bias is shown in Source M by referring to details of the cartoon’. According to Buthelezi, the outcome was that Pandor undertook to distribute a letter to schools ‘warning them of the potential bias’ in the textbook.<sup>11</sup>

The attempt by the IFP to pressure Minister Pandor into taking action failed for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it would have been unbecoming for her to interfere with the screening processes that all textbooks, including *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner’s Book*, had to undergo by blocking this particular publication. Such a step could not be taken, as it would have compromised the commercial processes pertaining to textbooks adopted by the Department of Education (DoE), violated the right to freedom of expression as enshrined in the South African constitution and stood in opposition to the outcomes of the NCS-History, which promoted multiple perspectives and critical enquiry. It would also have been foolhardy of Pandor to veto a textbook that possibly benefited the ANC (her party) by being a source of serious annoyance to the IFP, a long-standing opponent, as discussed earlier.<sup>12</sup> Against this backdrop, Musa Zondi, a spokesperson for the IFP, announced that action needed to be taken against *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner’s Book* by introducing a new dimension to the debate, namely that failure to do so would disadvantage the IFP in the 2009 parliamentary elections.<sup>13</sup>

With the textbook now directly linked to the upcoming election, the first action taken by the IFP involved its Youth Brigade, held at the IFP annual general conference in December 2007. The theme of the Youth Brigade was ‘Youth as champions in any crisis’. At the conference, an incensed Buthelezi lashed out at *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner’s Book* for portraying him and the IFP in a negative light. His major gripe was that ‘[t]he book uses a cartoon to depict a biased account of the low intensity civil war which claimed the lives of so many IFP supporters ... A cartoonist’s viewpoint was offered as historic fact and the truth about South Africa’s history was simply expunged with a wink and a nod’. To Buthelezi, it amounted to a political ploy to harm the chances of his party in the 2009 elections.<sup>14</sup> Consequently a resolution was adopted by the conference that the distribution of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner’s Book*, which had by now been elevated by the IFP to the status of a ‘prescribed book’, be halted for the 2008 school year and the book withdrawn. In adopting this resolution, the IFP Youth Brigade claimed that such action was necessary, as the book ‘and certain

of its content including cartoons, purporting to portray contemporary history, [is] highly defamatory of the President of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the party he has been elected to lead'.<sup>15</sup>

An official reaction came from Lunga Ngqengelele of the DoE, who corrected the IFP claim, stating that *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* was not in fact a prescribed book but one of the textbooks teachers and learners could purchase to use.<sup>16</sup> From the side of the press, *The Mercury* reported, without identifying particular individuals, that historians welcomed *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book*, as it did not subscribe to a single historical truth but allowed learners 'to make up their own minds about the past'. One of the authors of the book in question, Nigel Worden, added impetus to this thinking by proclaiming his support for the NCS-History, on which the textbook was based, for encouraging historical enquiry.<sup>17</sup>

However, the initial public outcries from the IFP came very late, as the new school year, during which the book in question was to be used, was only a month away. In addition, the vetting of history textbooks by the appointed national committee, consisting of history educationists representing various educational constituencies, had already been completed. For this exercise, the DoE had used generic guidelines with criteria added specifically for history textbooks. According to these criteria, history textbooks must provide learners with guidance on how to identify, select and access relevant sources of information; extract information from sources; analyse, interpret and evaluate information and data; and engage with and analyse historical sources. Alongside at least eight other history textbooks, *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* was approved in its totality for use in schools.<sup>18</sup>

When the DoE budget and strategic plan for 2008/2009 came under review in early March 2008, the IFP representative, Albert Mponshane, again raised the issue of political bias in textbooks and asked whether this was considered when the 'catalogues of textbooks' were compiled. The Director General of the DoE, Duncan Hindle, could reply with confidence that 'eminent historians were consulted in the compilation of the national catalogue of textbooks'. He added, however, that the selection would not satisfy everyone, since history books 'were by their nature not factual and merely contained someone's version of the facts'. Hindle also indicated that the issue of the content of history textbooks was discussed by the DoE with the various provincial education departments.<sup>19</sup> It became clear that the process of textbook selection would not be derailed because of the political sensitivities of the IFP.

By now the IFP must have realised that the DoE structures and Minister Pandor were not going to provide them with the desired outcome. In a change of strategy, it was decided to deal with the offending textbook on multiple

fronts simultaneously. Consequently, during mid- to late May 2008, a well-orchestrated plan, which included marches that concluded with the burning of the book, press releases, a memorandum to the Minister of Education and a speech at the National Assembly, was employed for maximum impact. This plan of action was to be kicked off with a series of protest actions in rural KwaZulu-Natal towns such as Eshowe, Empangeni, Port Shepstone and Bergville, the traditional stronghold of the IFP. Their aim was to ensure the discontinuation of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* nationally. The marches were to culminate in the handing over of a memorandum to representatives of the DoE. The reason for this, according to the national organiser of the IFP, Albert Mncwango, was that '[t]he IFP is protesting viciously biased propaganda masquerading as Grade 12 history'. He continued by sensationally claiming: 'This is nothing more than the sugar-coating of the ANC's history and brings to mind tactics used by the likes of Goebbels to sell Nazism'. To Mncwango the textbook was nothing but propaganda, 'telling lies and deliberately distort[ing] facts about the role of the IFP and the contribution made by its leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi'<sup>20</sup> by depicting him as 'an obstructionist and a killer who was conniving with the apartheid forces'.<sup>21</sup> To the IFP, this was part of an ANC plot to indoctrinate learners and to undermine the role Buthelezi had played in the liberation of South Africa.

That this was but the first salvo was clear, for Mncwango declared that he would not allow 'the legacy of Prince Buthelezi [to] be so deliberately destroyed', and to this end all legal forms of protest would be used.<sup>22</sup> Further impetus was provided by Musa Zondi, who in direct reference to the cartoon decried:

History is fact. We can't accept this book as fact. It is biased propaganda. In one of the places there is a cartoon done by Zapiro showing the leader of the IFP signing on to the new South Africa with blood of innocents from the political violence. All the other parties have a write-up regarding the agreement for the new South Africa, but with the IFP, only the cartoon is used. The ANC spilled as much blood ... Children who are taught history cannot exercise judgement.<sup>23</sup>

It was clear by now that the IFP had taken issue with the textbook as a whole and not merely the cartoon by Zapiro and treated it as a very serious threat to the public image of the party and its leader.

Against this backdrop, the first two planned IFP protest marches took place. In Port Shepstone, depending on which report is to be believed, either 300<sup>24</sup> or 2000 supporters attended the rally. On this occasion Mncwango outlined part of the process ahead by proclaiming that the IFP was prepared to go to court to force the withdrawal of the book that implied the IFP was involved in violence before the 1994 election. According to at least one report, teachers who took part in the protest complained that they found it difficult

to teach what they termed 'lies' while the learners also apparently questioned the credibility of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book*.<sup>25</sup> In other parts of KwaZulu-Natal an estimated 100 people gathered at Bergville to protest<sup>26</sup> while a substantial crowd gathered in the main street of Empangeni, many with IFP or Mangosuthu Buthelezi t-shirts and neatly manufactured placards attacking the textbook as biased. The protesters proceeded to take the extreme step of burning the book. The contradictory verdict of the IFP spokesperson at the burning was simple: 'We uphold the view that school textbooks should disseminate factual information and stimulate independent thinking, not form strong political opinions based on a lopsided presentation of past events'. As happened in Port Shepstone, a memorandum was handed over to officials of the DoE<sup>27</sup> as representatives of the Minister of Education, asking for the withdrawal of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* because it 'deliberately portrays IFP President Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the party in a negative light using a derogatory cartoon'.<sup>28</sup>

The culmination of the IFP protest strategy played out when Narend Singh presented the aforementioned memorandum as a speech during the education budget vote in the National Assembly.<sup>29</sup> By now the IFP rhetoric about *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* had become predictable and consistent: The book had depicted the conflict between the IFP and the ANC leading up to the 1994 election in a biased manner; the cartoon was presented as a historical fact without any accompanying objective commentary, and as such, it undermined tolerance and multi-party democracy. The launching of the book was to undermine the 2009 election chances of the party. Based on this reasoning, the IFP again urged Minister Pandor to halt the distribution of the publication. At the same time the party called for a review of the existing system and processes for screening textbooks for use in schools so as to rule out 'narrow political agendas'.<sup>30</sup>

Somewhat belatedly, two youth groups affiliated to the IFP also joined the protests. On the campus of the University of Zululand, Sadesmo expressed concern by reiterating the official line that presenting learners with a biased history could harm the IFP in the run-up to the 2009 election and that the textbook must therefore be removed by Minister Pandor.<sup>31</sup> More radical action was promised by the IFP Youth Brigade, which described the publication as lies and propaganda for the ANC that distorted the facts about the role the IFP and Buthelezi had played in the struggle against apartheid. To them this was reminiscent of pre-1994 white rule one-sidedness. Consequently, they promised protests and fights in a range of fora against a history textbook 'in which IFP President Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi is seen "signing on" to the new South Africa using the spilt blood of victims of political violence as ink'.<sup>32</sup>

Little support was forthcoming for the IFP position from within the organised teaching profession, academia and the national print media. The National Teachers' Union, who wanted to remain neutral, nevertheless expressed concern over the accuracy of history textbooks and felt rather naïvely that it was important that 'history is written as it was and that no one adds "spices" to flavour the content'. The biggest teaching union, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, was more circumspect and articulated support for the protest actions only if factual inaccuracies actually existed in the book.<sup>33</sup> A schoolteacher of an independent school, on the other hand, could not see the problem, and although she thought the book was slightly ANC-slanted, it was in her estimation the most intellectually challenging history textbook available. From the side of academia, Albert van Jaarsveld of the History Department at the University of Zululand felt that *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* was 'very balanced' and made clear that the cartoon of Buthelezi was part of an activity on bias. Furthermore, he argued that the inclusion of the cartoon was valid as it provided an honest reflection of the context in which it was created. Acting as a character witness for one of the authors, Nigel Worden, Van Jaarsveld explained that he was a well-respected historian.<sup>34</sup> The IFP protests also received very little in-depth coverage or support from the national print media, possibly for the same reasons. A columnist for the *Sunday Times*, sardonically stated: The IFP version of events before the 1994 elections was not consistent with what he himself remembered.<sup>35</sup>

Reaction from the publisher, OUP, to the IFP protests against *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* came from Lieze Kotzé, Managing Director of a company in South Africa. She saw it as a sign of a 'vibrant democracy', within which opposing ideas can be discussed, as was the intention of the module on bias that included the cartoon on Buthelezi. With reference to the IFP accusations that the book was a platform for ANC propaganda and a mandatory text in schools, Kotzé explained that no political party was consulted on what to include and what to exclude and that the book was but one of the textbooks approved for use in schools. Schools could therefore exercise their democratic right to select and purchase a textbook for use. Kotzé also made it clear that as far as OUP was concerned, the textbook adhered to the criteria set by the NCS-History, which expected learners to engage critically with topics and different sources. It was within this context that the cartoon in question was included as an example of bias in the media. In dealing with bias, it is inevitable that some group will take umbrage, and Kotzé therefore extended an olive branch to Buthelezi and the IFP by expressing regret that they took the cartoon, and in some cases the whole book, as a personal cri-



tique. OUP was therefore willing to come to a face-saving compromise by offering to rotate the cartoon and a related activity in each reprint to ensure that different parties were represented, thereby destroying the perception that one party—the IFP in this instance—was being targeted.<sup>36</sup> From this move, it was clear that the protests by the IFP were troubling OUP, as they threatened its history textbook as a product and posed a possible threat to the entire brand. Reacting to the offer to ‘rotate the cartoon’ in future editions, the IFP, which must have sensed some victory in the compromise offered, made clear: ‘If the publisher decides to reprint, what happens to the pupils who are exposed to it now? They will pass Grade 12 and not see the reprint, thus making them believe that Dr. Buthelezi is a killer’.<sup>37</sup> In short, what the IFP was demanding was immediate action.

By now the strategic capitulation of OUP to the IFP demands was gaining momentum. The commissioning editor of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner’s Book* explained the rationale with reference to the change mooted by Kotzé:

It is standard practice for publishers to update their titles by bringing them in line with new policy released by the Department of Education and to address feedback we receive from the market. During 2008, we revised our English history titles to bring them in line with the 2008 Subject Assessment Guidelines. Part of these revisions included replacing the cartoon on page 200 with a textual source and reworking the activity on the following page. The focus of the activity remains the analysis of bias. These revisions strengthen our titles and ensure our books reflect current thinking and content.<sup>38</sup>

As a consequence, and even before the threatened summons from the IFP could arrive, OUP decided to remove the page containing the cartoon by Zapiro and in doing so silenced the IFP protest with immediate effect.

The cartoon on Buthelezi was thus replaced with a source made up of various newspaper headlines about the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging (AWB) invasion of the Bophuthatswana Bantustan in early March 1994. The Afrikaans version of the book in question, *Op Soek na Geskiedenis Graad 12—Leerdersboek*, which appeared after the IFP protests, contained the new source—see the documentation section below.<sup>39</sup> In terms of the English version of the textbook already in use, anecdotal evidence suggested that the cartoon had been removed in a different manner. Schools were sent a page displaying the new source, which had to be pasted over the offending cartoon. The result of this process was that teachers and learners who were unaware of the IFP protests were now sensitised to them on a larger scale. Additionally, teachers and learners who had forgotten or who were unacquainted with the actions of Buthelezi and the IFP pre-1994 received a concise refresher course in this regard.



## Documentation

► **SOURCE M** Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party is shown finally agreeing to participate in the elections. The 'ink' he is using is the blood of victims of violence.



The cartoon as it appeared on page 200 of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* published by OUP.

Weekly Mail 4–10 Maart 1994

**OOPGEVLEK: VERREGSE  
SINISTERE PLANNE VIR OORLOG**

The Citizen 11 Maart 1994

**BOP-OPSTAND: MANGOPE  
VLUG UIT HOOFSTAD**

Cape Times 11 Maart 1994

**Mangope vlug: Plundering toe  
gepeupel Bop se strate invaar**

Die Burger 12 Maart

**Mmabatho "stil" na orgie van  
bloedvergieting en geweld**

▲ **BRON M** Hierdie koerantopskrifte toon sommige van die houdings net voor die verkiesing. [Mangope was die leier van die tuisland van Bophuthatswana (Bop). Mmabatho was die hoofstad.]

The Afrikaans version of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* (*Op Soek na Geskiedenis Graad 12—Leerdersboek*), replacing the cartoon of Buthelezi with various newspaper headlines about the AWB invasion of the Bophuthatswana Bantustan in early March 1994.<sup>40</sup>

## Conclusion

The ultimate outcome for IFP was that the party had partially managed to change in its favour how Buthelezi was depicted by *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book*. The IFP could therefore congratulate itself on a plan well

executed, for it had emerged victorious from this history war, having persuaded OUP to capitulate on historical content by replacing the cartoon. Support for the IFP and Buthelezi was, however, not forthcoming from outside the ranks of the party. While the IFP did manage to secure some media exposure for its interpretation of the pre-1994 actions of its leader, this was hardly headline-grabbing and mostly counterproductive. The burning of copies of the history book, in particular, served to reinforce stereotypes that existed in certain quarters of the IFP as an intolerant and undemocratic organisation that preferred to use violence rather than debate to resolve issues.

On another level, the protests and burning of *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book* also served as social commentary on a certain lack of historical literacy, especially as it relates to the reading of cartoons. This inability is highlighted by Siebörger, who makes the point that the cartoon in question was included as an example of bias—exactly that which the IFP railed against and ultimately failed to see. He continues, 'Ironically, in the light of the criticism made, the most likely conclusion of the exercise is that the media in 1994 was biased in its treatment of Buthelezi and that history ought to reflect that. It is, thus, against a reflection of a lack of good history teaching in school that gives rise to an inability to see the intention of the textbook was sympathetic to Buthelezi'.<sup>41</sup> The IFP and its followers therefore failed to understand the cartoon and the accompanying activity in its true nature.

The same, however, could not be said of Buthelezi, who is an educated man and an experienced politician with an acute sense of history. He must have understood the cartoon and its meaning well, for Buthelezi had in the past attacked historians who did not look kindly on him. A case in point is his describing the authors of *An Appetite for Power. Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of Loyal Resistance*, Maré and Hamilton, as 'half academics who dabble in esoteric politics with all the trappings of being involved in the struggle for liberation'.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, Buthelezi had used myths and symbols effectively in the past to create for himself a certain historical image, in order to keep especially his semi-literate and illiterate followers in check.<sup>43</sup> The cartoon in question presented a problem in this regard, as it provided a caricatured and satirical understanding of Buthelezi visible and available to learners, teachers and even parents. Consequently the cartoon by Zapiro, which used symbolism and exaggeration to explain the actions of Buthelezi prior to the 1994 elections, offended the IFP more than the text or other images in *In Search of History Grade 12—Learner's Book*—or any other Grade 12 history textbook, for that matter.<sup>44</sup> The textbook in which the cartoon appeared therefore needed to be controlled, for as a form of mass media, the analogy it provided of Buthelezi specifically and the IFP in general was interfering with the

perceptions they wanted to create of the past. This was also a struggle about the perceptions of the present. In a nutshell, the cartoon was interfering with the historical image-(re)making of Buthelezi, who wanted to be viewed as one of the founders of the 'New South Africa' alongside Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk. It therefore had to be expunged by any means available.

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# 46

## Spain

Rafael Valls-Montes and Ramón López-Facal

### Introduction

The period beginning with the Civil War (1936–1939) and extending until the end of the Franco dictatorship (1939–1975) was the most brutal period in the history of twentieth-century Spain. It also remains one of the most controversial issues in Spanish society today and, as a consequence, in the education system and in textbooks used in Spanish classrooms. The way in which these events were dealt with in the classroom during the dictatorship was to blatantly indoctrinate young people in the ideology of the system, and this has only partially been overcome today. Nowadays, textbooks provide schoolchildren with a certain amount of essential data to enable them to interpret this period and a more nuanced narrative is offered in accordance with that which is commonly accepted by the majority of historians. In order to understand the changes and limitations in the way in which the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship have been interpreted in the education of Spanish schoolchildren, it is necessary to briefly outline the political context in which these changes have occurred.<sup>1</sup>

In 1977, during the early stages of the transition to democracy, a pact was negotiated between the diverse political powers, which was based on a two-fold agreement. On the one hand, it was agreed that neither the Civil War nor the Franco dictatorship would be used as a cause for confrontation while, on the other hand, a general amnesty would be applied with no requests to be made for retroactive justice as far as any possible political or criminal offences committed by the main players of the period were concerned. This was an unequal pact struck between the elite, who had benefited from the dictatorship



and held power during the transition process, and the anti-Franco opposition which, in spite of the high degree of social mobilisation taking place on the streets, remained weak and lacking in any real power following almost 40 years of dictatorship, during which time its leaders had been under the continuous threat of action by the military and the police, who continued to be in favour of the regime. The political opposition to the Franco regime assumed an extremely generous political attitude. They accepted that the pro-Franco elite would remain in power and direct the transition process and that they, the anti-Franco side, would not receive any kind of recognition and that no kind of restitution would be given to the victims of the regime. On the other hand, victims on the pro-Franco side had received all kinds of honours, economic compensation and recognition from the very beginning.

The way in which the transition from dictatorship to democracy was carried out had negative consequences for the recovery and preservation of the memory and honour of those who had been repressed under the regime, a process which still remains difficult even today, almost half a century after the death of Franco.

## Historical Background

The 1977 agreement, which made the transition to democracy possible in Spain, was named by some the 'pact of silence' due to the fact that Franco's victims were not treated justly and their memory was never honoured. For others, though, it was a 'pact of reconciliation'. They considered that retroactive justice would have been a significant cause of division in the nation and would have constituted an added difficulty in the struggle to build a fully democratic state. Opinions on the process today range from those who consider that it was a transition upheld by political amnesia, silence and neglect to those who are of the view that only a transition supported by an amnesty could make reconciliation possible. This amnesia as far as the regime's repression is concerned, whether deliberate or not, has been an extremely important factor in Spanish politics over the last 30 years. Until relatively recently, no conflict or confrontation had come to light in party-political terms. It was not until the end of 2002, 27 years after the death of Franco, that all the parties represented in the Spanish Parliament passed a motion condemning the use of violence as a means of imposing political convictions on others and establishing totalitarian regimes. The motion gave a certain degree of moral recognition to the victims of both the Civil War and the Franco regime. Until that point, the conservative *Partido Popular* (the People's Party), which was founded by an

ex-minister of the Franco regime and had been in power since 1996, had refused to accept any motions of this kind.<sup>2</sup>

The defeat of the People's Party in the general elections of 2004 marked the beginning of a new period in the post-Franco era, one which would prove difficult for the victorious Socialist Party. The announcement, in June 2004, of the creation of an inter-departmental committee to draw up a paper on 'the moral, social and economic damage inflicted upon victims' was followed three months later by the establishment of another inter-departmental committee to study the situation of the victims of the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship.<sup>3</sup> Originally, the committee was charged with the task of presenting its final report within a year. However, the enormously complex and delicate nature of the task made this impossible. Furthermore, the financing of the report was postponed until the first quarter of 2006, which had been declared the Year of Historical Memory by all the political groups in the Spanish Parliament, with the exception of the conservative People's Party. In March of the same year, the Council of Europe issued a recommendation 'strongly condemning' the Franco regime and a proposal to declare 18 July of that year 'the official day of condemnation of the Franco regime'.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of 2007, following many long parliamentary debates, the Historical Memory Law<sup>5</sup> was passed. It addressed (albeit insufficiently in the eyes of some civil associations) the many complaints and demands of Spanish society regarding unresolved issues and offered the possibility of a more genuine and more comprehensive form of reconciliation. The crimes of the Franco age were officially condemned and historians were able to freely research a great deal of documentation on the Civil War and the Franco regime which, until that time, had not been accessible. The number of research projects and publications increased, and facts and interpretative approaches were established, which were accepted by the large majority of the professional community of historians. A new generation of young historians has since carried out exhaustive research on the violence and repression which was characteristic of the dictatorship, a period which had previously received very little attention in academic historiography and even less in school textbooks.

The different school history syllabuses applicable during the long dictatorship hardly underwent any changes to their content. The need to legitimate the uprising and its subsequent military victory led to the demonisation of all reform-oriented efforts by the Second Republic and its principal figures. All such actions carried out during the Republican period were repeatedly characterised in Francoist textbooks as 'anti-national', 'anti-Catholic', 'foreign-oriented', 'separatist', 'Marxist', 'Bolshevik' and 'leading to disaster, disorder and crime'. It was asserted that these types of behaviour had inevitably led to

the need to 'recover the true historical essence of Spain' by way of what was deemed in the textbooks a 'war of salvation', a 'war of liberation' or a 'crusade'.

The textbooks of the Franco period offered scarce detailed historical data on the Second Republic and the Civil War, simply omitting the majority of the Republican period and even neglecting to mention the names of its political leaders and, of course, its reform-oriented intentions. There was not even the slightest attempt to outline the structure of the period in order to help schoolchildren understand it.

Furthermore, no narrative was developed relating to the Civil War. Teaching on this period was simplistic and restricted to discrediting the Republican 'enemies' ('it was all disorder and anarchy') and an outright glorification of the Nationalists ('all that was healthy stayed in society').<sup>6</sup>

The textbooks of the period did not mention the repression and violence practised by the nationalist forces during the Civil War and the early stages of the dictatorship. Neither did they deal with the mass exile that came about after the end of the War, nor the severe hardships, of all kinds, endured by the majority of the Spanish population during the 1940s and 1950s.

Only after 1970, in the final years of the dictatorship, did details regarding the Republican period begin to appear, with the main political parties of the time and their most important leaders being identified. However, it was not until 1975 that the official teaching programmes accepted the use of the term 'War of Spain' to refer to the Civil War, a concept which did not become commonly used in textbooks until several years later. To date, we have not been able to find any textbooks which employ the term 'European Civil War' to refer to the period beginning with World War I and ending in 1945, into which authors such as Paul Preston place the Spanish Civil War as an 'episode in a greater European Civil War that ended in 1945'.<sup>7</sup>

## The Debate

The new approaches contained in recent textbooks are quite contrary to advances made in historiography, according to which it is unacceptable to attribute the initial responsibility for the outbreak of the Civil War proportionally between both sides. The abundance of documentation available and the historical analyses that have been carried out clearly highlight the anti-democratic and anti-social nature of the groups which initiated the military coup in 1936 and supported the resulting Franco dictatorship. Extremely detailed data has been used to analyse the scope of the atrocities carried out by both sides in the Civil War.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the hegemonic interpretation contained in school textbooks continued to be clearly evaluative in nature, rather than being based on facts. At that time, the main aspects on which textbooks focused were the acceptance of a general sense of guilt shared among all Spaniards regarding the outbreak of war and its continuation, and the exhortation that nothing like that should ever happen again.

Analysis of the Second Republic started to become broader and more considered, in the sense that its reform-oriented and modernising proposals were highlighted, along with the enormous difficulties faced in carrying them out: 'its aims to create a democratic, regionalist, secular state open to wide-ranging social reform ... were blocked by both the pressure of the working class and the right-wing parties ... and the Catholic Church'.<sup>8</sup>

The repression carried out during the Civil War began to appear in textbooks, albeit briefly, and originally it was attributed more to the Republican side than to the Nationalists. In addition, the extremely severe repression carried out during the Franco dictatorship was barely alluded to and only in selected textbooks.

These textbooks normally made mention of the difficulties and suffering faced by Spanish society during the first decades of the dictatorship and included information regarding the social and political opposition movements that began in the 1950s. However, the economic developments which occurred in the final stages of the regime were highlighted without the slightest reference to the fact that this economic growth was achieved, largely, by repressing social movements with the violence typical of any dictatorship.

From the beginning of the 1990s to the present day, school textbooks have presented an interpretation of the Second Republic, the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship which is much more factual than evaluative. It provides students with contrasting data and is in line with historiographical research carried out over recent decades, containing information which had previously been absent, particularly in relation to the violence and repression which took place during the Civil War and the long dictatorship.

In the most recent generation of history textbooks for secondary education, dating from 2014 onwards, the analysis of the Second Republic takes into account the difficulties faced within the international context of the 1930s as well as in the particular circumstances of Spanish politics, which were characterised at the time by severe social conflict and widely conflicting points of view within Spanish society relating to the modernisation of its structures.

The use of new historiographical methods in these textbooks has led to the supposed balance in the attribution of guilt for the outbreak of the Civil War that had previously been taught being overcome via the use of documentary

sources which reflect the clearly anti-democratic and anti-social character of the groups which spurred the civil-military coup of 1936 and those which supported the subsequent dictatorship. While not hiding the violence committed in the Republican zone during the Civil War, the textbooks now show the great differences between the repression carried out by both sides: the planned repression by the leaders of the uprising, compared with the violence of uncontrolled groups on the opposing side (where the Republican government did not have real control of its forces). Furthermore, these textbooks include greatly contrasting sources of quantitative information.

The Franco period is currently presented in a relatively wide-ranging manner. The debate regarding its definition (totalitarian system, military dictatorship, fascist state) is frequently mentioned and several phases are differentiated. Its deeply repressive nature is highlighted, and mention is made of the continued social and political opposition to the regime, which differed in intensity, depending on the circumstances, and was led by certain sectors of Spanish society.

The activities and small research projects proposed for pupils normally deal with the different aspects taught in each of the units used to provide a framework for the period. The most frequent kind of exercise is for the pupils to summarise or synthesise the information contained within the textbook, be it in the text written by the authors of the book or on the basis of the abundant documentary sources included. This approach is predominant in the textbooks of the main publishing houses both for obligatory secondary education (from 12 to 16 years of age) and for baccalaureate (from 17 to 18 years of age), although in the former it appears less frequently, as a result of the prevalence of a historiographical approach linked to the so-called history of daily life and of an educational focus more aimed at participation, with different kinds of questions and small research projects with a greater degree of involvement on the part of the pupil and his/her family.

The approach by current school textbooks to the study of the period extending from the Second Republic to the transition to democracy has not given rise to much debate in the field of education. The progressive transformation of the historical interpretation contained in the textbooks has been based on a more factual and historiographically documented approach to the characteristics of this complicated period, avoiding a priori evaluations of it as well as the glorification and demonisation to which it was subjected during the dictatorship. The two elements that have guided this progressive change from the very beginning of the transition to democracy have basically been the need to adhere to the rigour of historical analysis and the desire to promote and strengthen democracy as a fundamental value and the best system for civilised coexistence between the different opinions and sensibilities which are present in Spanish society.

Although modern-day textbooks do not contain exaltations of the Franco regime, opting instead to promote a positive perspective of the transition to democracy following the death of Franco, there are many who still maintain a confused discourse in relation to historical periodisation. Thus it is not uncommon for secondary school textbooks to combine the Second Republic and the Civil War in the same chapter, as if the latter had been the consequence of the former. On the other hand, the dictatorship is presented as a separate topic from the Civil War despite the fact that it was constituted during the War, when it adopted its most characteristic repressive features, which it maintained to the end. By contrast again, as far as the final stages of the regime are concerned (the age of economic growth from 1960 to 1973), the textbooks generally offer a positive perspective on the transformation of Spanish society, obscuring the fact that widespread repression was still commonplace during this time. Finally, the period of transition to democracy is praised and presented as a time of consensus and collaboration within the Spanish nation, while ignoring its limitations and the roles played by significant figures from the Franco regime during the process.

One of the most surprising, and reprehensible, aspects of modern-day textbooks is the lack of attention paid to the political and legal processes of reconciliation in a Spanish society with such a difficult recent past. Here, we are referring to the numerous processes of amnesty of the end of the 1970s and the later, occasional and incomplete, processes of rehabilitation and recognition of the soldiers of the Republican army, of those persecuted by the Nationalists and by the institutionalised regime and of the opposition to the dictatorship during the 1940s. It is extremely rare to come across references to these partial amnesties of the 1970s in textbooks and where they are found, the information is brief, indirect and does not go into the underlying problem, or it makes reference only to the victims of persecution at the beginning of the transition to democracy. In selected textbooks the demands made by the opposition in 1976 are explicitly mentioned, including 'the immediate release of all people imprisoned and arrested for political and trade union activities, the return of those in exile and an amnesty to restore their rights'.<sup>9</sup> In other books, any reference to such matters is restricted to stating the fact that the democratic opposition refused to accept the initial, very restricted, amnesty proposed following the death of Franco. However, the vast majority of textbooks make no reference at all to the complex process of reconciliation between Spanish society and its recent past. Indeed, this is also characteristic of the transition to democracy, which is generally absent rather than discussed as a problem that was not resolved in a satisfactory manner.

It is also the case that textbooks for baccalaureate pupils (17–18 years of age) do not pay sufficient attention to this issue, neither from a historiographical point of view nor from the perspective of young people's education in democracy. It is extremely rare to find a textbook that deals with the issue of amnesty and reconciliation in terms that extend beyond a brief mention of such legal provisions, exclusively in reference to the years of the transition, that demonstrate the insufficient and inconclusive nature of the amnesty process of the time.

## Conclusion

Over the course of the last 15 to 20 years, the teaching of history in Spain has contributed to deeper and more reasoned knowledge on the part of young people of the complex history of Spain between 1931 and 1975. The most common approach has been to attempt to affirm and strengthen democratic values and convictions among young people, while encouraging the rejection of dictatorships and violent conduct. In this way, the system has departed from the contents of the textbooks and the remarks of teachers and pupils which we examined in a previous paper (Valls 2009). However, it remains the case that the issue of reconciliation among the Spanish nation regarding its past is a matter that is almost totally absent from textbooks and from the classroom. Reference to the amnesty and legal reconciliation processes related to those still alive are virtually absent and there is no reference at all to those concerning the deceased. These are complex issues that still cause social conflict and the writers of school textbooks do not appear to have the courage to deal with them openly, as also demonstrated by the political parties (including the progressive parties) until recently. Only some contemporary historians and a minority of civil society, particularly via the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory,<sup>10</sup> have made such demands—the former via their reinvigorated and extremely worthy historiographical research and the latter by way of its campaigns denouncing the oblivion to which the losers of the Civil War and the victims of the regime's repression are consigned, and their work in finding the victims abandoned in the many remaining mass graves. All of this has been achieved, until very recently, with very little institutional support.

It may be that the nascent Spanish democracy of the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s was unable to achieve much more due to the fact that there were many difficult issues to be overcome in the transition from a brutal and cruel dictatorship to a weak democratic system where there was no purge of the power structures of the authoritarian state. Therefore, the focus



was on consolidating the process of democratisation and 'forgetting about the past', at least in terms of circumstantial detail. This attitude, which was understandable at the beginning of the 1980s, persisted beyond a reasonable period of time, into the 1990s and up to recent times. However, this situation is currently changing. The process of change began with the joint parliamentary declaration in November 2002 which condemned dictatorships (without referring directly to the Franco regime) and restated the moral recognition of the victims of the Civil War and of the regime's repression (without making the distinction here between victims of a war and those of a dictatorship, which are not at all the same thing). This was made possible by a change of attitude within the conservative People's Party, which had always previously refused to make these kinds of declarations. However, as can be seen in the indirect nature of the aforementioned declaration, they did not accept things being called by name. Furthermore, no kind of economic assistance was assigned to the associations which were, and are, working towards recovering the remains of victims of the military uprising from mass graves, in spite of the fact that this was done in the case of the Nationalist volunteers who fought with the Nazi forces during the invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II. The People's Party held the view that this was a closed issue as Spain was then a settled democracy that should be looking towards the future rather than back to the past. Furthermore, certain conservative organisations promoted a highly discredited revisionist historiography, which attempted to recover the myths and lies of the Franco regime with regard to the Civil War. Such initiatives have led to rejection from the majority of the parties in the Spanish Parliament, as well as from part of Spanish society, which considered that this time, while these unresolved issues were being dealt with without anger or desire for revenge, was a good occasion to seek a full and fair solution as the result of a higher degree of democratic culture. The defeat of the People's Party in the general elections of March 2004 seemed likely to open up a new panorama. However, over the course of the following months, the inherent difficulties in dealing with those difficult times became clear. In June 2004, the creation of an inter-ministerial commission to draw up a report on 'moral, social and economic reparations for victims' was announced. Three months later, this commission was formed with the official title *Comision Interministerial Para el Estudio de la Situación de las Víctimas de la Guerra Civil y del Franquismo* (Inter-ministerial Commission for the Examination of the Situation of Victims of the Civil War and the Franco Regime). Its final report was to have been presented in the space of a year but, due to its 'enormously complex and extremely delicate' nature, it was postponed until the first semester of 2006. At the beginning of February, 2006 was declared the Year of Historical

Memory by the political parties represented in the Parliament, with the continued absence of the People's Party. Meanwhile, in March of the same year, the Council of Europe declared the first great international condemnation of the Franco regime and proposed 18 July (the date of the beginning of the civil-military uprising in 1936) as the day for the international condemnation of the regime. The Spanish Parliament was unable to pass the law until the end of December 2007.

The ideal situation would be for history textbooks to address the unfinished task of dealing with these issues of reconciliation, by presenting the facts on the violence and repression that took place during the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship. However, this is not very likely to happen in the next few years. Secondary school textbooks are edited from a perspective in which a conservative sense of community and the conception of national identity predominate. The most innovative historiographical work gains a place in textbooks only when it has obtained a high degree of recognition within the academic world. In this context, the fact that there is virtually no state control or censorship of textbooks in Spain is eclipsed by the self-censorship practised by authors and publishers, who are extremely sensitive to how the books are received by the teaching community and by public opinion. Editors generally reject controversial topics due to the perceived negative impact, which would affect their sales.

This assessment of the current situation in Spain regarding the teaching of controversial historical topics brings hope, though not exactly optimism. In recent years, significant advances have been made in the teaching of history in Spanish secondary schools. However, the current situation must not lead to complacency. The democratisation process in Spain is far from being a model to be followed.

Processes of reconciliation are always complex, requiring considerable periods of time and, as is evident in other ongoing processes around the world, they lead to a wide variety of forms of rapprochement and acceptance of a traumatic past. The process of reconciliation and democratisation in Spain has shown many positive sides but it has also neglected to provide recognition or offer reparations to many individuals and groups, a fact constantly highlighted by the social movements demanding justice for the remaining victims of Francoist repression and for the dead of the Civil War. These demands are made without anger or desire for revenge and demonstrate a deep need for full, rather than partial, justice. The obstacles they meet are fundamentally political and predominantly placed by a right wing that is extremely conservative and authoritarian and which has largely assumed the Francoist inheritance and does not see the need for a democratic restitution for past injustices.

The contribution of Spanish history teaching to the processes of reconciliation over the past 15 years has been significant but insufficient. It has been unsuccessful in inspiring a sense of empathy among young people towards those who suffered violence and persecution for political reasons during the Civil War and the dictatorship. The problem is a difficult one to resolve due to the fact that a significant percentage of the secondary (and tertiary) education teaching community in Spain considers that history basically consists of the knowledge of political events and their principal figures, rather than it being a social science which can provide an ethical orientation for life and for the future. This social science perspective maintains that the daily lives of the common people, their sufferings, their joys, their hopes and despairs should occupy a central role in the teaching of history. Many academic historians and secondary education history teachers, independently of the generation to which they belong, do not integrate the topic of daily life into their teaching, which is still based on classical historiography. They focus, instead, on political and institutional history. This state of affairs would seem to indicate the presence of deficiencies in the university education system and in the training of secondary school teachers. Primary school teachers tend to have a sufficient level of training in education and the psychology of early childhood, though not in the content of academic disciplines, whereas the opposite tends to be true in the case of secondary school teachers, who generally receive a high level of training in terms of academic content but often lack pedagogical skills. Until the 1970s, secondary school teachers were given no training at all in such skills. However, today they receive a total of 600 hours of teacher training, with 60 hours of psychology, 60 of didactics and 240 hours specific to the academic topics relating to their teaching speciality. This situation is only just beginning to change. The development of a full academic programme for training history teachers will take at least another ten years, mainly due to a lack of resources. Therefore, there is little will or commitment on the part of teachers to learn new approaches to history teaching, although it is hoped that improvements in the educational training of history teachers will come about in the next few years.

## Notes

1. This work is part of the COMDEMO research project (Spanish acronym of Social Competencies for Democratic Citizenship, code EDU2015-65621-C3-1-R) funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy (MINECO) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

2. The problems of the People's Party regarding the recognition of the victims of Franco's dictatorship did not end in 2002. In December 2003, the parties represented in the Spanish Parliament, with the sole exception of the People's Party, participated in a memorial ceremony for the victims of repression under the Franco regime during the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the current Spanish Constitution. Those who participated in the ceremony repeated over and over again the phrase 'Forgive, yes; forget, never!'
3. The *Inter-ministerial Commission for the Examination of the Situation of Victims of the Civil War and the Franco Regime*. The committee produced its report on 28 June 2006: See *Informe General de la Comisión Interministerial Para el Estudio de la Situación de las Víctimas de la Guerra Civil y del Franquismo* [Inter-ministerial Commission General Report for the Study of the Situation of Victims of Civil War and Francoism] <http://www.memoriahistorica.gob.es/es-es/LaLey/Documents/InformeVictimas.pdf> (accessed 27 November 2017).
4. Parliamentary Assembly, 'Recommendation 1736. 'Need for International Condemnation of the Franco Regime'', 2006, accessed 5 June 2017: <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta06/EREC1736.htm>.
5. *Ley 57/2007 por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la Guerra Civil y la Dictadura*, commonly known in Spanish as the *Ley de Memoria Histórica*.
6. Castro, J. R. *Geografía e historia. Quinto curso de bachillerato* (Zaragoza, Librería General, 1945), 315–317.
7. Preston P. and MacKenzie, A., eds., *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain 1936–1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), viii.
8. Mañero, M., Sánchez, D. J. and González, I. *Ciencias Sociales. 8º* (EGB. Salamanca: Anaya, 1975), 118–119.
9. Madalena, J. I., Maestro, P. and Pedro, E., *Proyecto Kairós: Historia. 2º bachillerato*, (Barcelona: Rialla-Octaedro, 1999), 291.
10. *Asociación para la recuperación de la memoria histórica* (The Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory), set up in 2000, is the association in Spain which does most to demand the recovery of the memory (and of the bodies still lying forgotten in mass graves) of the Republican victims of the Civil War and the early years of the Franco dictatorship. For more information, see: <http://www.memoriahistorica.org/>.

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## Sudan

Julia Nohn

### Introduction

Controversies and debates concerning Sudanese history have always been closely related to the question of national identity and stretch back to the national independence movement in the 1930s. It was mainly the graduates of the British Gordon College,<sup>1</sup> that is, the western-educated northern Sudanese elite, who started calling for a national history to replace the historical accounts promulgated by the colonial powers. After independence, these young men became the country's leading politicians and educationalists. Nationalist ideas in Sudan arose out of the literary movement and therefore permeated the Arabic language, literature, and culture. Gordon College graduates discussed politics in literary salons and published historical essays in the influential literary journals *Al-Nahda* (Awakening) and *al-Fajr* (Dawn); one of them was Makki Shibayka, who later became one of Sudan's leading national historiographers.<sup>2</sup> The northern Sudanese intellectuals emphasised the strong cultural and historical links between Sudan and the Arab world and focused closely on the history of the northern Nile Valley region. The history of the country's southern regions, and of the northern non-Arabic peripheral regions of Sudan such as Darfur, has been neglected by national historiography. Although there have been many political and educational changes in Sudan since independence from the country's former colonial powers in 1956, the predominance of Arabic and/or Islamic topics within history textbooks has seen little change to this day and remains the subject of heated controversies in all parts of Sudan.

## Context/Historical Background

Sudan is a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation state that is home to a wide variety of tribes, languages and religious beliefs. Despite this diversity, politicians and educationalists from northern Sudan have insisted, since independence, on introducing Arabic as the sole language of instruction in all parts of Sudan and on teaching the same curriculum, strongly based on Arabic-Islamic history and culture. President Abboud nationalised all schools, including those in the south, in 1957, simultaneously introducing an Arabic national curriculum. The 1957 decree marked the beginning of a policy of Arabisation through education, a policy which has prevailed up to the present day, following only a brief interruption after the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. The period of peace and limited political autonomy for the south that ensued after the agreement and continued to 1983 temporarily brought the civil war between the north and the south, in progress since 1955, to an end. But even during this time, the history taught in schools was first and foremost the history of the Arabs, northern Sudan and Islamic Africa. A southern Sudanese education expert from the Equatoria district, asked about his school experience, responded: 'I can't remember anything [from] school that [made] specific reference to the local context or Southern Sudan'.<sup>3</sup> Southerners were not asked their views on, and had no say in, reforms and changes in education. This was no new experience for the southern Sudanese, as they had already experienced a similar sense of powerlessness during the period of British colonial rule. Their perception of independence was that of a mere shift of power from one foreign master, namely the British, to another, the northerners.

During the Anglo-Egyptian condominium (1899–1956), northern and southern Sudan were subject to administration as separate states; after 1922, the so-called Closed Districts Order regulated and limited the movement of northerners to the south.<sup>4</sup> Whereas in the north, particularly in the central Nile Valley region, state education was promoted, schools were built and the teacher training college and later curriculum development centre *Bakht al-Rida* was established, education in the south was studiously ignored by the government. The south was isolated and education left to missionary societies.

Those from northern Sudan argue that the separatist policies of the British and missionary education in the south are to blame for planting the 'seeds of separation' between northerners and southerners; one prominent representative of this view is Yusuf Fadl Hasan (see documentation below). Muhammad Umar Bashir is another well-known intellectual from northern Sudan who criticised the Christian missionaries for dividing education and excluding the northern Sudanese Arabic and Islamic culture from education in the south.<sup>5</sup>



Missionaries planted the worst memories of Arab slave raiders in the minds of schoolchildren in the south, collective memories that continue to be passed down to this day.

Southern Sudanese academics, however, take a different view. The most prominent scholar from southern Sudan, Francis Mading Deng (see documentation), admits that Christian missionary education worsened the tensions between north and south. However, this was only possible, he further argues, because of the already existing fear and mistrust among southerners towards the Arabic-Islamic north, a mistrust exacerbated by the fact that, while slavery had been formally abolished in Sudan in 1924, the practice of 'domestic slavery' still continued, with southerners held in such situations in the north.<sup>6</sup>

Southerners, along with some northerners, have expressed the view that the majority of northern historians and politicians have always avoided coming to terms with the Sudanese history of the slave trade. An official at the Curriculum Centre in Khartoum, having been asked why this topic was not addressed in history textbooks beyond a note in the margins, argued that this had been the only way of fostering peace and national unity and that discussing controversial issues like the slave trade in class would hinder the process of building a common national identity in Sudan. Conversely, Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im (see documentation) sees this rejection of responsibility on the part of the north as an inadequate response to the challenge of creating national unity.

The question of national identity has always been a central issue within Sudanese educational politics. From a northern Sudanese perspective, it appears reasonable that Sudanese national identity should be based on Arabic language and culture as well as on Islamic faith, since the ascendancy of Islam and the use of Arabic as a lingua franca date from the rise of the Islamic Funj Sultanate in the early sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The northern viewpoint further perceives the Arabic language and the Islamic religion as necessary tools for the creation of national unity. The religious and cultural diversity of Sudan has always been a threat to unity in the eyes of the ruling elites, who have therefore pursued a policy of racial and cultural hegemony.

During the early period of President Ja'far Muhammad Numayri's rule in the 1960s and 1970s, educational policy was inspired by pan-Arabism and socialism rather than Islam. History textbooks therefore focused on the Arabic world (*al-watan al-arabi*), and attempts were made to create a sense of national unity via the Arabic language and the history of the Arab world. While African history and the rise and fall of East and West African kingdoms were also included in textbooks, the main emphasis was placed on Arab history.

In 1990, shortly after President Omar al-Bashir had come to power, a conference was held on education policy; one of its resolutions was that new curricula and textbooks should be created and that they should be based on Islamic values, Islamic religion and Islamic culture. The textbooks produced in accordance with this resolution, which are still being used today, clearly reveal the aim of the ruling elites to homogenise the ethnically and credally heterogeneous population through the unifying force of Islam. Both southerners and secular northerners deplored the 'Islamic indoctrination' they saw as emanating from the textbooks<sup>8</sup> (see documentation, Ndole Ndoromo Kumama).

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of January 2005 brought the long civil war to an end; the referendum on the independence of southern Sudan which had been agreed upon in the CPA took place in January 2011. After an overwhelming majority of 98.83 per cent of southerners voted for independence, the [Republic of South Sudan](#) formally declared its independence on 9 July 2011.<sup>9</sup> The autonomous Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GoSS) includes the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, one of whose central duties is the preparation and development of new curricula for primary and secondary schools.<sup>10</sup> As Mou Mou points out (see documentation), the various curricula and textbooks from northern Sudan and neighbouring African countries can no longer be used in South Sudan; in his view, a specific curriculum for the new country must be developed, which should focus on its own south Sudanese history and society with the intent of making South Sudan 'one nation'.

Does the independence of South Sudan herald an end to 'history wars' or, in the words of Francis M. Deng, to 'wars of vision'?<sup>11</sup> Does this mean that struggles over cultural hegemony in Sudan and discussions around whose history to teach in its schools have now come to an end? The answer is no, for a number of reasons. Although Sudan has now become two separate states, both north and south still continue to be multi-ethnic and multi-religious states. There are non-Muslims and non-Arabs in the north, and there are Muslims and Arabs living in the south. Students may continue to feel pressure towards cultural homogenisation even more strongly than before, especially if they now belong to a minority group within their state. Other pre-existing ethnic conflicts, such as the crisis in Darfur, where crimes against humanity have been committed against the Muslim non-Arab population, may now intensify.<sup>12</sup>

As long as Omar al-Bashir remains the president of northern Sudan, no major reforms of the Islamic-based curricula and textbooks in use there are to be expected. But how will southern politicians and educationalists be able to meet the enormous challenge of creating new textbooks and writing their own history for the first time? Keeping in mind that there are very few written

sources on the history of southern Sudan, creating history textbooks appears to be an extremely difficult task.<sup>13</sup> Unlike other parts of Africa, southern Sudan has historically been very isolated; only very few foreigners, among them Europeans and Arabs, have succeeded in crossing the Sudd, the large swamp 'barrier' region located at the Bahr al-Jabal part of the White Nile.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, as Feng has put it, 'the complex and intense history of the Sudan indicates that the country is confused in its sense of identity and vision of its destiny'.<sup>15</sup> How can national history be written under such circumstances? Due to the fact that only a tiny number of southerners are educated to university level, it is highly probable that international experts, be they genuinely knowledgeable or self-appointed, and western 'neo-missionary' societies will take charge of or at least be involved in textbook production and the writing of south Sudanese national history—a history that will include difficult elements of the past, such as the history of slavery and the civil war. It remains to be seen whether South Sudan can succeed in promoting peaceful understanding and tolerance through history teaching or whether new history, culture and identity wars will emerge.

## Debates/Documentation

The following quotations illustrate a range of different points of view on the function of education within the nation-building process and on the role of history education for national Sudanese identity.

Voices from northern Sudan:

### Yusuf Fadl Hasan

Missionaries poisoned the minds of children by teaching them far more about Arab slave traders [than about other subjects] and scarcely anything about the role of Europeans here in the Sudan and in the transatlantic flow of African slaves. Doubtless Islam was badly impaired by the myth of the rapacious Arab traders. Its image was greatly tarnished, especially when [this damaged image] was exploited by Euro-Christian propaganda.<sup>16</sup>

### Abdullahi Ahmed an-Na'im

Northern rejection of responsibility for the sins of their fathers, and of the few politicians and Jallaba [traders from north Sudan] who have continued that

infamous tradition [of slavery], is an understandable but extremely inadequate response to the challenges to national unity, political stability, and economic and social justice presented by the southern problem.<sup>17</sup>

## Muhammad Umar Bashir

Education plays a fundamental and vital role in solving the problem of national unity ... [At the time of independence] students in the north worried about the hostile attitude of students in the south, their talk about the slave trade, and their orientation towards Africa, and not the Arabs, as well as towards the church and the West. Many [northerners] feared that these signs could just be the beginning of a southern secession movement and lead on to the creation of an independent hostile southern state.<sup>18</sup>

Voices from southern Sudan:

## Francis Mading Deng

Northerners mostly dwell on the separatist policies of the British and especially [their] encouragement of a southern identity based on traditional systems, with the modern influence of Christianity and Western culture ... What they do not realize is that traditional identity and Christian Western influence have combined to consolidate and strengthen a modern southern identity of resistance against Islamization and Arabization. Forced assimilation is no longer possible, if it ever was.<sup>19</sup>

## Mou Mou

We have different curricula now. We have the Ugandan curriculum, we have the Kenyan curriculum, we have the Ethiopian and we have [the] Sudanese—by which I mean Northern Sudanese—and ours. These things are not unified. Do you think we will be *one nation* with so many different curricula? No, we won't. So one of the challenges facing us is *to unify our curricula*. These different curricula should boil down to *one curriculum for Southern Sudan*. Why? It simply means [that] if we do not have a curriculum where our children will read *our history*, study *our geography*, study *our society*, then it simply means we are producing *non-Sudanese* [citizens].<sup>20</sup>

## Ndole Ndoromo Kumama

What is written in the Sudan[ese] history textbooks is very negligible, as if the people of South Sudan have [had] no stories about their existence since [time] immemorial. Worse, what they recorded and wrote is a cursory register [of wars]. No documentation [has been] done on the life of the indigenous [people of Sudan] and their achievements. The social and cultural aspects of the communities of the south are totally neglected ... Thus, it is very vital and a must for us to include the teaching of social and cultural histories of South Sudan[']s societies, nations and kingdoms in our school curricula and syllabi. Teaching history in the republic of Sudan did and does not build [the] self-image of the learner in South Sudan ... The [current] system of education inculcates and instils to the young mind of the pupil his/her belongingness [*sic*] to the Arab and Muslim world. The learner is constantly informed that Sudan is an Arab Muslim country and that it is [a] spearhead to inculcate and penetrate the Arab Muslim civilization into the interior of Africa.<sup>21</sup>

## Conclusion

'Unity within diversity' has been a slogan omnipresent in Sudanese political discourse since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Since South Sudan's declaration of independence, many southerners have placed their hopes on a peaceful future for an independent southern Sudan and the end of Arabic-Islamic hegemony. Will southern educationalists be able to come to terms with the conflict-laden past as part of the process of national identity-building? What will the new history textbooks for southern Sudan look like? How can the balancing act of creating a sense of belonging among the population of the new southern nation state and fostering positive relations with neighbouring northern Sudan succeed? Voices from southern Sudan demonstrate the depth to which feelings of mistrust and anger towards the north have taken root in the collective memory of the south. There is still a long road to travel until these negative sentiments can be dispelled. In 1983, Muhammad Umar Bashir, discussing the educational system in northern Sudan, observed: 'The real crisis that education and culture face in Sudan lies in the gap between what is said and what is done as well as the discrepancy between the written educational goals and strategies on the one hand and their practical realisation on the other hand'.<sup>22</sup> It is to be hoped that education in the south will find a way of negotiating and avoiding this gap in its aim of creating national identity and stability.

## Notes

1. Gordon Memorial College, founded by General Kitchener in 1902, served as the principal training centre for jobs within the colonial service. It became a breeding ground for nationalist activity among the educated classes from the 1920s until independence in 1956, when it was renamed University of Khartoum. See H. J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism: Nationalism and Culture in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 50–60; M. S. al-Qaddal, *Tarih as-Sudan al-hadith. 1820–1955m* [History of the modern Sudan. 1820–1955] (Khartoum: Markaz Abd-al-Karim Mirghani, 2002), 463–480.
2. M. S. al-Qaddal, *Tarih as-Sudan al-hadith*, 126. Makki Shibayka/Mekki Shibeika (variant spelling) (1905–1980) received his doctorate in history from the University of London and later became professor of history at the University of Khartoum. He wrote many studies of Sudanese history, including M. Shibeika, *The Independent Sudan: The History of a Nation* (New York: Robert Speller, 1959). See R. A. Lobban, R. S. Kramer and C. Fluehr-Lobban, *Historical Dictionary of the Sudan* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 254.
3. M. Sommers, *Islands of education: Schooling, civil war and the Southern Sudanese (1983–2004)* (Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning, 2005), 62.
4. See M. O. Beshir, *The Southern Sudan. Background to Conflict* (Khartoum: Khartoum University Press, 1970), 41–42; D. H. Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Oxford, Bloomington, Kampala/Nairobi: James Currey, Indiana University Press, Fountain Publishers, in association with International African Institute, 2003), 11–15.
5. M. U. Bashir, *al-Ta'lim wa-l-wahda al-wataniya* [Education and national unity] (Umm Durman: Markaz Muhammad Umar Bashir li-d-Dirasat al-Sudaniya, 2005), 13. *Muhammad Umar Bashir* and *Mohamed Omer Beshir* are two different spelling variants (Transliterated Arabic and English) of the same name. Muhammad Umar Bashir is a renowned northern Sudanese scholar and should not be confused with Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan.
6. See F. M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994), 4–9, 69–76. Francis Mading Deng graduated from Khartoum University and pursued postgraduate studies in the UK and at Yale Law School in the US, where he obtained his LLM and JSD degrees. In 2007 Deng was appointed UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide.
7. See Y. F. Hasan, *Studies in Sudanese History* (Khartoum: SUDATeK, 2003), 209. See also Y. F. Hasan, *The Arabs and the Sudan. From the Seventh to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Khartoum: Khartoum Univ. Press, 1973).

8. See A. Breidlid, 'Education in the Sudan. Privileging of an Islamic discourse', *Compare* 35 (2005) 3, 247–263.
9. 'Results for the Referendum of Southern Sudan', 2011, accessed 5 June 2017, <http://southernsudan2011.com>.
10. Official Website of the Government of Southern Sudan, accessed 5 June 2017, <http://www.goss.org>.
11. F. M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994).
12. On 14 July 2008 the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced criminal charges against President al-Bashir, accusing him of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.
13. The first history textbook for use in secondary schools in South Sudan was edited by Anders Breidlid (Oslo University), in cooperation with Sudanese scholars and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of South Sudan. The book project was funded by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. See A. Breidlid, ed., *A Concise History of South Sudan* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2010).
14. See R. A. Lobban, R. S. Kramer and C. Fluehr-Lobban, *Historical Dictionary of the Sudan* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 283.
15. F. M. Deng, *War of Visions: Conflict of Identities in the Sudan* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994), 160.
16. Y. F. Hasan, *Studies in Sudanese History*, 211. Yusuf Fadl Hasan is a professor of history at Khartoum University.
17. A. A. an-Na'im, 'National Unity and the Diversity of Identities'. In *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan*, ed. F. M. Deng and P. Gifford (Washington, D.C., Lanham, Md., U.S.A: Wilson Center Press, 1987), 71–77 (here 73). An-Na'im is a professor of law at Emory Law School. He is an expert in human rights in cross-cultural perspectives.
18. M. U. Bashir, *al-Ta'lim wa-l-wahda al-wataniya* (Umm Durman: Markaz Muhammad Umar Bashir li-d-Dirasat al-Sudaniya, 2005), 20. Bashir composed the original text in 1983. [Translated from Arabic by the author].
19. F. M. Deng, *War of Visions*, 205.
20. SRS—Sudan Radio Service, 'Under-Secretary Urges Single Curriculum for Southern Sudan Schools', Mou Mou, under-secretary at the GoSS Ministry of Education, in an interview with Sudan Radio Service (SRS), 6 February 2010, accessed 5 June 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20100214105122/http://www.sudanradio.org/under-secretary-urges-single-curriculum-southern-sudan-schools>.
21. N. N. Kumama, 'Teaching history in independent South Sudan', *Emmykwa's Blog*, 20 August 2010, accessed 5 June 2017, <http://emmykwa.wordpress.com/2010/08/20/teaching-history-in-the-independent-southern-sudan>. Ndoile Ndoromo Kumama is an educationalist and teacher from South



- Sudan. He received his master's degree from Newcastle University and specialised in educational management, planning and curriculum development.
22. M. U. Bashir, *al-Ta'lim wa-l-wahda al-wataniya*, 47.

## Further Reading

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# 48

## Sweden

Björn Norlin and Daniel Lindmark

### Introduction

This chapter focuses on three contemporary debates on mediating history in Sweden. Although far from isolated,<sup>1</sup> these three debates have proved the most intense and enduring in recent decades. All were multifaceted, addressing issues about history as a public matter, as a science, and as a subject for teaching, and all were interrelated though distinct. All three had political and ideological dimensions, with government authorities playing a direct or indirect role. The debates took place in the broad sphere of public media: national and local daily press, history journals, teachers' magazines, and interactive meeting places. From a long-term historical perspective, all three conflicts are associated with old, more or less latent, problems related to history in a public context. However, the rise of digital media marked the arrival of a new, highly populated, and far more rapidly responsive environment of public history, bringing new forms and characteristics to the debates.

### The Debates, Context, and Documentation

#### Popular History, Historical Scholarship, and the Return of the National Narrative

The first controversy actually comprised a number of minor disagreements about the means and aims of popularising national history. The relationship between historical scholarship and popular history has a complicated past in

Sweden and in the early 1990s journalists started to claim a new, more prominent role in the production of historical narratives. This was accompanied by a growing commercial interest in history and a spurt in the publishing industry.<sup>2</sup> The burgeoning interest in the past soon led to conflict and turned the field of popular history into a battlefield, the combatants mostly historians and journalists, but also anthropologists and museum curators. The debates addressed issues of the selection and use of historical data, attitudes towards previous research, the proper manner of narrating history, and, on a more fundamental level, truth and objectivity. The debates also raised questions about the boundaries between popular history and historical scholarship.

A central element in the growing public interest in history was the desire to increase awareness about the nation's past, that is, to re-establish a grand-scale national narrative. One attempt was the 'Swedish History' exhibition mounted in 1986 and partly funded by the Swedish Arts Council but wholly coordinated by museum directors Ulf Erik Hagberg and Sten Rentzhog. The intention was to exhibit a Swedish *histoire totale* in order to restore a collective national memory. It was hoped this would remedy what were seen as growing social problems caused by a lack of historical perspective and counteract alienation and xenophobia. The exhibition was spread among several nationally funded museums, including the National Historical Museum [*Historiska Museet*] and the Nordic Museum of Cultural History [*Nordiska Museet*] in Stockholm. It was immediately criticised by both historians and anthropologists, essentially because of what was viewed as a deficiency in displaying new historical perspectives and a simplistic attitude towards the reinstatement of a national-ideological history tradition.<sup>3</sup> Others defended the exhibition and directed their criticism towards the critics themselves, claiming that the real problem was that history scholarship had become cloistered and that professional historians had lost their former role as mediators of historical knowledge to the public.<sup>4</sup>

Parallel to efforts made at recreating a collective national memory in order to consolidate a sense of shared national identity, both journalists and professional historians began publishing books dealing with twentieth-century Swedish history and the Swedish welfare state. This was conducted in a far more critical manner than previously; state-sanctioned sterilisation was highlighted, for example, and Swedish foreign policy during the Second World War was harshly appraised.<sup>5</sup> Simultaneously, non-academic historical narratives with distinct ethno-political aims started to emerge among minority groups on the national periphery. These narratives strove to break down into smaller segments the same grand-scale national history that the major exhibitions were trying to restore.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the most intriguing debate about popularising national history revolved around the journalist Herman Lindqvist. In the early 1990s, he published the first volumes of an extensive series on the history of Sweden, with the express intention of revealing what he saw as an undeservedly forgotten national past. He was openly sceptical of the ability of academically trained historians to transmit historical knowledge to a broad audience. Lindqvist himself subscribed to a conservative genre focusing on great men, thrilling events, and the nobility. Waves of criticism from historians accompanied the release of each new volume. The critics focused on what they found to be Lindqvist's inability to conduct advanced research, his many factual inaccuracies, and the author's attempts to breathe new life into an outdated genre of historiography.<sup>7</sup> In a harsh and famous review of Lindqvist's treatment of the seventeenth century, Peter Englund, one of his chief critics, characterised the author and his writing in the following way: 'By gathering up tall tales which historians have been clearing away since the nineteenth century, a re-mythologised past emerges in his writing, where truth and fiction are blended in an unintentional, far too post-modern soup'.<sup>8</sup>

In turn Lindqvist accused historians of being driven by territorial thinking and of having a distorted relationship to the national past. He also underlined what can be seen as the core of the controversy, criticism of historians' monopolisation of the past, and their failure to make it come alive for a wide audience.<sup>9</sup>

## **History as a Core Subject and the Delicate Matter of Selection**

A second debate broke out over the effort to promote history as a core subject in the public school system. Throughout the post-war period, the status of history had steadily deteriorated, resulting in constant reductions in teaching hours allocated to the subject. Politicians have been ambivalent on how to assess history's place in schools. However, from 1999 onwards, there has been a cross-party resolve to strengthen the subject's position. An investigation commissioned by the governing Social Democrats in 2003 concluded that history should indeed be made a core subject. The party promised to implement this proposal in the national curriculum of 2007. However they subsequently lost the election in 2006, and the curriculum was abandoned by the conservative-liberal government-elect, though the recommendation was not. In 2007, it was announced that history teaching would be prioritised in both elementary and secondary education when a new curriculum was drafted in 2011.<sup>10</sup>

Before 2007, the discussion on augmenting the role of history in schools attracted only enthusiastic teachers and academics with an explicit interest in elementary and secondary schooling. Once it was decided that history was to become a mandatory subject, however, the matter of selecting what was to be included in the curriculum was on the table and triggered widespread interest among academically trained historians of all types. One of the leading participants in the debate was the History Teachers' Association and its board of directors, including the academic historians Klas-Göran Karlsson, Hans-Albin Larsson, and Per Eliasson.<sup>11</sup> Another was *Humanistportalen*, a web forum for scholars of pre-modernity sponsored by one of the leading Swedish research funds.<sup>12</sup>

The delicate job of selecting content suitable for a modest number of teaching hours granted to history was delegated to a committee led by Eliasson, which recommended that the development of pupils' historical consciousness and understanding of contemporary society be central. This entailed a strong emphasis on the history of modern society at the expense of pre-modernity and the classical era. The planned curriculum for elementary schools was particularly restrictive; in fact it was suggested that no history before the year 800 was to be deemed mandatory at this level.

Needless to say, the proposal was strongly criticised by scholars of pre-modernity, 13 of whom (mostly professors) published a petition condemning both the Eliasson committee and the Swedish Board of Education. The suggested curriculum, the petition claimed, was not only ignorant but also adverse to democracy. It threatened to create citizens with a nationalist, Eurocentric historical perspective entirely lacking the ability to critically understand the heritage of ancient mythology in contemporary society. Accordingly, the petition demanded that:

Our schools must continue teaching classical history in order to provide pupils the tools with which to critically scrutinise the reuse of classical history, which corresponds to the most widespread use of history in Europe. The Board of Education has presented a curriculum for history teaching in compulsory schools which is both worrying and narrow-minded. In essential aspects it even risks defeating its own purpose and making long-term perspectives, global outlooks and the understanding of cultural diversity all but impossible. This is why we urge the Board of Education to come up with a completely new proposal, which confronts the historical challenges in today's changing world in a radically different way.<sup>13</sup>

Similar criticism was raised by one of Sweden's most publicly known academic historians, Dick Harrison. He claimed that the committee was biased and driven by its own interest in modern history, and expressed doubts as to

whether its members actually possessed a working knowledge of pre-modernity.<sup>14</sup> Eliasson and his fellow committee member Kenneth Nordgren responded by claiming that the few meagre hours given to history called for stringent selection and that the chances for pupils to obtain coherence and understanding of contemporary society were greater if teachers concentrated on certain aspects of the past rather than force-feeding them its entirety. They also reassured critics that pre-modern history would be given a more prominent role in upper secondary schools (a proposal that was still being processed by the Board of Education at the time).<sup>15</sup> In the end, the result was a compromise. The classical era—along with many other pre-modern aspects of the past—was reintroduced to the curriculum. This debate highlighted what can be viewed as the core issue in this debate—the difficulty of selecting topics for history education and the delicacy required.

### **Acknowledging Crimes Against Humanity and the Threat of Politicising History**

The third controversy peaked in 2008. It had far more pronounced political and ideological dimensions than the two previously mentioned. At the centre of the debate stood a government agency, the Living History Forum. First proposed by Social Democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson in 1997 as a permanent, independent organisation, it was incorporated into the Swedish Ministry of Culture in 2003. Its aim was initially to promote democracy, tolerance, and human rights by supplying knowledge—via exhibitions, seminars, and classroom material—about the Holocaust and crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis. Though it meant political involvement in teaching history, the Forum attracted little attention at first. However, as early as 1998, conservative voices called for a similar information campaign on the crimes against humanity committed by communist regimes. Dismissed at first by the Social Democratic government, the demand slowly gained ground. However, it was not until the change of government in 2006 that the campaign was actually launched.<sup>16</sup> Its aim was to draw attention to persecution and terror under communist regimes, focusing mainly on the Soviet Union, China and Cambodia. The Forum developed extensive materials—a book, a travelling exhibition, numerous pamphlets and teachers' manuals—for the task. New Superintendent Eskil Franck was also appointed at this time, publicly announcing that the agency would no longer maintain neutrality when it came to questions of human rights and their violation. He also announced his intention of planning information campaigns in closer cooperation with academic researchers.<sup>17</sup>

In early April 2008 a counter-attack was launched. More than 350 academics signed a petition strongly criticising the Forum and its campaign.<sup>18</sup> Their main argument was that a state agency commissioned by the ruling political parties should not get involved in the mediation and teaching of history, no matter what the cause. History was in danger of becoming an ideological tool in the struggle for political power, and the prospect of a particular interpretation of history sanctioned by the state was viewed as a threat to freedom of research and teaching. The agency was thus acting in contravention of its own principles. The petition asserted that:

Few question the need to study and discuss in schools the experiences of oppression under Communist regimes and other regimes with great human sacrifice and suffering on their conscience. But few are also those who can ignore the strong ideological implication of government-sponsored campaigns in our schools. As professional historians, we feel a growing unease that the subject of history is being turned into a battleground for ideological campaigns and that the openness, critical attitude and tolerance the Living History Forum was intended to stimulate is threatened.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, it was claimed that the educational material produced by the agency was partisan.<sup>20</sup>

Reaction to the petition was immediate. Some critics claimed that researchers who signed it were being inconsistent, since they had neither complained during the Holocaust campaign nor about other governmental agencies, established by the Social Democrats, that had intervened in questions of historical research.<sup>21</sup> One scholar, sharing this view, drew a parallel with the government's willingness to encourage a gender perspective in national research.<sup>22</sup> Others claimed that the petition sprang from a left-wing political agenda and that it was sheer hypocrisy not to admit it. This was a political debate, not a debate over principles of scholarship, the author asserted.<sup>23</sup> The debate became particularly bitter at Växjö University and in the provincial press of the surrounding region. In fact, it became so emotionally charged that the university administration was forced to intervene.<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to three public debates on the mediation of history that have taken place over the past two decades, highlighting important issues in a contemporary Swedish context. Among these are disagree-



ments over the general aims and means of popularising history; the complex relationship between historical scholarship and the writing of national history; criticism of academic historians' monopolisation of the past and their ability or lack thereof to transmit it to a wider audience; the difficulty of selecting appropriate topics; and, lastly, the fear of political involvement in the telling of history. The debates also reflect a new climate where an increasing number of stakeholders and the introduction of new media have created a growing and more rapidly responsive market for the production and consumption of historical knowledge.

## Notes

1. Cf. U. Zander, 'Fornstora dagar, moderna tider: Bruk av och debatter om svensk historia från sekelskifte till sekelskifte [Glorious past, modern times: the use of and debates on Swedish history from one turn of the century to the next]' (PhD diss., Lund University, 2001), 402–459; D. Lindmark & C. Rönqvist, 'History Teaching in Sweden'. In *Facing—Mapping—Bridging Diversity: Foundation of a European Discourse on History Education*, ed. E. Erdmann and W. Hasberg (Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag, 2011).
2. Cf. U. Zander, 'Fornstora dagar, moderna tider', 420; D. Lindmark and C. Rönqvist, 'History Teaching in Sweden'.
3. U. Zander, 'Fornstora dagar, moderna tider', 430.
4. A. W. Johansson, 'Historievetenskapens diskreta charm [The discreet charm of history]', *Dagens Nyheter*, 24 March 1993.
5. Cf. M.-P. Boëthius, *Heder och samvete: Sverige och andra världskriget* [Upon honour and honesty: Sweden and the Second World War] (Stockholm: Ordfront, 1999); M. Runcis, 'Steriliseringar i folkhemmet [Sterilisation in the Swedish welfare state]' (PhD. diss., Stockholm University, 1998).
6. L. Elenius, 'Memory Politics and the Use of History: Ethnopolitical Creation of Identity Among Finnish-speaking Minorities at the North Calotte 1960–2000'. In *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, ed. M. Pakier and B. Stråth (New York: Berghahn, 2010).
7. Cf. B. Sawyer & P. Sawyer, 'En svensk historia med många fel [A Swedish history with many errors]', *Svenska dagbladet*, 1 November 1992; L.-O. Larsson, 'Historier om Sverige [Histories of Sweden]', *Smålandsposten*, 5 November 1992; L.-A. Nordborg, *Sydsvenskan*, 7 November 1992.
8. P. Englund, 'Historien enligt Herman [History according to Herman]', *Expressen*, 26 September 1994. (All translations by the author unless otherwise stated).
9. Cf. U. Zander, 'Fornstora dagar, moderna tider', 438–446.

10. H. A. Larsson, *Barnet kastades ut med badvattnet: Historien om hur skolans historieundervisning närmast blev historia* [Throwing the baby out with the bath water: the story of how the teaching of history in schools nearly became history] (Bromma: Historielärarnas förening, 2001); P. Eliasson, 'Gymnasiepropp: Så blev historia kärnämne', *Nationalencyklopedin*, last modified in 2004, accessed 29 August 2011, [http://www.ne.se/rep/gymnasiepropp-s%C3%A5-blev-historia-k%C3%A4rn%C3%A4mne?i\\_h\\_word=per+eliasson](http://www.ne.se/rep/gymnasiepropp-s%C3%A5-blev-historia-k%C3%A4rn%C3%A4mne?i_h_word=per+eliasson); H.-A. Larsson, 'Lång natts färd mot dag: Kring debatten och ickedebatten om historieundervisning [Long night's journey into day: the debate and non-debate on history education]'. In *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* [History is now: an introduction to history didactics], ed. K.-G. Karlsson and U. Zander (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2009); T. Nygren, 'History in the Service of Mankind: International Guidelines and History Education in Upper Secondary Schools in Sweden, 1927–2002' (PhD. diss., Umeå University, 2011), Paper III.
11. H.-A. Larsson, 'Lång natts färd mot dag'.
12. 'Humanistportalen', accessed 30 May 2017, <http://www.humanistportalen.se/>.
13. A. Andrén et al., 'Skolverkets förslag är trångsynt [Board of education's proposal is narrow-minded]', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 19 February 2010.
14. D. Harrison, 'Historia i skolan blir rena snurren [History in school may become pure nonsense]', *Expressen*, 15 February 2010.
15. P. Eliasson and K. Nordgren, 'Allt hinns inte med på historiektionerna [Can't cover everything in history class]', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 1 March 2010.
16. U. Zander, 'Fornstora dagar, moderna tider', 448.
17. E. Franck, 'Nu granskar vi kommunismen [Time to scrutinise communism]', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 September 2007.
18. By October 2010, the number of petitioners had reached 466. 'Upprop mot statlig kampanjhistoria [Petition against the government's history campaign]', accessed 30 May 2017, <http://www.historieuppropet.se/undertecknare.htm>.
19. Peter Aronsson et al., 'Regeringen gör historia till ideologiskt slagfält [Government turns history into an ideological battlefield]', *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 April 2008.
20. H. Blomqvist, 'Forum för statlig propaganda [The forum of state propaganda]', *Aftonbladet*, 2 April 2008; U. Bjereld, 'Lägg ner statens propagandamyndighet [Close the state's propaganda department]', *Expressen*, 3 April 2008; Å. Linderborg, 'Hotad frihet [Threatened freedom]', *Aftonbladet*, 8 April 2008; L. Andersson Palm, 'Historieskrivningens frihet hotad [The freedom to write history under attack]', *Historisk tidskrift* 129 (2009) 2, 247–250.
21. B. Rothstein, 'Forskaruppropet i DN saknar konsekvens [Academic revolt in DN lacks consistency]', *Svenska dagbladet*, 5 April 2008.

22. J. Lundberg, 'Därför saknar personerna bakom historikeruppropet trovärdighet [Why historians behind appeal lack credibility]', *Expressen*, 4 April 2008.
23. Cf. D. Levin, 'Upp till kampanj! [To the barricades!]', *Göteborgsposten*, 10 April 2008. It is noteworthy that one of the leading liberal think-tanks in Sweden, Timbro, supported the petition.
24. Cf. E. Uddhammar, 'En skamfläck för Växjö universitet [A disgrace for Växjö University]', *Smålandsposten*, 4 April 2008; O. Agevall et al., 'Ett intellektuellt haveri [An intellectual breakdown]', *Smålandsposten*, 5 April 2008; M. Estvall, 'Jag förringar inga folkmord [I do not minimise genocide]', *Smålandsposten*, 8 April 2008; E. Uddhammar, 'Etiskt allvarlig handling [An ethically questionable act]', *Smålandsposten*, 14 April 2008.

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# 49

## Switzerland

Markus Furrer

### Introduction

In the twentieth century the prevailing narrative in Switzerland was patriotic and characterised by strong continuity but rarely questioned by the general public.<sup>1</sup> This narrative told a story of success starting with the struggle for freedom of the old mediaeval Swiss Confederation, included the belated foundation of the federal state in 1848 and concluded with Switzerland proving its strength in the ‘era of the catastrophes’ (Eric Hobsbawm) in the twentieth century. It is no coincidence that this conception in particular dominated the minds of people: Helvetic mainstream politics and society in the 1950s and 1960s were caught up in a traditional view of history moulded, as it still is, by this special role, a view oriented towards an excessive dogma of neutrality. Neutrality was given the function of a ‘cover memory’ (Christof Dejung), thus legitimising Switzerland’s behaviour in the aftermath of the last World War. Until the 1970s the state exerted great influence on how history was perceived and the government considered itself the guardian of a view of history primarily committed to the ideals of state.<sup>2</sup> Very little sustainable discourse took place as critical voices were not allowed to enter the collective memory of the public.<sup>3</sup> Up to the mid-1990s, opposing viewpoints existed only within small political groups of revisionist historians and traditionalist veterans, and they were carefully considered and precisely formulated.<sup>4</sup> More critical portrayals of history in teaching materials on topics such as Switzerland’s refugee policy during the Second World War have only been included since the late 1970s and were not taken into account before then.<sup>5</sup> Society and politics devoted very little attention to history teaching. When, in the mid-1990s,

Switzerland's policy during the period of National Socialism was critically scrutinised from abroad, there was a feeling of being taken unawares. Because Switzerland's status and duty within Europe and in the world had primarily been defined with a view to its history and political characteristics, this gave rise to a debate over the correct view of history and whether to place a high value upon the consciousness of tradition within the country.

## Context

As the Holocaust came to dominate twentieth-century history, Switzerland increasingly became a focus of the world's attention. The debate was triggered by criticism levelled against Swiss banks for withholding lost financial assets belonging to victims of the Nazi regime. This was accompanied by increasing criticism of Switzerland's role during the Second World War, which called the fundamental myth of Switzerland into question. As a result, the globalised world society lost confidence in, first of all, the Swiss banks and then in the country as a whole. The issue was taken up by renowned newspapers, in particular in the United States and Great Britain. The scandal about the dormant assets grew into the greatest historical debate Switzerland had ever seen,<sup>6</sup> during which the war narrative that holds a key role in the overall Swiss national narrative was critically examined. The common past that had so far united the country now turned into a highly divisive element of national importance.<sup>7</sup>

An Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland—Second World War (ICE/Bergier Commission) was commissioned by the government in 1996 to investigate Switzerland's role during the period of National Socialism from a historical and legal point of view.<sup>8</sup> This was a unique undertaking which also set international standards. Never before had historians been empowered with such potent legal instruments in order to research so sensitive a matter in the archives in such depth.<sup>9</sup> The Bergier Commission carried out its research from 1997 until 2001. It focused on the question of how Swiss people had behaved at the time, whether they could possibly have behaved differently and, if so, why they had not done so. Critical reflection rested predominantly upon questions of how closely the country had been linked economically with the German Reich as well as the extent of anti-Semitism and its impact on refugee policy. Left-wing intellectuals unanimously welcomed the decision by the Swiss government, whereas right-wing conservative circles and people of the war generation strongly criticised it. The commission oscillated in the field of tension between the monetarisation and

juridification of history. Parallel to the historical reappraisal, the Volcker Commission, also installed in 1996, tracked lost assets belonging to victims of National Socialism.

US class action claims made against major Swiss banks resulted in an out-of-court settlement in 1998 which brought to a close the issue of Switzerland and its part in the Second World War at the international level. The Swiss public interest now focused on the proceedings brought to light by the Independent Commission of Experts (ICE). In large parts of society, growing resentment towards the Commission of Experts, historians and the discipline of history itself became apparent.<sup>10</sup> The government, which was thought to have given in to international pressure, likewise came in for severe criticism. After the public debate surrounding the Bergier Report had died down, the history book *Hinschauen und Nachfragen* (Observing and Questioning) was published in 2006, a textbook aimed at 14- to 18-year-olds as well as at people interested in history in general.<sup>11</sup> It attempted to make the information contained in the final report of the ICE and the interim reports available to a wider public. The publication, which is used as additional material to complement the set of history books, attracted much public interest. It was described as exemplary from a subject-specific didactical and methodological point of view; it was consistently provocative and offered a broad perspective and received the 'Worlddidac Award' in 2006.<sup>12</sup>

## The Debate

The ICE published 25 interim reports and presented its final report in 2001. Part of what was investigated had already been brought to light by historians and journalists—in some cases as early as the 1950s. This involved issues such as 'Switzerland and its refugees' or 'Switzerland and Nazi Gold'. The commission thus more strongly focused on complex economic interdependencies and deliberately chose a more historical perspective, namely in the sense of a bottom-up approach.<sup>13</sup> The public critically monitored the work of the commission and this was reflected in numerous press articles and statements as well as readers' letters.

To some degree it seemed that the public felt insecure, as a view of history was being revised which had to that point seemed right and proper. The question the commission was to answer was: What standpoint will be taken and what statements made? The commission gained national and international recognition for its final report and in Switzerland its work was acknowledged by the government, many different political parties (including the Social

Democratic Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Party and the Green Party), much of the media and a wide range of other institutions. A group of people who had experienced the period, the Swiss People's Party and other nationalist conservative and right-wing organisations rejected the conclusions. This debate was never developed further amongst historians as there did not seem to be any noteworthy dissent on this point. However, the group of historians responsible for the report was confronted with a section of the public that still held on to a now outdated view of history. Two main tendencies became visible among the proponents of a process of coming to terms with the past: one 'revisionist' and one 'moderate'. The 'revisionists' blamed Switzerland on two fronts, namely in the way it behaved at the time and in the way it subsequently handled the past.

The newspaper *Wochenzeitung* wrote: 'The report of the commission suggests that the way the Jewish refugees were dealt with by the authorities in general as well as almost every single decision was guided by two emotions: That is hatred against Jews and ordinary economic, all-consuming self-interest or greed'.<sup>14</sup> More moderate interpretations criticised instead the opportunism and the handling of the historical past more than the way people behaved under the circumstances of the time.<sup>15</sup> Very often the interpretations intertwined.

Right-wing conservative circles and a group of military veterans firmly rejected the results of the report. High-ranking officers and former diplomats were among them. In party political terms, this protest had a great impact on the Swiss People's Party, which was to become the biggest party in Switzerland in the 1990s and ultimately pursued a policy of national identity. One argument from those supporting the report was that procedures used by the authorities at the time were in conflict with the principles of international law. Some of the report's detractors felt that their efforts during the years of war had been ridiculed by the research results of the ICE, and they bombarded the press with readers' letters directed towards the young historians whose knowledge, they argued, had been drawn from archives and not from their own experience, which led them to jump to ill-judged conclusions on historical events that had taken place long before their birth.<sup>16</sup> This generation still adhered to a view of history that did not view the war period as a political and humanitarian catastrophe but as a time during which the Swiss people had been united through a common threat and danger, a generation that still closely identified with memories of the 'Anbauschlacht'<sup>17</sup> and the 'Rütliappost'.<sup>18</sup>

In 1989 the mobilisation of the Swiss people and the draft into the Swiss military were commemorated during a ceremony. The conflict came to be primarily interpreted as a clash between a culture of remembering and the science of history, even if—as research proves—eyewitness accounts could considerably differ on the basis of gender, political leaning or social class.



Individual memories are often different from what is written into the collective memory.<sup>19</sup> In 2006, when the textbook *Hinschauen und Nachfragen* was published, opposition from conservative nationalist circles began to rise again, warning against the danger of a false view of history being spread and indoctrination taking place. From this opposition perspective the textbook contained self-reproaching passages that violated national dignity.<sup>20</sup> What they asked for was a book to tell history and not stories.<sup>21</sup> There was much criticism that the historians had looked into biographical case studies and had taken a bottom-up approach to history. Paradoxically, the same faction accused the commission of neglecting oral history and not attaching much importance to questioning contemporary witnesses from the 'Aktivdienst' (active service) generation. From a sociological point of view, this active service generation did not actually exist and, as the investigations showed, the Second World War memories of this age group in Switzerland turned out to be quite varied and multifaceted.

Particularly active was the *Arbeitskreis Gelebte Geschichte* (Living History Study Group). Numerous high-ranking personalities from politics, industry, science and the army were represented in the executive committee, which was specifically founded as an 'instrument for correcting' the research results of the Bergier Report, aiming at readjusting 'errors, half-truths and distortions'.<sup>22</sup> The association reproached the authors of the textbook for generalising unfortunate individual cases and spreading irresponsible lies.<sup>23</sup> Individual members criticised the textbook for being even worse than the Bergier Report itself and the Swiss People's Party tried, through political channels, to prevent the textbook from being released for use in classrooms. However, the harsh criticism increased the success of the textbook, which even appeared on the bestseller list of non-fiction books and was widely appreciated by historians as well as teachers because it made the findings of the commission's research available to adolescents. Although the debate on the German-language textbook primarily took place in the German part of Switzerland, the findings presented by the commission were met with opposition in the whole of Switzerland, including the French part of Switzerland.

## Documentation

It is hard to reduce the whole debate to a common denominator. Thus only individual aspects can be highlighted at this point. The commission's investigation covered a broad topic, and numerous newspaper pages were filled by readers' letters and publications by critics who heavily criticised how the members of the commission had been selected, the investigation areas and

examination methods they had chosen and the conclusions they had come to. The reports of the commission as well as the textbook *Hinschauen und Nachfragen*, which resulted from the findings, also came under critical attack.

The three-volume history textbook *Menschen in Zeit und Raum* (People in Time and Space) published in 2005 covers different epochs and areas and also includes the findings of the Bergier Commission, yet remained spared from polemics. The issue of Switzerland in the Second World War comprises a short chapter of four pages. The starting point is the debate on the view of history:

During the Second World War there was the danger that Switzerland would be assaulted by the German army. The people in Switzerland dealt with this danger in various ways. Should Switzerland better adjust to the National Socialists? Or should Switzerland better resolutely offer resistance? This policy was still being heavily debated at the beginning of the twenty-first century, because it had a great impact on the destiny of a great many people.<sup>24</sup>

What is more, the textbook takes a very definite position and uses the whole of its scope of influence:

The Federal Council, the Federal Department of Justice and Police and the army leadership could have known at the time that the refugees who were refused asylum would, in most cases, be deported to Eastern European concentration camps by the National Socialists, where many of them would lose their lives. In retrospect, many observers put the decisive reason for the refugee refusals by the Federal authorities down to the Swiss anti-Semitism of that time, but not to the tense supply situation.<sup>25</sup>

The 150-page textbook *Hinschauen und Nachfragen* also came under direct attack as it explicitly introduced the findings of the Bergier Commission into classroom teaching. It is divided into five chapters and includes various biographical references. The readers are encouraged to ask themselves what scope of action the people presented could possibly have had. Thus the question as to what Switzerland did to prevent these crimes from happening at the time is also raised:

How did Swiss people behave when a friendly neighbouring state turned into a dictatorship and suppressed the political opposition, where Jews and other minorities were discriminated against, expelled and finally executed? Could and should the government, enterprises and private individuals have behaved differently at the time? Who assumes what responsibility and why did the decision makers act the way they did?<sup>26</sup>

Thus the bystander role taken by the country is seen in a critical light, in the same way the 2001 final report of the ICE had already stated with respect to the state and society:

The responsibility towards the international community was—without external coercion—assumed insufficiently, which can be ascribed to miscalculations, ignoring changing circumstances and their consequences (business as usual), a diffuse fear, but also to egoistic motivations. To invoke “reasons of state” in whose name many measures were justified was already inappropriate at that time.<sup>27</sup>

What gave rise to the criticism were not primarily the individual examinations of the commission or its new findings, but that it highlighted specific actions and that the commission and the textbook questioned a view of history that had been widely accepted until that point and was now being subverted.

How would it now be possible to be proud of a country that had acted that way in the war? The report and the textbook were interpreted as fundamental criticisms of Switzerland by nationalist conservative powers. This was, for instance, expressed by a bourgeois politician who complained about deficiencies in the ICE report:

Armed neutrality is seen as a morally questionable facet of the *Sonderfall* (special case) Switzerland. The army does not play any crucial role in these remarks. Important issues like active service, Swiss everyday life, foreign policy, economic supply are excluded or only touched on marginally. But instead, the refugee policy is described as questionable in a rather moralising tone. Value judgments and moral positions replace the historical findings to a large extent and political preferences guide [the report’s] interest in understanding matters.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

To sum up, it can be said that after the end of the Cold War a significant change took place in the cultural memory of Switzerland. The image of an island of democracy and humanity could no longer be sustained as Europe was shaken by war and atrocities. Much rather, what came to the focus of attention was the historical picture of a country directly and indirectly entangled in the criminal political acts of National Socialism by its anti-Semitic refugee and economic policy.<sup>29</sup> This process was launched relatively late but all the more intensively and unexpectedly and gave rise to a historical debate within the country that doggedly discussed the right view of history in school education and in the public arena. This is understandable within the context

of several developments: The self-conception of particular European nations is becoming rooted less and less in themselves and is much rather integrated within a supranational network. The basis of peaceful coexistence between nations is a 'reflexive self-historicisation' (Rudolf Stichweh) which is proof of international credibility.<sup>30</sup> But simultaneously a conflict with other master narratives is ignited. Within the Swiss context, two such narratives need to be considered:

- The clash with the *Großdeutung* [overall interpretation] of the Shoah and its universalised victim perspective contrasts fundamentally with the self-conception of the Swiss people.<sup>31</sup> This *Großdeutung* threatened to suppress the mythologically inflated memories of Switzerland as a heroic nation. And as this intrinsic connection between images of the war and the entire master narrative shows, there was therefore a danger of, as it were, the whole construction collapsing in a domino effect.
- Tensions are also created by the extension of the narrative to the geographical perspective of the whole of Europe. This subsequently puts in jeopardy the element of Switzerland being a special case within this narrative.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

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# 50

## Taiwan

Wei-chih Liou

### Introduction

In 1945, after the Second World War, Taiwan was returned to Chinese rule, terminating its 50 years of colonisation by Japan. During the martial law era that ensued (1949–1987), Taiwanese education subscribed to the ‘Greater China’ perspective under which the national and cultural identities of the Taiwanese were also considered Chinese. After martial law was lifted in 1987, political democratisation and social liberalisation movements gradually emerged, eventually shifting the development of high school history textbooks from the ‘Greater China’ perspective to the Taiwanese perspective. However, this trend did not achieve broad societal consensus and remained susceptible to challenge and fierce debate. In 1997, a new subject, ‘Understanding Taiwan’, was introduced at junior high school level.<sup>1</sup> This chapter describes the controversial history component of ‘Understanding Taiwan’, which had a far-reaching impact on the subsequent development of Taiwanese history textbooks for high school level, and seeks to shed light, in the context of Taiwan, on the complex relationship between history textbooks and the construction of national identity.

### Historical Background

In 1949, the government of the Kuomintang of China (KMT) was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party in mainland China and retreated to Taiwan. Since Taiwan was considered a temporary ‘revival base’,<sup>2</sup> the KMT government

deemed it unnecessary to learn more about Taiwanese history and actively 'resinicised' Taiwan, which had been heavily influenced by Japanese culture. From 1966, in response to the Cultural Revolution in China, the KMT government launched the 'Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement' in Taiwan to demonstrate to international society that Taiwan was a more legitimate representative of Chinese culture than was communist China.

After 1990, with martial law lifted, Taiwan accomplished major reforms, becoming a liberal democracy. Taiwanese identity also gradually came to compete with Chinese identity.<sup>3</sup> Many Taiwanese saw a need to rid schools of educational content rooted in the 'Greater China' ideology and to generate educational content centred on Taiwan.

## Debates and Documentation

### Criticisms of Taiwanese History Education Before 1997 and the New Textbook *Guomin zhongxue renshi taiwan jiaokeshu*<sup>4</sup> (Understanding Taiwan)

Before the lifting of martial law, the 'Greater China' identity was the dominant characteristic of Taiwanese history education. This involved the following: attempts to reduce Japanese influence and resinicise Taiwan; emphasis on the great achievements and glories of Chinese history and culture; using, when describing China, the terminology 'my nation' to encourage learner identification with China; and including in the history curriculum only national history, meaning Chinese history, and foreign history, that is, world history. Taiwanese history was not included as independent content because it was treated as part of the local history of China.<sup>5</sup>

In junior high school textbooks, information on Taiwanese history was fragmented and lacked any sense of Taiwan as a historical subject in its own right. In the three volumes of the national history textbooks for junior high schools, materials on Taiwanese history only accounted for 4.03 per cent of the text.<sup>6</sup> Under the assumption of China and Taiwan as one nation, the texts in these textbooks were based on the perspective of 'central China' and 'peripheral Taiwan', or, in other words, a Sinocentric historical view. Furthermore, there was an exploration of Taiwanese experiences after the retrocession of Taiwan following the Second World War, while the experiences of Taiwanese under the Japanese occupation went unmentioned.<sup>7</sup>

After the lifting of martial law in 1987, Taiwan entered a state of confusion in terms of its cultural identity. Some history scholars stated their concern that the state of democracy, liberty and diversity that had been achieved might be

superficial. At a profound level, Taiwan had no self-concept; it did not know or see itself clearly as a nation. People had different images of Taiwan's past, different propositions for Taiwan's present and different plans for Taiwan's future.<sup>8</sup>

Other scholars criticised Taiwanese history education as 'anti-education and anti-Taiwan'<sup>9</sup> and pointed out that when history education ignores the background and life experiences of those it seeks to educate, it might be considered assimilation education aimed, in this case, at making the Taiwanese 'Chinese'. They called for a history education whose 'course contents and learning methods [would be] relevant to local culture and daily life. The history education most needed in Taiwan will allow Taiwanese to understand Taiwan, identify with Taiwan, and foster national consciousness'.<sup>10</sup>

A substantial increase was proposed in the amount of Taiwanese history to be taught: 'The teaching materials should be rearranged so that Taiwanese history, Chinese history and world history are distributed equally. The teaching materials should treat Taiwan as the primary setting and include the history of all ethnic groups on the island. The descriptions should cover the long-term historical development and external relations of the island so as to help pupils gain comprehensive and overall understanding of Taiwan'.<sup>11</sup>

These academics also proposed new theoretical foundations upon which to reshape Taiwan's history education: the 'concentric-circles historical view'. The new paradigm called for history education to progress in outward circles, 'starting by covering the history of the region in which the learners live, to the history of their province, national history and world history, and from contemporary and modern history to ancient and far ancient histories'. It suggested that a complete history education would progress 'from the understanding of the inner core before [teaching] extended knowledge in a broader scope', with the rationale that 'we have to use our own perspectives to explain the world'.<sup>12</sup>

'Understanding Taiwan' was a new subject introduced to the existing curriculum, which was based on the 'Greater China' perspective. The Taiwanese historical perspective was first realised with the release, in 1997, of the junior high school textbook *Understanding Taiwan*, which contributed to profound changes in history education in Taiwan. *Understanding Taiwan* is the first textbook to focus exclusively on Taiwan. The textbook, for the first year of junior high school, consists of three sections: history, geography and social studies. When the Taiwanese Ministry of Education announced the establishment of the new subject in 1994, there was little societal opposition and limited discussion on the issue, which indicated the relative societal consensus on the need for school pupils to 'understand Taiwan'. Yet the textbook's release in 1997 gave rise to substantial controversy, especially in relation to the content in its history section.

Unlike previous textbooks, which had considered the tie between Taiwan and China to have begun in the third century CE, *Understanding Taiwan* asserted that the link came into being in the seventh century CE, which significantly shortened the history of the relationship across the Taiwan Strait. The new book's coverage of the 'period of international competition'<sup>13</sup> between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries is particularly Taiwan-centric; it treats each power involved, such as Holland, Spain, Japan and China, equally and considers the Chinese to be just one among these competing powers. In this book, Taiwan is no longer hypothesised as having been under the sovereignty of China since ancient times and Taiwanese history is separated from Chinese history.

When covering the Japanese colonial period, instead of describing the Japanese as the coloniser or the national enemy, *Understanding Taiwan* emphasises the positive influences of Japanese rule on Taiwan's political, economic, societal and cultural development and modernisation. The book refers to the period after the Second World War as the period 'since the ROC [(Republic of China) has been] based in Taiwan'.<sup>14</sup> This downplaying of Chinese influence highlights the independent nature of Taiwan and the historiographical trend towards a Taiwan-centric view.

## Criticism of *Understanding Taiwan*

This major change triggered the first heated debates in Taiwan concerning textbook content. In summer 1997, a member of parliament, C.-H. Lee, raised strongly worded questions about the *Understanding Taiwan* textbook at a public hearing, sparking a series of debates. The controversial textbook was the cause of at least 8 public hearings, 4 public protests and over 300 news reports and commentaries in the ensuing three months. The disputes were concluded peacefully after minor revisions to the textbook, but the societal confrontations left a deeper impression due to the intertwining of the textbook debate with disputes surrounding two opposing notions of national identity or national imagination: Chinese and Taiwanese consciousness. The following summarises the main allegations levelled at the textbook.<sup>15</sup>

### Deliberate Omission of the Ties Between Taiwanese and Chinese History

Some critics asserted that the textbook deliberately ignored the fact that the Chinese had cultivated Taiwan since ancient times and portrayed Taiwan as an unoccupied island. In its references to multiculturalism, the textbook

weighted Chinese and foreign cultures equally and treated the development activities of the Chinese and Japanese as of almost equal status. The book therefore appeared to legitimise the argument that the ‘Japanese discovered Taiwan and had sovereignty over Taiwan’ and support a pro-Japanese historical view.<sup>16</sup>

### **Glorification of Japanese Colonial Rule and Omission of Japanese Aggression Towards and Oppression of the Taiwanese**

A further criticism of *Understanding Taiwan* related to its effective equation of the history of Japanese occupation with the history of the achievements attained during the colonial government by Japan. The entire section on Japanese colonial rule outlines how, basing their actions on the spirit of the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese brought about the modernisation of Taiwan. It enumerates achievements such as how the Japanese made the Taiwanese develop punctual, law-abiding and hygienic habits; how the Japanese helped Taiwan engage in economic reform and social construction; and how the Japanese made Taiwan the ‘Sugar Kingdom’. One scholar has pointed out the rarity of such an ‘affirmative’ depiction of colonisers anywhere in the world.<sup>17</sup>

### **Violation of the Taiwanese National Spirit and Taiwan’s Constitution**

A civil society group also put forward its objections to *Understanding Taiwan*, asserting that the textbook violates the spirit of the ROC’s constitution,<sup>18</sup> which, in Article 158, explicitly states that the purpose of education and culture is to develop the national spirit of the citizen. The ‘national spirit’ here obviously refers to the spirit of Chinese nationality. In the view of this civil society group, this textbook attempted to show that the authorities in power did not identify with their own country or the basic concept of its statehood and attempted to use their control over the country to subvert this ‘national spirit’.

### **Issues with the Concentric-Circles View of History**

Opponents of the textbook also questioned the theoretical foundation of the ‘concentric-circles’ view of history.<sup>19</sup> They consider it a strange notion to put more effort into understanding the history of the Philippines, which is close

to Taiwan, than into learning about Confucius, Mencius, Laozi and Zhuangzi, simply because northern and central China are further away from Taiwan than the Philippines and hence are not included in the geometric 'concentric circles'. The criticism here is that history education designed on this basis is not logical in relation either to historical time or to cultural space.

## Counter-attacks by the Supporters of *Understanding Taiwan*

The academics who led the *Understanding Taiwan* project went on the counter-attack against these criticisms.<sup>20</sup> In their view, contemporary Taiwanese face confusion between 'national identity' and 'cultural identity', an identity crisis 'due to the history education of the past fifty years'.<sup>21</sup>

The scholars went on to express the opinion that, although most of those opposed to the new subject of *Understanding Taiwan* recognise that they are 'also' Taiwanese, these sections of the public can only accept views of history that highlight anti-Japanese sentiment and consider alternative ideas to be unduly flattering to Japan. The scholars further asserted that Taiwanese resistance to Japan cannot be expanded without limit, just as China's modern history cannot be written as anti-Japanese history.

Proponents of the subject and textbook further claimed that the 'concentric-circles' view of history does not prevent Taiwanese people from understanding China's history and culture, but rather only intends to remodel history education on the basis of the instructional principle of 'from near to far'. In this view, it is not necessary to accommodate China endlessly just because the ancestors of most of the contemporary Taiwanese population came from China. The proponents of this perspective consider that, while it is necessary to study and understand China, this should take place analogously to the study of the US, Japan or any other country.

Despite the aforementioned controversies, *Understanding Taiwan* was introduced in schools after minor revisions. This textbook adheres more closely to historical facts than previous texts that offered the 'Greater China' perspective, although it still fails to represent the historical feelings and experiences of all Taiwanese. In 2001, a new curriculum was implemented for grades 1–9 that emphasised Taiwan's subjectivity. The component of *Understanding Taiwan* was incorporated into social studies classes for the seventh grade and

*Understanding Taiwan* as a separate subject was abolished. The *Understanding Taiwan* textbook continues to guide succeeding history textbooks in their interpretation of Taiwanese history, which is evident, for instance, in their definition of historical periods and narrative perspectives. Most junior high school textbooks published thereafter followed the trend it set in breaking away from the Chinese historical perspective.

## Conclusion

The controversy surrounding history textbooks in Taiwan did not cease after the debates on *Understanding Taiwan* in 1997. A subsequent revision of the senior high school curriculum and the accompanying textbook triggered societal concerns and heated debates again in 2006. These discussions once again centred on many of the viewpoints that featured in the 1997 *Understanding Taiwan* textbook controversy. In 2012, a new history curriculum, realigned with a more pro-China historical view, was implemented. As one might expect, it was not well received and came under fierce attack. In 2015, angry senior high school pupils took to the streets to protest the renewed wave of pro-China realignment in the new senior high school history curriculum, occupying the office of the Minister of Education. In 2016, pupils successfully obtained a promise from the new government that they would have the right to participate in the design of high school and elementary school curricula. This may be the first case of curriculum design with pupil participation in world history.

In the last two decades, Taiwanese history education has shifted between Chinese and Taiwanese perspectives without arriving at a reasonable compromise or solution. Discussions about history textbooks have almost always become entangled with sensitive political issues. While some might condemn the increase in the significance of Taiwanese history in school education as an act of de-sinicisation or Japanisation, others may denounce an increase in the significance of Chinese history as an act of 'de-Taiwanisation'. Historical facts are still not properly interpreted in textbooks, which endorse either a Chinese or a Taiwanese consciousness. The practice of using education and national history to shape national identity is still prevalent. It is apparent that there is still a long way to go before a consensus on historical and national identities can be reached.



## Notes

1. National Translation and Compilation Center 國立編譯館, *Guomin zhongxue renshi taiwan jiaokeshu* 國民中學認識臺灣教科書 [Understanding Taiwan: Textbook for junior high schools]. (Taipei: Guoli bianyi guan 國立編譯館, 1997.).
2. 'Revival base' 復興基地 (*fluxing gidi*) is a term used by the KMT government to describe Taiwan as a military base for the mission to reclaim the sovereignty of mainland China.
3. For more information on the development and evolution of Taiwan's national identity, see Wang Fu-chang 王甫昌, 'Dang dai Taiwan she hui de zu qun xiang xiang' [Ethnic imagination in contemporary Taiwan] (Taipei, Taiwan: Qun Xue 群學, 2003); Xue Hua-yuan, Dai Bao-cun and Zhou Mei-li 薛化元、戴寶村、周美里, 'Taiwan bu shi zhongguo de: Taiwan guo min de li shi' [Taiwan does not belong to China: The history of Taiwanese nationals] (Taipei County, Taiwan: Qun ce hui 群策會, 2005); Tang Shao-cheng 湯紹成, 'Taiwan de rentong wenti' [Taiwan's identity problems] (Taipei, Taiwan: Wen jin tang shuju 問津堂書局, 2012); Shang Dao-ming 尚道明等著, Zhang Maogui 張茂桂主編, 'Guojia yu rentong: Yi xie waishengren de guan-dian' [Nation and identity: Perspectives of some 'Waishengren'] (Taipei, Taiwan: Qun Xue 群學, 2010); and Chen Jia-hong 陳佳宏, *Feng qu tai kong jiang zi liu: Cong zhi min dao jie bei de taiwan zhu ti xing tan jiu* [Research on Taiwanese subjectivity: From the period of colonisation to martial law] (Taipei, Taiwan: Bo yang wen hua 博揚文化, 2010).
4. National Translation and Compilation Center 國立編譯館, *Guomin zhongxue renshi taiwan jiaokeshu* 國民中學認識臺灣教科書 [Understanding Taiwan: Textbook for junior high schools]. (Taipei: Guoli bianyi guan 國立編譯館, 1997.) Referred to throughout this text as *Understanding Taiwan*.
5. For more analysis on Taiwanese history textbooks, especially those published before the lifting of martial law, see Zheng Zheng-cheng and Lai Ze-han 鄭政誠、賴澤涵, 'Dangdai Taiwan lishi jiaoyu de bianqian yu zhanwang' [Changes in and prospects of contemporary Taiwanese history education], *Taiwan jiaoyu* 臺灣教育 [Taiwanese education] 674 (2012), 25–30; Dai Bao-cun 戴寶村, 'Jieyan lishi yu lishi jieyan: Gaozhong lishi jiaokeshu nei-rong de jianshi' [The lifting of 'martial law' in history education: A review of high school history textbook content], *Taiwan wenxian* 臺灣文獻 [Taiwan literature] 58 (2007), 399–425; Dai Bao-cun 戴寶村, 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia rentong—Guomin zhong xiaoxue Taiwan shi jiaoyu zhi jiantao' [History education and national identity: Review of history education in elementary and junior high schools in Taiwan]. In *Taiwan dao, Taiwan sheng, Taiwan guo* [Taiwan island, Taiwan province, Taiwan country], ed. Dai Bao-cun (Taipei County, Taiwan: Taipei County Cultural Center, 1996), 1–29; and Peng Ming-hui 彭明輝, 'Taiwan de lishi jiaoyu yu lishi jiaokeshu (1945–2000)

- [History of education and history textbooks in Taiwan (1945–2000)]'. In *Taiwan shi xue de Zhongguo chan jie* [*The Chinese entanglements in Taiwanese history*], ed. Peng Ming-hui 彭明輝 (Taipei, Taiwan: Maitian chuban she 麥田出版社, 2002), 207–260.
6. Dai, 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia rentong', 15. (All translations by the author unless otherwise stated).
  7. Ibid., 7–16.
  8. Du Zheng-sheng 杜正勝, foreword to *Taiwan xin Taiwan hun* [*Taiwan's heart, Taiwan's soul*], ed. Du Zheng-sheng 杜正勝 (Kaohsiung, Taiwan: He pan chuban she 河畔出版社, 1998), 9. Du 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia'. In the same book, 157.
  9. Dai, 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia rentong', 25.
  10. Dai, 'Taiwan lishi yu lishi jiaoyu', 40
  11. Dai, 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia rentong', 25.
  12. Du, 'Taiwan xin Taiwan hun', 141, 166.
  13. National Translation and Compilation Center, 'Guomin zhongxue renshi taiwan jiaokeshu', 14–22.
  14. National Translation and Compilation Center, 'Guomin zhongxue renshi taiwan jiaokeshu', 86–100. Taiwan's official name is the Republic of China 中華民國 (Zhonghua minguo).
  15. For more critiques on the *Understanding Taiwan* textbook, see Wang Fu-chang 王甫昌, 'Minzu xiangxiang, zuqun yishi yu lishi: "Renshi Taiwan" jiaokeshu zhengyi fengbo de neirong yu mailuo fenxi [National imagination, ethnic consciousness and history—content and context analysis of the Understanding Taiwan textbook disputes]', *Taiwan shi yan jiu* 台灣史研究 [Taiwan historical research] 8 (2001): 146. Xu Nan-cun 許南村, ed., *Ren shi Taiwan jiaokeshu ping xi* [An analysis of the 'Understanding Taiwan' textbook] (Taipei, Taiwan: Ren-jian chuban she 人間出版社, 1999). Wang Zhong-fu, ed., 王仲孚, *Wei lishi liu xia jian zheng: 'Renshi Taiwan' jiaokeshu can kao wen jian xin bian* [Bearing witness to history: The 'Understanding Taiwan' textbook reference documents], (Taipei, Taiwan: Hai xia xue shu 海峽學術 [Hai Xia Academic Press], 2001).
  16. Pan Chao-yang 潘朝陽, 'Renshi Taiwan lishi pian pinglun 認識台灣歷史篇評論 [Comments on Understanding Taiwan: History Section]'. In Wang, *Wei lishi liu xia jian zheng*, 1.
  17. Zeng Jian-min 曾健民, 'Taiwan renmin zhuti ye! Zhengzhi zhengque ye! 台灣人民主體耶! 政治正確耶! [The subjectivity of Taiwanese! The political correctness!]'. In *Wei lishi liu xia jian zheng: 'Renshi Taiwan' jiaokeshu can kao wen jian xin bian*, ed. Wang Zhong-fu (Taipei, Taiwan: Hai xia xue shu, 2001), 155.
  18. The Nationwide Alliance for the anti-unconstitutional tempering of textbooks 全國各界反對違憲竄改教科書聯盟, 'Fandui mei ri jiaocai, jujue taidu jiaoyu [Refuse Japan-flattering teaching materials and Taiwanese

- Independence education]'. In *Wei lishi liu xia jian zheng: 'Renshi Taiwan' jiaokeshu can kao wen jian xin bian*, ed. Wang Zhong-fu (Taipei, Taiwan: Hai xia xue shu, 2001), 263.
19. Pan Chao-yang 潘朝陽, 'Dui tongxin yuan lishi jiaoyu gainian de zhiyi [Questions on the Concentric-Circles history education concept]'. In *Wei lishi liu xia jian zheng: 'Renshi Taiwan' jiaokeshu can kao wen jian xin bian*, ed. Wang Zhong-fu (Taipei, Taiwan: Hai xia xue shu, 2001), 312–313.
  20. Dai, 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia rentong', 156, 158–159; Dai, 'Taiwan lishi yu lishi jiaoyu', 40; Du, 'Taiwan xin Taiwan hun', 146–147.
  21. Du, 'Lishi jiaoyu yu guojia rentong', 149.

## Further Reading

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- Du, Zheng-sheng 杜正勝. *Taiwan xin Taiwan hun* 臺灣心臺灣魂 [Taiwan's heart, Taiwan's soul]. Kaohsiung, Taiwan: He pan chuban she 河畔出版社, 1998.
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## Tatarstan

Marat Gibatdinov

### Introduction

Since the late 1980s, when *perestroika* and *glasnost* put an end to ideological restrictions, history has become a key topic of discussion in the Republic of Tatarstan. The impassioned debates on history, involving professional historians and others, have been closely associated with national identity and political struggle. History and history textbooks have been at the centre of discussions not only for educators and historians but also for politicians, national activists and the country's federal authorities. A number of political forces in the Republic of Tatarstan and the central authorities of the Russian Federation have attempted to use history as a tool to legitimise or delegitimise political power and have used textbooks as instruments for the indoctrination or the 'correct social education' of schoolchildren. All those involved in the debate have claimed to advocate the one 'true history' and the one 'true past' and have denied the validity of other opinions and approaches. This chapter commences by presenting an overview of the historical background behind previous debates and controversies surrounding history teaching in Tatarstan. The chapter then analyses a number of current debates on history: the 'identity wars' (between different tendencies within Tatar historiography, between Tatar and Russian historians and between some Muslims and Orthodox national activists), the 'textbook wars' (between Tatarstan and the central authorities of the Russian Federation) and the 'battles' for Bulgar heritage between Tatar and Chuvash historians.

## Historical Background

Previous debates and controversies on history in Tatarstan date back to the nineteenth century, when the first professional Tatar historians examined primary sources and Russian history books and gave their alternative interpretation of Tatar history and the place of Tatars in Russian history. Russian historiography of that time mostly concentrated on the idea, promulgated by Sergej Solov'ëv, that the Tatar period should be excluded from Russian history as essentially incidental; however, some prominent Russian historians, such as Nikolaj Karamzin and Vasilij Ključevskij, while identifying what was in their view a negative influence of Tatars on Russian history and culture, consider this influence to be only the external influence of the steppe rather than viewing it as stemming from organic elements of the country's national history.<sup>1</sup> This notwithstanding, debates on history at that time took place not only between Russian and Tatar scholars but also within Tatar society.

The process of nation-building gave rise to a profound interest in the historical past among Tatar intellectuals and politicians. Divergent political and social movements, ranging from the conservative Qadimists to the reformist Jadidists, attempted to unite Tatars around their shared past, appealing to various historical theories. The principal schools of Tatar historiography which were formed at that time continue to exist to this day.

The oldest of these schools, known as the Bulgarists, had not only an academic but also a political dimension aimed at returning to a presumed 'golden age' through the restoration of Volga Bulgaria, the medieval state that existed between the seventh and thirteenth centuries in the Middle Volga region. The Bulgarists' ideas date back to the second half of the eighteenth century, when Murad (Morad), a mullah, educator and leader of the Tatar social movement, planned an anti-tsarist rebellion and also established a tradition of pilgrimage and crowded gatherings at the ruins of the medieval city of Bulgar, the place associated with the official adoption of Islam in 922 AD and the burial site of a number of Muslim saints. Bulgarist ideas experienced a revival in the second half of the nineteenth century, led by Bagautdin Vaisov (1810–1893), the founder and leader of the Tatar religious, social and political eschatological movement. During the Soviet period, Bulgarism was the only legitimate school of Tatar historiography, all others being strictly forbidden. In the post-Soviet era, carried by the rising tide of the Tatar national movement and the growth of a Tatar national consciousness, the neo-Bulgarist movement radicalised, opposing both the country's officially supported and promoted directions of historiography: the 'chauvinistic' Russian version, which was

supported by the federal government, and the new official ‘Tatarism’, which was supported by local authorities in the Tatarstan Republic. This paid attention not only to the Bulgar component of the Tatar ethnogenesis but also to other elements, such as Proto-Turkic and Kipchak. Started at the turn of the twentieth century as the principal direction of Tatar historiography, Tatarism was forbidden during the Soviet era in accordance with the 1944 resolution of the Central Committee of the USSR’s Communist Party, which forbade the study of the Golden Horde period.<sup>2</sup> Tatarism was only able to reassert itself after *perestroika*.

## The Debates

The recent metaphorical battles over history in Tatarstan could be described as a fight on two fronts: the main front line of what has been called the ‘text-book war’ runs between Tatarstan and the central authorities of the Russian Federation, while the second front is focused on internal conflict within Tatarstan.

### Tatarstan vs the Central Authorities of the Russian Federation: The ‘Textbook War’

History education in Tatarstan’s post-Soviet period, which is considered to span the period from 1992 to December 2007,<sup>3</sup> saw all regions of the Russian Federation developing their own local textbooks.<sup>4</sup> The system of history education in force at that time consisted of two main components: a federal component (world history and history of Russia) and a national/regional component (NRK).<sup>5</sup> The former took up 85 per cent and the latter 15 per cent of the time allotted to teaching history in schools.<sup>6</sup> Over the last 20 years, the regions of the Russian Federation have received the right to determine, to some degree, the length of regional history textbooks. Tatarstan actively used this window of opportunity<sup>7</sup> to replace the existing brief and optional history of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR),<sup>8</sup> whose principal accent was on the Soviet period. It introduced a compulsory course entitled ‘The history of the Tatar people and Tatarstan’.

The post-Soviet developments of de-ideologisation, freedom of speech and democratisation permitted broad historical discussions<sup>9</sup> in former Soviet Union societies and the development of a profound interest in the historical past,

especially in those periods of history and those topics that were proscribed from study during the Soviet era; in the case of Tatar history, these periods were the Golden Horde (1266–1420), Turkic Khaganates (551–745) and the Khazar Khaganate (seventh to tenth centuries) and the topic of the role of Islam in Tatar history.<sup>10</sup> In this situation, which unfolded similarly across the entire post-Soviet region, Tatars, with their well-developed pre-revolutionary historiographical tradition, were well able to make use of the new freedoms. A number of works by Tatar historians that had previously been banned returned to the public arena and formed the methodological basis for modern Tatar historiography, which developed independently without being subject to the ideological control of the central authorities of the Russian Federation. The Tatarstan authority successfully used the research findings of Tatar historians for the legitimization of its power. This period saw the interests of Tatar national activists, Tatar historians and Tatar authorities coincide.<sup>11</sup>

The principal debate between Tatar and federal textbook authors centred around the negative images of the Tatars as ‘barbarians’, ‘invaders’ and ‘enemies’, and the mono-perspectival (Russian-centric) approach to Russian history, found in Russian federal textbooks. Tatarstan expressed strongly worded criticism of Russian federal textbooks for their omission of ethnic minority interests and aspects of history related to other ethnicities. Analyses of federal history textbooks show that all aspects of ethnic history are almost completely excluded from the current ‘History of Russia’ curriculum. The concept of historical education as it exists in today’s Russia assigns primary importance to the history of the development of Russian statehood and excludes ethnic histories. While the new Federal State Educational Standards<sup>12</sup> stipulated an aim of the curriculum to be the ‘acquisition of knowledge about the spiritual values and cultures of the multi-ethnic population of Russia’, it does not provide for the necessary teaching hours to adequately cover these matters.

Interethnic and intercultural interactions within the Russian Federation are poorly reflected in modern Russian textbooks. History textbooks often ignore ethnicity-related discourse or only mention it in connection with negative phenomena such as conflict and war. The teaching of history in schools, as a rule, deals with the history of the development of the Russian nation<sup>13</sup>; the history of other peoples of the Russian Federation is mentioned only in the context of their incorporation into the structure of the erstwhile Russian Empire. Thus, in official federal textbooks, the people living in the Russian Empire, and later in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation, are not depicted with their own independent history or statehood prior to their incorporation into the Empire. In official history, it might therefore appear that



they had not existed before their 'uncovering' by Russian pioneers/colonisers. The resulting blank spot on the metaphorical map of history in schools obliterates all history of the extensive space behind the Urals until the Russian colonisation of Siberia. Having an independent history of statehood, Tatarstan does not conform to this approach.

Tatar history textbooks place particular emphasis on this tradition of statehood that is missing from Russian federal textbooks. Tatar textbooks have responded by focusing on the positive aspects of ethnic history, including such topics as the 'peaceful coexistence of different peoples and cultures', the 'toleration policy of the Golden Horde', and the 'blossoming of culture' and trying to omit more negative moments, which receive, as their authors evidently see it, enough coverage in federal textbooks. Tatar authors have also criticised federal textbooks for their negative images of Tatars and their prejudiced representation of the Golden Horde and of Russian-Tatar relationships throughout history; such textbooks are cited as containing depictions of the 'atrociousness of the Mongol-Tatar conquerors', 'savage hordes of Tatars', and 'cruel riders with slanting eyes'.<sup>14</sup>

In turn, the Russian federal centre has sharply censured regional textbooks:

The content of [regional] history textbooks over-emphasises the achievements arising from erstwhile national statehood, historical figures are depicted excessively heroically; the exaggeration of Russification policies creates a negative attitude towards Russians and Russia ... interethnic relations during a long shared life ... in a common state are ignored or tendentiously interpreted ... And as a result, [textbook policy] can create separatist ideas and promote an extreme national spirit of ethnic mobilisation ... The ethnically oriented [regional] historical materials promote divisions among groups of pupils along ethnic lines and the destruction of the political unity of the Russian Federation.<sup>15</sup>

The Russian government has staked a claim to full ideological control over the entire design of history education and history textbooks in the Russian Federation. Putin said in a speech that 'We need only one textbook for each year of schooling', going on to state that this textbook has to be based on one 'single concept of Russian history', should avoid 'ambiguous interpretations' and be 'free from inner contradictions'.<sup>16</sup> These sentiments have been echoed by Medvedev and representatives of other Russian authorities. As a response to Putin's speech, a 'New Concept' was hurriedly created and the process of writing a new history textbook in line with this single concept was launched immediately.<sup>17</sup>

## Controversies over the Interpretation of History Within Tatar Historiography

Recently published local textbooks in Tatarstan represent mainstream Tatar historiography, mainly 'Tatarist' viewpoints.<sup>18</sup> This approach sees the largest proportion of textbook content devoted to the Golden Horde and Mongol Empire among the Tatar states. These textbooks pay attention not only to the Kazan khanate but also to the other Tatar khanates (Astrakhan, Crimean, Kasimov and Siberian) and to the Ancient Turkic period; this approach broadens the concept of Tatar history well beyond the borders of the modern Tatarstan Republic. In the view of Bulgarists, however, the only valid origin of Tatar history, and its most important period, is Volga Bulgaria. Even when discussing Mongol rule, Bulgarist approaches accentuate only the Bulgar *ulus* (districts) of the Golden Horde and the Kazan khanate, which is represented as the successor of Volga Bulgaria.

The competition between Tatarist and Bulgarist approaches to history<sup>19</sup> reflected in these textbooks, and the discussions surrounding the regional or ethnic approach to history education, which culminated in the compromise agreed at the round table meeting on the issue organised in 1999 by Tatarstan's Ministry of Education, were manifested in the official title of the school subject, 'History of Tatars and Tatarstan', which combines both the regional and ethnic aspects of Tatar history.<sup>20</sup>

The pure Bulgarist approach has declined in popularity among professional Tatar historians. Some now accept a broader approach, citing the findings of recent excavations as evidence that 'archaeological culture' similar or very close to that of the Bulgars is not limited to the Volga area, but rather has a wide Western European and Eurasian dimension.<sup>21</sup> Some Tatarists have also called for a more balanced approach: 'healthy' and 'balanced' Bulgarism has a 'right to exist'.<sup>22</sup>

In the academic field, the two approaches began to converge and the Tatarist approach 'won' due to its more thorough and established institutionalisation. Whereas the Bulgarists are generally groups of tenacious amateurs and national activists,<sup>23</sup> the Tatarist school is coordinated by a range of institutions, such as the Sh. Marjani Institute of History at the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences and the Kazan State University's Institute of History. The extensive contacts of the Sh. Marjani Institute of History with Russian and international academics and institutions have enabled it to

organise various ambitious research projects and international conferences/congresses and to prepare a seven-volume work on the 'History of Tatars from ancient times', recently translated into English.<sup>24</sup> This institute also organised the annual 'International Bulgarian Forum' (2010–2014) and published the voluminous *Atlas Bulgarica*.<sup>25</sup> In other words, Tatarists did more for the importance of the Bulgar heritage than any previous Bulgarists could have wished: they have even referred to Volga Bulgaria as 'the cradle of European civilisation' (*Bolgary—kolybel' evropejskoj civilizacii*). However, the discussion was re-ignited when the first president of the Republic of Tatarstan, Mintimer Shaimiev, who resigned from office in March 2010, placed himself at the head of the 'Republican Foundation for the Restoration of Historical and Cultural Monuments in the Tatarstan Republic', which had the city of Bulgar as one of its main areas of activity.<sup>26</sup>

Lacking serious academic impact,<sup>27</sup> Bulgarists found themselves marginalised and attempted to engage in various political activities.<sup>28</sup> They invented 'historical sources' (*Džagfar Tarihy*, *Chulman Tolgau*) and now effectively exist as a narrow circle or club. Their principal argument frequently centres on appealing to oral history and historical memory and on various accounts widely regarded as fictitious.<sup>29</sup> Mirfatikh Zakiev's theory of the reconstruction of the 'early ethnic history of Bulgar-Tatars'<sup>30</sup> was rejected by the majority of professional historians.

Both Tatarists and Bulgarists represent different wings of the Tatar national movement. In the context of national activism, they differ in their views as to which period of the republic's past should be the basis of Tatar national self-identity. Bulgarists tend to emphasise the significance of Volga Bulgaria in an attempt to reconstruct a sense of Bulgar identity, even rejecting the use of the name 'Tatars' in favour of 'Bulgars' (or 'Bolgars'),<sup>31</sup> while some of them have tried to revive the pre-Islamic religion of Tengrianism.<sup>32</sup> Tatarists, by contrast, consider Volga Bulgaria to be only one of the events which have taken place in the process of Tatar ethnogenesis. Thus Tatarists, supported by the Tatar regional government, aim to unite all ethnic and religious sub-groups in one Tatar super-ethnos and represent Tatars as the second biggest ethnic group in Russia (after the Russians); they accuse Bulgarists of promoting the isolation of Volga Tatars from the other ethnic sub-groups of Tatars and the other Turkic and Muslim peoples of Eurasia.

## The Battle for the Bulgar Heritage

Volga Bulgaria carries considerable significance not only in the context of Tatar history: there is a long-standing debate between Tatar and Chuvash<sup>33</sup> historians for the right to call themselves the true successors of the Volga Bulgars. Both sides claim to have the exclusive right to the Bulgar heritage and are highly reluctant to share this heritage with the other. While Tatars support their claim largely by citing religious tradition and the geographical location of Volga Bulgaria, Chuvashes mostly stress linguistic aspects. Tatar textbooks do not deny the Chuvash affinity with the Bulgar region, but they equally do not emphasise it. Some authors refer to the Bulgar region as the common motherland of many of today's peoples of the Volga-Ural area. Chuvash authors directly and polemically equate the Bulgars with the Chuvash people and reject Tatar authors' propositions.<sup>34</sup>

## Religion and Ethnic Identity

One of the aspects of history education that has given rise to conflicts within the Tatar community is the question of the position of religion in Tatar ethnic identity and self-identification. The majority of Tatar historians agree that Islam has historically played an important role in Tatar ethnic identity. Tatar textbooks mostly display a favourable attitude towards Islam<sup>35</sup> and have frequently been subject to criticism for the prejudiced image of *Kryashens* (baptised Tatars) which they present. Heated discussions on the place of religion in the process of Tatar ethnogenesis periodically arise on the eve of each new general census of the population in the Russian Federation.<sup>36</sup> While Kryashen national activists campaigned vocally for the official acceptance of Kryashens as an independent ethnic group, Tatar activists persisted in counting them as part of the united Tatar 'super-ethnos'.

'The tradition of peaceful coexistence of Islam and Christianity in Tatarstan', which was officially promulgated as the slogan of the Republic of Tatarstan, has been subject to a number of trials, such as 'symbolic wars' over the issue of displaying the crescent under the Orthodox crosses and over the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women and pectoral crosses by Orthodox Christians. Such controversies can lead both sides to enlist history and historical memory in support of their argument. With this in mind, the Tatarstan authorities have decided to use the primary school subject 'The Basis of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics',<sup>37</sup> recently introduced by the federal government, to pro-

mote inter-faith dialogue and not to allow religious segregation in classrooms, which can lead to a split in society.<sup>38</sup>

## Russian Historical Memory Versus Tatar Historical Memory in Tatarstan

The official social policy in the Republic of Tatarstan, known as '*Tatarstanism*', is based on the promotion of peaceful coexistence among all ethnic groups as equal citizens of the Tatar republic. However, both Russian and Tatar nationalists claim a privileged position in society for their respective ethnic groups and complain about 'discrimination' by regional authorities. The dispute between Russian and Tatar historians in Tatarstan was ignited in 2009 by a letter accusing a new book for children,<sup>39</sup> which described the history of the conquest of Kazan Khanate by Russians, the struggle against invasion and the history of the Tatar national liberation movement, of being 'propaganda for extremism' and depicting Russians as 'invaders', 'occupants' and 'colonisers'.<sup>40</sup> Experts from the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences and the Prosecutor General's office in Tatarstan found the book to be free from dangerous and illegal content. The Prosecutor General commented: 'The discussion of the disputed issues in the field of academic research cannot always be solved through the prosecutor's office'.<sup>41</sup>

A series of publications about the 'existence of earlier Slavic tribes in the Middle Volga area' further inflamed the debate. The discussion centred on the ethnicity of the 'Imenkovski archaeological culture' of the fourth to seventh centuries AD,<sup>42</sup> and involved scathing criticism of 'provincial Tatar historians' for their 'mystification of history'.<sup>43</sup> The author claimed that backward-looking Tatar historians had created 'nationalistic historical myths' that clashed with the 'true academics from metropolitan institutes' and a 'truth-seeking Russian historian [the author himself] persecuted by the official Tatar scientific community'. All involved in the discussion accused the others of 'falsification',<sup>44</sup> 'incompetence' and 'nationalism' or 'chauvinism' and widely used personal attacks and insults rather than academic arguments, even making contemptuous plays on an opponent's surname.<sup>45</sup> The debates centred around the Tatars' or the Russians' respective desire to historically legitimise the claims of their own antecedence to the territory of Tatarstan as well as the 'historical right' of one ethnic group to 'stewardship of the natural and economic resources'<sup>46</sup> of the area.

## Tatar vs Other National Historiographies

Most Tatar historians seek to establish that the Tatars have taken a leading cultural position among other non-Russian nationalities in the Volga area throughout history, referring to the 'high level of culture and civilisation' sustained by the Tatars or to their 'sacred duty' to spread Islam among the 'barbarians'. They frequently represent other peoples of the region as occupying a status of lower prestige, without their own nation state or a high urban culture, and claim the Tatar influence to have been a 'vehicle of civilisation' and self-evidently positive for these peoples.

Some Finno-Ugric 'nationally minded intellectuals', from the Mordovia, Udmurtia and Mari El Republics near Tatarstan, disagree with these claims,<sup>47</sup> instead emphasising in their historical accounts the violent action of the Tatars who, in their view, have attempted 'to assimilate all Finno-Ugric peoples in the Volga area' through 'Islamisation' and 'Turkisation'<sup>48</sup>; some have even used the term Holocaust in this context. Tatar authors regard this 'natural assimilation' as a completely different issue from forcible assimilation or Christianisation by Russians. However, some Finno-Ugric historians have built the national identities of their own people around the struggle against 'Tatar aggression' or aggression at the hands of other Turkic peoples, ancestors of the Tatars: 'Mordvinian statehood had no time to take shape and be strengthened before it was dragged into the struggle between the two biggest states of this area: Kievan Rus and Volga Bulgaria ... The struggle of Mordvinians with the aliens from the steppe continued for decades'.<sup>49</sup> This notwithstanding, the authors of Finno-Ugric history textbooks pursue their own national historiographies in markedly varied directions, some of them mentioning the Tatars without negative connotations<sup>50</sup> and recognising them as the original indigenous people of the region—that is, as descendants of the tribe of the *Burtas*, not as 'Tatar-Mongol invaders'—or discussing the 'pro-Tatar orientation' of Mordvinian feudal lords<sup>51</sup> and the cooperation of Mari peoples with the Tatars and Udmurts in the national liberation struggle.<sup>52</sup>

## Tatar-Bashkir Discourse

In the same way that Tatar self-identity and historical memory are based on the presumed existence of an ancient independent Tatar statehood, Bashkir and Finno-Ugric people are similarly engaged in attempting to assert an independent history for themselves and build a political relationship with the central authorities of the Russian Federation on the fundament of 'voluntary

unification with Russia'. Tatar textbooks only briefly mention the Bashkirs as one of the nomadic peoples existing on the periphery of a sphere of Tatar cultural and political influence, with some Tatar historians going so far as to suggest that the Bashkirs are an 'artificially created ethnic group'.<sup>53</sup> Bashkir authors, by contrast, have attempted to expand the scope of Bashkir history, claiming it 'dates back as far as the time of the Sumerians'.<sup>54</sup> In response to the millennial anniversary of the Tatar capital Kazan, celebrated in 2005, they suggested that the history of Ufa, the capital of the Bashkir Republic, stretched back 1500 years or more.

## Documentation<sup>55</sup>

### Rafaël' Hakim<sup>56</sup>

The Russian Federation, having emerged from the ruins of the Soviet empire, has to take a fresh look ... to rethink [its] history ... Russian historians [are] responsible for ... shaping perceptions of Russia held by non-Russian people as 'our' or an 'alien' country [i.e. for including or excluding them from the history of Russian statehood]. Russian academia will have to reckon with the emergence of numerous independent research centres, each with its own views on the issues. Therefore it would be difficult to write the history of Russia from Moscow; it must be written ... by taking into account the views of historians of all indigenous peoples of the country. Historians in Russia and Tatarstan are linked by a common interest, which requires very close interaction, but equally the subject 'History of Tatars and Tatarstan' is a relatively independent historical topic which would not fit into the 'History of Russia'.<sup>57</sup>

Pyotr Stolypin<sup>58</sup> once proposed the creation of small nationalities with their own literary language from every ethnic group of the Tatar nation, a proposal which would have put an end to the Tatar nation. The Bolsheviks have successfully implemented this policy ... A Bashkir language and a number of [Bashkir] national 'attributes' were hurriedly invented ... and all the [Bashkir] people are artificially constructed for political purposes ... Tatars, you should know the truth about your history! Don't believe those who tell you that the Tatars were barbaric people, ... that the 'Tatar-Mongol yoke' impaired the development of Russia and other states. Don't believe those who tell you that 'We are not Tatars but Bulgars!' Don't believe those who disparage the Golden Horde.<sup>59</sup>



## Salavat Gallâmov<sup>60</sup>

Kazan Tatars, the descendants of the Mongols of Genghis Khan, are unsuccessfully trying, emulating the Russians, to invent their national history, which does not square with reality. Both [the Tatars and the Russians] are trying to portray themselves in history ... as 'ancient' agricultural peoples. This is a notion ridiculous to any serious anthropologist ... The Russians, and even more so the Kazan Tatars, never had a national mythology, and it still does not exist. It [the absence of a distinct national mythology] does confirm that the unification of wild, nomadic Slavic tribes into one nation took place only after the ... acceptance of Christianity [in the area of this nation] ... and Bashkords and Kords have a national mythology, whose roots can be traced back to the Sumerians, which existed in the 3rd millennium BC.<sup>61</sup>

## Aleksandr Ovčinnikov<sup>62</sup>

The following statements [from Nurulla Garif's book] are liable to arouse ethnic and religious discord: 'As soon as the Russians entered into the city [Kazan], they immediately began to plunder ... Russian colonisers ... started capturing the best land. The most convenient and fertile places were given to Christian monasteries. The seizure of land was carried out through the destruction of the Muslim estates' (p. 39) ... 'The Tatars of the tsarist period always expressed their opposition to the discriminatory policies of the Russian state' (p. 45). The following statements are liable to have a detrimental impact on the modern geopolitical interests of Russia and Tatarstan: 'The national liberation struggle of the Tatar people was manifested during the Russian-Turkish war (1877–1878) ... Tatars refused to fight against their Muslim brothers ...' (p. 63). In my opinion, the general context of the book is a latent call to extremist action; this view is confirmed by the following statement: 'The struggle for the restoration of an independent state continues today'. (p. 66)<sup>63</sup>

## Gusman Halilov<sup>64</sup>

This textbook [*History of Tatar Peoples and Tatarstan* by R. Fahrutdinov] ... infringes my right to precise [and] reliable information about the historical past of my people ... The false information about my ancestors ... discredits me as the heir to their glory ... The ministry is disseminating false information by requiring the use of this book as a school textbook ... My history, the history of my nation, belongs to me by birth and it is my intangible asset, inalienable from me. My grandfather told me: 'Son, we are not Tatars, we are Bulgarians and Muslims. The word 'Tatar' means infidel, the enemy of Islam'. My father told me the old legends about the history of the ancient Bulgarian state ... the years

of my studies in the history department of Kazan State University convinced me beyond doubt that an objective history, the true historical science which confirms my grandfather's words, [tells us] that we are Bulgarians, not Tatars. Our people are autochthonous, i.e. we did not migrate from another place, did not deprive somebody else of their lands, but have lived here since time immemorial.<sup>65</sup>

### **Gennadij Tafaev<sup>66</sup>**

We think that from 1236 onwards, the genocide (the Bulgars' Holocaust) exterminated around 5 million people, probably even more ... The genocide of Bulgars during the Golden Horde and the assimilation of the Chuvashes during the Kazan Khanate period stimulated the birth of the Chuvashes on the ethno-lingual, ethno-cultural and ethno-religious basis of Volga-Kama Bulgaria.<sup>67</sup>

### **Sergej Svečnikov<sup>68</sup>**

From the ninth to the eleventh centuries, the Mari engaged in trade connections with the Bulgars and the Khazars, who were relatively well developed ... Sections of the Mari people, living on the borders with the Volga-Kama Bulgars, were tributaries of this country [as vassals of Bulgar's rulers] ... Written sources do not report on the direct incursion of the Mongol-Tatars in the 1230s and 40s into the territory inhabited by the Mari. The invasion affected those Mari settlements located near Volga Bulgaria [and] Mordovia [and] subjected [them] to the most cruel devastation ... Mari lands were on the wooded periphery of the [Mongol] empire, far away from the steppe zone, without a developed economy, so there was no harsh exertion of authority by the military police there, [and] in the most inaccessible and remote areas the Khan's power was only nominal ... Virtually all of the Mari people took part in military campaigns [of Tatars] on Russian land, more frequently in the time of Girays (1521–1551).<sup>69</sup>

### **Valerij Ūrčenkov<sup>70</sup>**

Meanwhile (1298) Prince Behan, who 'by order of the Golden Horde king owned many of the surrounding Tatar and Mordvinian towns', appeared on the river Moksha. His descendants were families of Tatar princes, [the] Seid-Ahmetovs [and] Adaševs ... The best arable lands pass[ed] into their hands ... How to explain the pro-Tatar orientation of Mordvinian princes? There is only one possible answer: Mordvinian feudal powers tried to make use of the dissension in the Horde to restore the political independence of their land. At the

same time, they sought to exploit the disagreements between Russian princes and the Tatar khans in order to create favourable conditions for themselves. And the power of the khans with their steppe cavalry seemed to them more significant than the power of the Russian armed forces ... In this, [they] made a serious miscalculation. Subsequent events proved the tragedy of the error [they] committed ... Mordvinian soldiers saw the depletion of the military forces of the Horde. They realised that a new, powerful and long-term factor, the Grand Duchy of Moscow, had entered the historical arena.<sup>71</sup>

## Conclusion

Debates on history are an important part of public discourse in post-Soviet Tatarstan. Tatar society has a great need for new national heroes and symbols and shows a profound interest in issues of national self-identity, ethnogenesis and national history. Historical discourse in Tatarstan has developed under the influence of controversies surrounding Tatar historical memory and that of Russian and global historiography. Those most closely involved in these processes include politicians, national activists and amateur and professional historians. United in the common struggle against what they consider to be the misrepresentation of Tatar history in federal textbooks, they have chosen different ways to resolve the issues; all of them, however, claim to represent a single correct and absolute truth: 'true history'. The resulting contradiction to the officially promoted Russian representation of the past is an inescapable factor determining all Tatar historical discourses, which also brings its influence to bear on the analysis of modern Tatar historiography and historical myth-making.

## Notes

1. R. Hakimov, 'Introduction'. In *Materialy II Mežregional'noj konferencii Realizaciâ nacional'no-regional'nogo komponenta istoričeskogo obrazovaniâ v nacional'nyh respublikah Povolž'â i Priural'â: problemy i perspektivy*, ed. F. Sultanov and M. Gibatdinov (Kazan': Institut Istorii AN RT, 2005), 4–5.
2. Resolution (*Postanovlenie*) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party 'On the conditions and measures for the improvement of political and ideological work in the Tatar party organisation' (1944); the conclusions of an office within the Tatar regional committee of the Communist Party: 'On mistakes and shortcomings in the work of the Tatar research institute of language, literature and history' (1944) and 'On a situation in the preparation of

essays on the history of 'Tatar ASSR' (1946). Documents in: S. A. Dudoignon, D. Ishakov and R. Muhametšin, *Islam v tatarskom mire: istoriâ i sovremennost'* (Kazan', 1997), 338–378.

3. Federal statute number 309-FZ became effective from 1 December 2007 and ushered in radical change in the field of education in the Russian Federation. The national/regional component (NRK) was abolished; the 'unity of the educational space of the Russian Federation' was accentuated. As a result, there are no in-class hours available in schools to cover regional and local history and native culture. Additionally, an order made by the Federal Ministry of Education (no. 362, 28 November 2008) forbids the use of native languages during the final state examinations (EGÈ), prescribing that Russian only be used. In other words, the educational rights of minorities as protected by the Russian constitution and the requirement in the Federal State Educational Standards of the Russian Federation to show 'responsiveness to the ethno-cultural peculiarities of peoples and historical specificity of the regions' have become, in the truest sense, rather academic.
4. According to the Law on Education in the Russian Federation of 29 December 2012 (no. 273-FZ), only those textbooks approved by the government can be officially used in schools. There are two classifications (*grif*): 'allowed' (the first level or 'rank' of approval for new textbooks) and 'recommended' (the second highest rank of approval). The latter can only be received after 'approbation' (i.e. the use of the textbook in the classroom, with positive feedback from teachers). Previously, the regional ministries of education were responsible for the approval of all regional textbooks. Since 2005, however, all textbooks have been required to be assessed at federal level only, by the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Academy of Education, for their conformity to scientific and academic accuracy and to educational standards. If a textbook passes the assessment procedure, the Russian Ministry of Education will put it on the 'Federal lists of textbooks approved (allowed) for use in the educational process', passed by the Federal Ministry of Education for each school year (<http://www.fpu.edu.ru/fpu/>, accessed 31 January 2018). Non-approved textbooks can be used at the teacher's own risk, but the first inspection after commencement of use will result in the books being removed from the school library.
5. The term 'national' is used here to mean 'ethnic'; NRK (the Russian acronym for Nacional'no—Regional'nyj Komponent) therefore refers to an ethno-regional component in history teaching (regional and local history and culture).
6. 'Obâzatel'nyj minimum soderžaniâ srednego (polnogo) obšego obrazovaniâ. Obrazovatel'naâ oblast' 'Obšestvoznanie' [The compulsory minimum content of secondary (full) general education]', *Narodnoe obrazovanie* 16 (1998), 18–21; 'Nacional'naâ doktrina obrazovaniâ v Rossijskoj Federacii [The national doctrine of education in the Russian Federation]', *Učitel'skaâ gazeta*

- 42 (1999), 12; 'Ob utverždenii Federal'noj programmy razvitiâ obrazovaniâ [On the approval of the federal programme of development in education]', *Vestnik obrazovaniâ* 12 (2000), 3–15; 'Ob utverždenii maketov gosudarstvennyh obrazovatel'nyh standartov [On the approval of the State Educational Standards]', *Vestnik obrazovaniâ* 10 (2000), 3–7.
7. I. Fokeeva, *Nacional'no-regional'nyj komponent istoričeskogo obrazovaniâ: metodičeskoe posobie dlâ učitelâ* [The ethno-regional component of history education: teacher's workbook] (Kazan: TaRIH, 2003).
  8. An autonomous republic was the second rank of republic (lower than a Union Republic) in the structure of the USSR. TASSR was a part of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic).
  9. T. Sherlock, *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying the Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); V. Kaplan, P. Agmon and L. Ermolaeva, *The Teaching of History in Contemporary Russia: Trends and Perspectives* (Tel Aviv: The Cummings Center for Russian and East European Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1999).
  10. For more details, see: M. Leušin, 'Istoriâ tatar pered sudom CK VKP(b)' [The history of Tatars before the court of the Central Committee of the Communist Party] *Gasyrlar Avazy* 3 (1996) 4, 84–95; I. Ismajlov, 'Ne dano marksistskoj ocenki Zolotoj Orde [[They] did not assess the Golden Horde from the Marxist viewpoint ...]', *Gasyrlar Avazy* 3 (1996) 4, 96–101.
  11. T. Guzenkova, 'Respubliki Povolžâ za pravo na sobstvennuû istoriû [The Volga Region republics for an entitlement to their own history]'. In *Nacional'nye istorii v sovetskom i postsovetskih gosudarstvah*, ed. K. Ajmermaher and G. Bordûgov (Moscow: Fond Fridriha Naumanna, 2003), 131–135.
  12. Federal'nyj Gosudarstvennyj Obrazovatel'nyj Standart (FGOS), accessed 1 June 2017, <http://www.fgosvo.ru/>.
  13. In the Russian language, the term generally translated as 'Russian' refers to the ethnic Russian peoples (*ruskie*); for all citizens of the Russian Federation, without ethnic distinction, the term *rossiâne* is used.
  14. V. Piskarëv et al., 'Istoriâ tatarskogo naroda i Tatarstana v federal'nyh učebnikah [The history of Tatars in federal textbooks]', *Magarif* 12 (2001/2) 1, 54–57/63–65; F. Sultanov, M. Gibatdinov and L. Bajbulatova, eds., *Recenzii na federal'nye učebniki po istorii otečestva* [Reviews of federal textbooks on the history of the motherland] (Kazan: Institute of History). All translations by the author unless otherwise stated.
  15. M. Kuz'min et al., 'Analiz učebnyh izdanij, imeûših grif organa upravleniâ sub'ekta Rossijskoj Federacii [Analyses of the educational materials approved by the educational authorities of the Russian Federation's federal subjects]'. In *Materialy II Mežregional'noj konferencii Realizaciâ nacional'no-regional'nogo komponenta istoričeskogo obrazovaniâ v nacional'nyh respublikah Povolžâ i*

- Priural'â: problemy i perspektivy*, ed. F. Sultanov and M. Gibatdinov (Kazan': Institut Istorii AN RT, 2005), 120–143.
16. 'Putin potreboval "pravil'nogo" edinogo učebnika po istorii [Putin requires 'correct' single history textbooks]', accessed 25 January 2015, [http://newsru.com/russia/19feb2013/putindybom\\_print.html](http://newsru.com/russia/19feb2013/putindybom_print.html).
  17. The final version of the concept had been adopted at the time this chapter was completed: 'The concept of the new educational complex on national history', accessed 1 June 2017, [http://rushistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Koncepcia\\_final.pdf](http://rushistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Koncepcia_final.pdf). Many of Tatar historians' recommendations were quite unexpectedly accepted by the concept's authors. The controversial term 'Mongol-Tatar Yoke' was changed to the more neutral 'dependency of Russian lands on the Khans (so-called "Horde Yoke")'. However, the history of Tatars and other peoples of Russia are still not integral parts of Russian history, but only treated as supplementary to the main narrative. The indigenous people's narrative is represented in the concept mostly via political history, with cultural aspects almost completely neglected. Such sensitive topics as forcible Christianisation and Russification are still ignored in the concept.
  18. The only exception is Miftahov's textbook: Z. Miftahov and D. Muhamadeeva, *Istoriâ Tatarstana i tatarskogo naroda: Učebnik dlâ srednih obšeoobrazovatel'nyh škol, gimnazij i liceev. č.1* [The history of Tatarstan and Tatars: Textbook for secondary comprehensive and selective schools Part 1] (Kazan': Magarif, 1995), which took an approach closer to that of the Bulgarists and 'Mongolists', but was not widely used. Almost inevitably the textbook written by the Bulgarist Nurutdinov was never recommended by the ministry or approved for official use in schools: F. Nurutdinov, *Rodinovedenie. Metodičeskoe posobie po istorii Tatarstana* [The study of native history. Workbook on the history of Tatarstan] (Kazan', 1995). There is no clear evidence that Nurutdinov's book has been or is being unofficially used in schools. Because of the unfavourable reviews given by the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences and the In-service Teacher Training Institute, this book could not be used extensively in schools. It was briefly, and illicitly, used by the author and a small circle of those holding the same views, due to a lack of new textbooks. Tatarstan was strongly criticised by federal institutions for using this book, although the author referred to it as merely 'teaching materials', as no official classification ('recommended [authorised] by the Ministry of Education') appears on its first page as in approved textbooks.
  19. For more details, see: 'Gusman Halilov's appeal against the decision of the Tatarstan Ministry of Education on Ravil' Fahrutdinov's textbook', accessed 31 January 2018, <http://www.bulgars.ru/dela/kitap0.htm>; I. Izmajlov, 'Nezakonnoroždennye deti gospod žurnalistov, ili o navâzčivom šumerobulgarizatorstve istorii tatar [The illegitimate children of journalists, or: On

- the obsessive Sumerian-Bulgarisation of Tatar history]’, *Zvezda Povolž’â*, 17–21 (2003) April–May.
20. F. Sultanov et al., eds., *Nacional’no-regional’nyj komponent gosudarstvennogo obrazovatel’nogo standarta osnovnogo obščego obrazovaniâ po istorii. Predmet— ‘Istoriâ tatarskogo naroda i Tatarstana’ (Proekt)* [The ethno-regional component of the State Educational Standards of basic general education in history. The school subject ‘History of Tatars and Tatarstan’. A draft] (Kazan’: Institut Istorii AN RT, 2006).
  21. G. Davletšin and F. Huzin, *Bulgarskaâ civilizaciâ na Volge* [The Bulgar civilisation on the Volga] (Kazan’: TKI, 2011).
  22. I. Gilâzov, ‘Bulgarizm vozroždaetsâ? [Bulgarism revived?]’, *Zvezda Povolž’â* 32 (2010) 2–8 September, discussion section.
  23. The Bolgar National Congress (local NGO) website, accessed 1 June 2017, <http://www.bulgars.ru/>.
  24. The History of the Tatars since Ancient Times. In Seven Volumes (Kazan: Sh. Marjani Institute of History, 2017). For more information see Sh. Marjani History Institute website, accessed 31 January 2018, <http://xn%2D%2D80aagie6cnbn.xn%2D%2Dp1ai/libraries?page=3>.
  25. *Bulgarica. Vremâ i prostranstvo Bulgarskoj civilizacii: Atlas* [An Atlas Bulgarica. The Time and Space of the Bulgar Civilisation] (Kazan/Moscow, 2011).
  26. ‘Bulgarizm vozroždaetsâ [Bulgarism revived]’, *Zvezda Povolž’â* 29 (2010) 12–18 August; I. Gilâzov, ‘Bulgarizm vozroždaetsâ?’
  27. After the deaths of Al’fred Halikov (1994) and Abrar Karimullin (2000), Bulgarists were unable to gain friends among other prominent historians. Faâz Huzin, the most famous successor of Halikov’s research, was more inclined towards Tatarism, or towards a combination of both approaches.
  28. President of the Bolgar National Congress Gusman Halilov’s struggle for the official recognition of the term ‘Bulgar’ as an ethnonym for Tatars: ‘Legal statement to the Prosecutor’s Office’, accessed 1 June 2017, <http://www.bulgars.ru/dela/gosov23.htm>; ‘Appeal to the European Court of Human Rights’, accessed 1 June 2017, <http://www.bulgars.ru/dela/reab6.htm>; ‘Appeal to President Putin’, accessed 1 June 2017, <http://www.bulgars.ru/dela/reab1.htm>; various documents and letters to be found on the Bulgarists’ website, accessed 1 June 2017, <http://www.bulgars.ru/dela.htm>.
  29. Ū. Šamiloglu, ‘“Džagfar Tarikhy”: kak izobretalos’ bulgarskoye samosoznaniye [‘Džagfar Tarikhy’: the invention of the Bulgar sense of self]”. In *Fal’sifikaciâ istoričeskikh istočnikov i konstruirovanie etnokratičeskikh mifov*, ed. A.E. Petrov and V.A. Shnirel’man (Moscow: IA RAN, 2011), 275–287; A. Petrov, ‘Neobulgarskaâ ideâ i legitimizaciâ poddel’nogo svoda Džagfara [Neo-Bulgar concept and legitimisation of the fabricated code of Džagfar]’. In *Fal’sifikaciâ istoričeskikh istočnikov i konstruirovanie etnokratičeskikh mifov*, ed. A.E. Petrov and V.A. Shnirel’man (Moscow: IA RAN, 2011), 288–296.



30. M. Zakiev, *Proishozhdenie Tŭrkov i Tatar* [The origin of Turkic peoples and Tatars] (Moscow: Insan, 2002).
31. A. Halikov, *Kem bes—bolgarmy ällä tatarmy?* [Who are we—Bulgars or Tatars?] (Kazan: Isdatel'stvo 'Kazan', 1992).
32. For more details see: Shnirelman, V. 'Ot konfessional'nogo k etničeskomu: bulgarskaâ ideâ v nacional'nom samosoznanii kazanskikh tatar v XX veke [From the denominational to the ethnic: Bulgarist ideas on the national self-awareness of Kazan Tatars in the twentieth century]', *Vestnik Evrazii* 1–2 (1998): 131–152.
33. Chuvash: a Turkic ethnic group, native to the Volga region. Most live in the Republic of Chuvashia (Russian Federation) and surrounding areas. The majority of Chuvash people are Orthodox Christians.
34. Vasilij Dimitriev, 'Ob osnovnoj argumentacii teorii čuvaškogo ètnogeneza [On the basic arguments of the theory of Chuvash ethnogenesis]'. In *Problemy srednevekovoj arheologii Urala*, ed. R. Gumerovič Kuzeev (Ufa: BFAN SSSR, 1986), 26–35.
35. For more details, see: M. Gibatdinov, 'Cross-referencing images of Muslims and Islam in Russian and Tatar textbooks (1747–2007)'. In *Narrating Islam: Interpretations of the Muslim World in European Texts*, ed. G. Jonker and S. Thobani (London: Tauris Academic Studies, I B Tauris & Co Ltd., 2010), 62–95.
36. For more details, see: M. Bilz, 'Stiefkinder der Nation. Zur Brisanz der Kategorie "krjašeny" im Russischen Zensus von 2002'. In *Neuordnung der Lebenswelten? Studien zur Gestaltung muslimischer Lebenswelten in der frühen Sowjetunion und ihren Nachfolgestaaten*, ed. A. Frings (Berlin: Lit-Verlag, 2006), 127–162.
37. This obligatory subject allowed parents to choose only one of the six components ('The Basis of Orthodox Culture', 'The Basis of Muslim Culture', 'The Basis of Judaic Culture', 'The Basis of Buddhist Culture', 'The Basis of the World's Religious Cultures', 'The Basis of Secular Ethics') for their children to learn, starting from the final year in primary school. Officially, all components are to be taught only using a cultural approach—any form of religious or atheistic indoctrination is not allowed and the use of any official ideology is forbidden by the Constitution of the Russian Federation.
38. The results of surveys among parents in Tatarstan show that the majority prefer the subjects 'The Basis of the World's Religious Cultures' (61.3%) and 'The Basis of Secular Ethics' (38.7%); however, experts cite that 'both the first president of Tatarstan, Shaimiev, and the current president, Minnikhanov, publicly emphasised the secular character of the republic's schools and recommend strongly that parents choose 'The Basis of the World's Religious Cultures' and 'The Basis of Secular Ethics'. None of the Tatarstan schoolchildren have studied the option 'The Basis of Muslim Culture' or 'The Basis of Orthodox Culture', accessed 1 June 2017, [http://religare.ru/2\\_97189.html](http://religare.ru/2_97189.html).

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39. N. Garif, *Osvoboditel'naâ vojna tatarskogo naroda* [The Tatar People's War of Liberation] (Kazan': Tatarskoe knižnoe izdatel'stvo, 2006).
  40. A. Ovčinnikov, '*Prizyv k ekstremizmu* [Incitement to extremism]', an appeal to the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Tatarstan containing an analysis of N. Garif, 'The Tatar People's War of Liberation', *Zvezda Povolž'â* 23 (2009), 2.
  41. Ä. Amelina, 'Russkij marš v Kazani [The Russian march in Kazan]', news posted on the Bashkortostan traditionalists' website *RB-21 vek*, 8 November 2009, accessed 10 June 2012, <http://www.rb21vek.com/print:page,1,191-russkij-marsh-v-kazani.html>.
  42. A. Ovčinnikov, 'Slavânskoe prisutstvie [The Slavic presence]', accessed 28 May 2012, <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2009-11-16/2192>; I. Izmajlov, 'Otsutstvie prisutstviâ ili opyt izučeniâ politizacii arheologii [The absence of presence', or observations on the politicisation of archaeology]', accessed 28 May 2012, <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2009-11-30/2250>; A. Ovčinnikov, 'Deševââ istoriografiâ (otvet I.L. Izmajlovu) [Vulgar historiography (a response to I.L. Izmajlov)]', accessed 28 May 2012, <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2009-12-24/2400>.
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  45. A. Ovčinnikov, 'Neskol'ko slov Ajdaru Halimu [A few words on Ajdar Halim]', <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2009-12-24/2404>; I. Izmajlov, 'Ovčinka [The sheepskin]', <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2010-03-15/3013>; 'Ovčinka vydelki ne stoit [The game is not worth the candle]', <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2010-02-24/2849>; 'Obšeizvestno, čto naučnye diskussii prinâto provodit' na konferenciâh [It is generally known that academic discussions must be addressed at conferences]', <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2010-04-06/3153>; A. Ovčinnikov, 'V zaveršenie spora [In conclusion of the discussion]', <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2010-03-02/2905>; A. Sibgatullin, 'Okaânnye inoplemenniki [The damned members of a different tribe]', <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2010-03-02/2907>, all accessed 28 May 2012.

46. A. Ovčinnikov, 'Slavânskoe prisutstvie [The Slavic presence]', accessed 30 May 2012, <http://tatpolit.ru/category/zvezda/2009-11-16/2192>.
47. M. Kirčanov, 'Istoriâ i nacional'naâ identičnost' v finno-ugorskih regionah RSFSR [History and national identity in the Finno-Ugric regions of the RSFSR]', *Naučnyj elektronnyj žurnal. Regional'nye issledovaniâ* 2 (2010), accessed 1 June 2017, <https://sites.google.com/site/regionalnyeissledovanija/arhiv/vyp-2/m-v-kircanov-istoria-i-nacionalnaa-identichnost-v-finno-ugorskih-regionah-rsfsr>.
48. Ibid.
49. V. Ūrčenkov, *Mir istorii, učebnik po istorii Rodnogo kraâ dlâ 6 kl.* [The world of history: textbook of native history for 6th grade] (Saransk, 1997), 43.
50. N. Anufrieva, *Rodinovedenie: učebnik dlâ 5 kl.* [Textbook of native history for 5th grade] (Saransk, 1997), 222.
51. V. Ūrčenkov, *Mir istorii, učebnik po istorii Rodnogo kraâ dlâ 6 kl.* [The world of History: textbook of native history] (Saransk, 1997), 66–69.
52. S. K. Svečnikov, *Istoria marijskogo naroda IX–XVI vekov* [The history of the Mari people from the ninth to the sixteenth century] (Joškar-Ola, 2005), 40.
53. R. Hakim, 'Kem sin, tatar? [Who are you, Tatars?]', In *Tatar ruhy: sajlanma äsarlar (1989—2006)* (Kazan: Tatar. Kit. Näšr., 2007), 109–110.
54. S. Gallâmov, 'Kak uničtožaetsâ i razvorovyvaetsâ istoriâ i kul'tura baškordskogo naroda [How Bashkir history and culture is destroyed and stolen]'. In *Velikij Hau Ben (Istoričeskie korni baškordsko-anglijskogo âzyka i mifologii)* (Ufa: Baškortostan, 1997).
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56. Rafail (Rafaël') Hakim (Hakimov), Vice-President of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, Director of Sh.Mardjani Institute of History, Research Director of the Kazan Center of Federalism and Public Policy (KCFPP), former State Adviser to the President of the Tatarstan Republic (1991–2008).
57. R. Hakim, 'Istoriâ tatar i Tatarstana: metodologičeskie i teoretičeskie problemy [History of Tatars and Tatarstan: methodological and theoretical problems]', *Panorama, Forum* 19 (1999): 1–49 (here 3–4).
58. Pyotr Stolypin (1862–1911) was the Prime Minister of the Russian Empire from 1906 to 1911.
59. R. Hakim, 'Kem sin, tatar?', 109–110, 120.
60. Salavat Gallâmov, Bashkir researcher in comparative linguistics, etymology and interpretation of words, author of the theory of the Iranian origin of the Bashkir people and hypotheses about the impact of the Bashkir language on the ancient and modern European languages, and of Bashkir myths and epics on ancient Indian philosophy.
61. S. Gallâmov, 'Kak uničtožaetsâ i razvorovyvaetsâ istoriâ i kul'tura baškordskogo naroda', 91.
62. Aleksandr Ovčinnikov, Russian historian (PhD in history), lecturer at Kazan Technological Research University.

63. A. Ovčinnikov, 'Prizyv k ekstremizmu', 2.
64. Gusman Halilov, graduated as a radio technician (1970) and historian in the Kazan State University (1979), was a police officer (1981–1997) and is now retired. He is president of the NGO 'Bolgar National Congress'.
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70. Prof. Valerij Ūrčenkov, Mordvinian historian, director of the Research Institute for Humanities (NIIGN), member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Finno-Ugric Peoples of the Russian Federation (since 2009).
71. V. Ūrčenkov, *Mir istorii*, 66–69.

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# 52

## Turkey

Büşra Ersanlı

### Introduction

Conceptions of the past and of teaching about the past frequently cast light not only on the historical but also on the political culture of a nation. Participants in a debate are often ill-informed or misinformed and the subsequent debate is based on a specific kind of ignorance or suspicion, which is often directly connected to the various forms of censorship practised for political gain in a number of countries.<sup>1</sup> In Turkey, history teaching reflects the widespread ignorance resulting from political censorship.

The traditional political allegiances fostered during the republican era in Turkey can be outlined by defining and describing three major phases of Turkish identity construction: the first phase emphasised Turkicness<sup>2</sup> and the integrity of the republican state; its Ottoman heritage was denounced as reactionary, anti-modern, and corrupt (1923–1932). The second phase focused on being Turkish along with the denial of the country's social/cultural plurality, a course strengthened by the suppression of any potential political opposition (1930s–1960s). Later, in the 1970s, identity construction was based on an assumed synthesis of Turkicness and Islam; the continuance of this synthesis saw it adopted first in the context of an economically liberal agenda (1990s) and then of a conservative democratic identity (2000s). The latter rehabilitated the 'glorious' Ottoman past, reasserting patriarchy along with 'empire plurality' (millet system<sup>3</sup>).

There were a number of brief breaks in this construction of national identity: during the mid-1960s, when a plurality of ideologies was represented in the National Assembly due to the electoral system of proportional representation;

during the latter part of the 1980s when the economic liberalism and personal unconventionality espoused by the then Prime Minister and President Özal encouraged a degree of liberal reform; and finally in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when EU candidacy requirements were further enforced by the two succeeding governments. In this latter case, Ecevit's government, and later the conservative democrats (AKP government), who had always been dedicated to the Turkic-Islamic paradigm and a majority-based patriarchal identity, tried to change the 'soldier-nation' culture, not however by demilitarisation but by seeking to break the links between Kemalism and its traditional strict laicism.

These major phases of political allegiances reflected directly on interpretations of the past and the present and on continuities and discontinuities in the teaching of history and its official syllabi. Societal concerns around the identity of the nation, the individual as a citizen of the Turkish Republic and the value of citizenship arose around the points of controversy on history teaching. The 1990s may be considered as the period in which alternative arguments and interpretations on historical debates began to emerge.

## Historical Background and Context

The Turkish political culture and its influence on historical self-assertion could be formulated as conservationist monistic/pragmatic authoritarian and corporatist. This culture is manifested in history education in a sense of 'us' as a single, indivisible societal unit, against often unnamed others conceived in spoken and unspoken opposition as external and internal 'enemies'. The principal methodological problem in history education is a resistance to the acknowledgement of social and cultural forms outside those constituting the 'core majority' of Turkic-Islamic-neoliberal positions.

From 2003 onwards, Turkey's Ministry of National Education outlined methodological changes to the way history education was designed: constructivism was to replace behaviourism, the aim being to move beyond passive narration of events on the part of pupils and encourage them to investigate and find the nature of historical change. Paragraphs were appended to history books, adding more conceptual and biographical information in order to encourage analytical and critical thinking and active pupil participation. The content, however, failed to support these objectives and left the ethnocentric patriarchal master narrative almost untouched.

The Ministry of National Education controls Turkey's entire education system. Local authorities have no influence on curricula or the appointment of teachers and the ministry centrally appoints headteachers. Currently, more



than 15 million pupils are using the history books prepared and/or approved by the ministry's Board of Education. Pupils start studying history in their fifth year of schooling, using social science textbooks; in year eight, a course on *History of the Turkish Republic and Atatürkism* is taught. The course on Atatürkism is repeated in year 12 at a more advanced level, and a similar compulsory course, for which pupils are not awarded any credits, is taught during the first year of all Turkish university degrees. This republican history syllabus, however, does not cover the period after the Second World War, thus condemning young people to repeat a narrow set of content (on the founding years of the Republic) that bypasses controversial issues.

In 2005, the Board of Education decided to include world history lessons in the syllabus for the final year (year 12) of secondary school. The corresponding textbook was called *Contemporary Turkish and World History* (2010).<sup>4</sup> The books for year 11 also underlined political, social, legal, economic, educational and artistic specificities of the Turks as a distinct group, rather than treating them as part of global society. The inclusion of non-Turkish recent history is limited to the narration of the demise of the USSR and the independence of ex-Soviet Turkic republics. The emergence and development of the UN and the EU are examples of topics not covered by the history syllabus. References to such international organisations are only found in a very recently launched elective course titled International Relations.

Year 10 history textbooks on the Ottoman Empire appear to show that the Ottoman past is being rehabilitated and the previously predominant discourse of 'fatal decline'<sup>5</sup> and the Ottoman Empire as the 'sick man' of the states seems to have been abandoned. The year 9 history textbook covering ancient times and the Middle Ages revolves primarily around Turkic-Islamic civilisations, with others being consistently presented as less significant. Teachers' manuals for all these books show that Turkicness is the key point of emphasis to be stressed in lessons, followed by the states it is associated with. Within all textbooks for secondary schools, the concept of the state is overstated,<sup>6</sup> and there is overt emphasis on the strategic uniqueness of Turkey in the region.

## The Debates

Public debates on history are usually related to political issues around the past as perceived by the media, politicians, historians, academics, authors, and artists. Some issues are settled in line with the agenda set by the political party in power, and very rarely as a consequence of civil disobedience or of sustained and systematic criticism or opposition.

From 1992 onwards, Turkey's Ottoman past was rehabilitated in history teaching and was included in textbooks in the shape of chapters on the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire. This rehabilitation of the period has been strategically refined by the state since the mid-2000s, accompanied by increasing public interest as reflected in media coverage, specifically on television, revolving around the sophistication of the Ottomans in daily life, arts, and culture. During this decade many popular history journals were launched, and the idea of Turkey as a regional and indeed world power in direct continuity from the Ottomans' heyday rose to prominence.

In 2011, a television serial called *Magnificent Century*—in reference to the era of Sultan Sulaiman—was denounced by conservative democrats as debasing and denying the greatness, seriousness and masculinity of this erstwhile symbol of state dignity. The film was seen as an ideological manipulation of the Ottoman heritage, downgrading its legacy and virtues to what essentially amounted to a continuation of the Turkish Republic. There were attempts to censor the series and discussions continued on television for a number of weeks; the scriptwriter and the producer were pressured to remove the serial from the schedule. The rehabilitation of the Ottoman 'greatness' satisfied those with patriarchal and hierarchical political allegiances and paved the way to a claim to leadership in the region, as echoed in a chapter title in one of the new Ottoman history books for year 10: 'World Power: [The] Ottoman State (1453–1600)'.<sup>7</sup> The television serial mentioned above covered exactly the same era; it did not, however, simply revisit the global and regional strategic capacity and excellence of the Ottoman Sultan but also portrayed the humanity of those who ruled at this time: their actions, emotions, and personal weaknesses.

The political, cultural, and economic euphoria displayed for a Central Asian and Caucasian Turkic affiliation of Turkey immediately after the demise of the USSR, as well as finding reflection in the media, books, periodicals, and every public space, was introduced very hastily into history textbooks and related social science books from 1992 onwards. Chapters were appended to the end of the books in which flags and maps of all the newly independent Turkish states featured. There was some debate in the public arena around this development, but it was very often publicly mentioned as a world event of historical significance to be rejoiced over; it was an opportunity for the official history narrative in Turkey to seize upon the accomplishments, generally consisting in the foundation of independent states, of diverse Turkic nations or states other than the Turks of Anatolia. In other words, political changes in the former Soviet space supported the ethnocentric narration of history in Turkey. However, as reflected in the history textbooks, it was almost impossible to gain

information about the people, the societies and cultures of these newly independent Turkic states.

The third and perhaps most controversial issue of debate reflected in textbooks in this period was the Armenian issue. Ever since the assassinations of Turkish diplomats by the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) during the 1980s, the Armenian issue has been debated more frequently in the public sphere. The discussion has always focused primarily on the role of the Armenian diaspora in opposition to the unity of the Turkish state. The ministry decided to add seven pages on the 'assassinations [committed by] and treachery of the Armenians' to the year 7 primary school social science books in 1999. In addition to this, in 2003, a competition was initiated by the Ministry of National Education, and extended to Armenian primary schools in Turkey, in which pupils were called upon to write a composition on how the Armenians massacred the Turks. In response to this, a group of history teachers, lawyers, and academics came together to create an initiative called History for Peace (2003)<sup>8</sup> whose aim was to protest against the discrimination of the Armenian people in textbooks. The incident unleashed a debate both in the media and within other fora of communication in major cities.

From the turn of the millennium onwards, academic interest critical of official readings of the history and society of the Armenians in Turkey began to grow. An international conference was organised, initially planned to take place in a state university, but after nationalist reactions and official pressures led to its being banned from the intended venue, it was held at a private university (Istanbul Bilgi University) on 25 September 2005. During this conference, it was asserted in general that debate on the issue was caught between allegations of genocide and equally vehement reactions amounting to complete denial, and that consequently what actually happened had been neglected. The emphasis at the conference was not on the number of Armenian people massacred but largely on the atrocities that took place. On the conference's second day, a number of witnesses further clarified the critical stance regarding history of at least some of the Turkish intelligentsia. This conference and similar events paved the way for a number of creative exhibitions and a deeper insight into the history and society of the Armenians of Turkey in academic works.<sup>9</sup> A popular concern for equal citizenship in harmony with international agreements thus became part of public debate. *Agos*, a paper produced by younger members of the Armenian community in Turkish and Armenian since 1998, provided publicity to the process. One newspaper article<sup>10</sup> described how history education in Turkey continues to be manipulated on the Armenian issue, with a one-sided approach apparent even in higher education.

Another very important issue of public debate in Turkey in recent times is related to gender. The debate emerged during the second half of the 2000s in particular, both in relation to the EU candidacy process and as a result of the increase in influence of women's organisations concerned with sensitivity to gender equality and the pressure these organisations exerted on the government to adopt EU principles. During these years, some universities and women's associations launched projects, working with the Ministry of National Education with the aim of reviewing and changing sexist narratives in textbooks. It was not until 2008 that human rights entered the curriculum as a criterion for content intended to protect against discrimination.<sup>11</sup>

On the gender issue, the debate between patriarchal, hierarchy-bound conservatives and feminists, along with liberal and left-wing democrats, became a continuous feature of public discourse. Women's struggle for democracy and increased political participation has grown extensively more high-profile over the last two decades. The impact of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), signed in 1995, only started to become visible during the second half of the 2000s. Since 2008, the Board of Education has been working on creating an equal place for women in history textbooks; manifestos and research papers call for gender hierarchies and discriminatory 'hero cults' to be eliminated and for sources to include work by female artists and authors and to better reflect women's history.<sup>12</sup>

A transition from a historical narrative focused on military and bureaucratic history to one featuring more social history has eased the process of reducing the amount of discrimination in historical narratives presented in schools and universities. However, as far as gender equality is concerned, the targets outlined in teachers' manuals or research papers are not yet reflected in textbooks. History textbooks continue to give names and information in an order which implies a hierarchy and a 'hero cult' is still in evidence. Women portrayed in heroic roles in history books remain rare, and this has been interpreted by drawing similar conclusions to those behind the masculine rationale explaining unequal participation of women in politics—that not many women have contributed to 'history'.

A further burning issue has been the exclusion of the Kurds and Alevis from history and social science books, where they remain essentially non-existent, despite the fact that the issues in Turkish society relating to these groups have been among those most vigorously debated in public. Neither Kurdish people, who make up at least one out of every five people in Turkey, nor the Alevi people, whose numbers may be even higher, are recognised as realities in Turkish history textbooks. The inclusion of diverse ethnic, cul-

tural or religious identities is the most burning problem currently facing Turkey's process of democratisation. Kurdish identity is mentioned once in the typical course of schooling in Turkey, as the name of the organisation acting against the integrity of the Turkish Republic. With regard to the Alevis, it is only very recently, after frequent and long debates in the media, and following workshops in September 2011, that the Alevi faith was included in *Din Kültürü ve Ahlak* (Culture of Religion and Morals) textbooks. However, the description of Alevi Bektashi sects was not universally welcomed by Alevis, who assert that the narrative on Alevis and Bektashis given in the books depicts them as having a monist culture and relegates them to a secondary position within society, thus continuing to undermine pluralism.<sup>13</sup> The other major problem is that if Alevis are absent from the social history of Turkey, then how much more visible are they if only described as a different sect in textbooks on morals?

An issue not directly related to history education, but present in public debate related to the Kurdish issue, is the controversy over the First Republican Constitution (1921). The constitution gave space to regional autonomous governments, indicating a will to share political power with the Kurdish political elite in the east and southeast of Turkey. The official narrative in textbooks on the 1921 constitution asserts that it was a constitution born of a transitional era and should be considered incomplete as it contained no mention of regional self-governance. However, the amendments in the 1924 constitution, which is regarded as 'complete', officially put an end to any possibility of regional autonomy. Public debate on the issue still continues whenever local autonomy and decentralisation or reforms in self-government are discussed. The proposal, and subsequent demand, for 'democratic autonomy' made by the Kurdish political movement brought the discussion to a higher level<sup>14</sup> in 2010 and 2011.

Parliamentary debates on the omission from the textbooks of atrocities against Kurdish people in Dersim/Tunceli in 1938 also created public interest. By drawing attention to this fact, Onur Öymen (a Republican People's Party MP) succeeded in igniting an unprecedented interest among young people in investigating incidents that were not mentioned in their history textbooks. We observed an explosion of information on such subjects being exchanged on the Internet, in documentary films and books, and an increase in research into the background of such events and witnesses to them. Yet it is still not known when this information will be included in history textbooks. The ongoing debate around the issue is directly related to the need for radical reforms towards decentralisation and recognition of the other social identities existing in Turkey.

## Conclusion

While some changes in method have taken place in history education in Turkey, evolution in content has been less apparent; the master narrative continues. Turkish history textbooks assert that history encourages the development of individual choice and decisions, yet they continue to deny or ignore plurality and diversity of views and over-emphasise a continuous national myth.

In 20 major cities receiving large numbers of migrants, in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 121 people from all origins and professions, including history teachers and pupils. Specific questions were asked to understand the interviewees' personal interpretation of the relationship between educational experience and the 1980 military coup as well as the atmosphere of violence in the 1990s. The study found that, in the educational system in Turkey, the idea of 'we/us' is continuously mobilised against the idea of 'the other'. Most teachers complained about a lack of information or false information which they could hardly question due to the sacred positioning of the 'us'. The experiences shared in this research show that the denial of social, ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic plurality does not bring peace but legitimises discrimination and increases conflict and even violent behaviour. Kurdish personal experiences also underline their non-existence within the history of Turkey. The past is exclusively inhabited by Turks.

In public debates in Turkey, cultural wars continue between conservatism and change, between the authoritarian leaders and the non-followers, between military bureaucrats and democrats; identity wars rumble on between the Alevîs and Sunnis, between the Turks and the Kurds, between the patriarchy and feminists, between the Turks and the Armenians and many others, most of which are denied a place in history textbooks. Symbolic wars are waged in these books, and the conservative monolithic narrative in power is besieged. The plurality of history and memory is transient.

## Notes

1. A. De Baets, 'History: School Curricula and Textbooks'. In *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, ed. D. Jones (London/Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2002), 1067–1073.
2. The term 'Turkic' denotes all peoples speaking a Turkic language, in Central Asia and elsewhere, while the term 'Turkish' is restricted to the Turks inhabiting the Ottoman Empire and later the Republic of Turkey. 'Turkish nationalism' thus refers to an intra-Ottoman movement, later also of importance in the Republic of Turkey.

3. A system of autonomous, self-governing religious communities.
4. *Ortaöğretim-Çağdaş Türk ve Dünya Tarihi 12* (Secondary Education—Contemporary Turkic and World History, 12th grade), MEB, Ankara, 2010.
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## Recent Textbooks Reflecting Change

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- Ortaöğretim Tarih 9. sınıf* (Secondary Education—History, 9th grade), Ankara, MEB, 2008–2009.
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# 53

## Ukraine

Polina Verbytska

### Introduction

The search for national identity and collective understanding of the common past that is reflected in history education in Ukraine has given rise to a number of current problems and challenges. This chapter considers the debate in Ukraine concerning history education and history textbooks in the broader context of developments and changes in Ukrainian society, as a society in transition, in the years since the country gained its independence. The social and educational discourse around history involves inherent issues of national identity and of the politicisation of history and historical memory.

### Historical Background to the Debate

The moment at which Ukraine gained independence saw the initiation of processes through which a new national identity began to emerge and the nation's historical and collective memory became subject to reconstruction. Ukrainian historiography in general and history education in particular found themselves presented with the difficult task of developing a concept for Ukraine's history that could achieve national consensus.

As Natalia Yakovenko fairly states, the variant of 'the image of the Other' which is represented in Ukrainian history textbooks demonstrates substantial dependence on Soviet historiography rather than being founded on an original image from Ukraine, although it is based on the romantic nation-building

paradigm of the nineteenth century, when the inherent commonness of 'blood' expressed in language, culture and religion was considered to be the guarantee of the nation's vitality.<sup>1</sup> In contemporary social conditions, school history teaching is still highly influential in systematically forming in a young person's mind a particular image of the historical past of the national community with which they identify. This notwithstanding, it is not the only source influencing young people in today's Ukraine. A young person receives information on historical events which he or she did not witness from various sources, including the mass media, educational and scientific non-fiction or fiction resources, films, his or her family, friends, acquaintances and others; in other words, young people draw their information from both official and unofficial memory. All these sources of historical information influence people's national identity to an extent.

We may see from this assessment of the situation that presenting a form of collective identity that can meet the needs of the young generation living in modern society, and bringing together the different versions of historical memory existing in different regions of Ukraine, are daunting tasks and key issues in contemporary social and academic discourse.

## The Debate

The formation of a civic culture and the civic attitudes of young people have become increasingly crucial in a period when one of the defining characteristics of modern life is the existence of multicultural society; Ukraine is home to representatives of more than 100 nationalities for whom it is the place of residence, of professional activity, of self-determination and self-realisation.

How exactly to design the model of history represented in current school textbooks in order to educate a critically thinking individual capable of living and effectively interacting in contemporary society was the key question raised by a study to monitor how school textbooks addressed the history of Ukraine, initiated in 2008 by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, a state organisation that was set up in 2005. This working group consisted of historians, mainly university lecturers from different regions of Ukraine. Taking into account the existence of several patterns of historical memory in Ukraine, the geographical distribution of the professionals working in the group enabled it to consider specific regional features and local types of historical memory in the final summary of its work. One impetus for establishing the monitoring group was a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the quality of

general history education in Ukraine and a rapid decline in school students' interest in history as a subject.

Existing school history textbooks were examined in relation to the following points: their relationship to the current sociocultural circumstances of Ukrainian society, their humanisation of history and openness to the 'Other' and the world outside the students' own community, and the inclusion and nature of exercises to develop critical thinking. The findings showed a paradoxical disparity in most Ukrainian textbooks between their content and design and the societal challenges of today, a disjunction which calls for immediate action because schoolchildren who are taught content designed for a different system of values and different social orientations are likely to experience problems identifying with today's Ukraine and with a consensus view on its history. Most existing history textbooks stress an ethnocentric vision of history, leaving aside the principles of multi-ethnicity and of a plural, multi-cultural and multi-religious society—the primary values that modern, open societies seek to transmit through teaching in schools.

In light of these findings, the commission concluded that history textbooks currently in use in Ukraine do not correspond to the current state of historical research nor to the needs of today's Ukrainian society or the standards befitting a modern, pluralistic state. Further, it found that these textbooks do not present the variety of Ukrainian collective identity sufficiently to enable pupils to form a common, unifying identity and respond appropriately to the challenges of our times. These findings indicate that there is a gap between modern challenges facing society in Ukraine and the textbooks used in its schools, a gap which needs to be addressed.<sup>2</sup>

## Documentation

The working group sessions and the publication of the summary of its findings gave rise to considerable public debate in the professional community, including among historians, teachers and authors of textbooks. Views within this community ranged from approval to total non-acceptance of the positions taken by the monitoring group, and the debates surrounding the chapter's more controversial issues still continue.

The principal controversies surrounding approaches to teaching history and the ideas behind the historical narrative reflected in textbooks can be summarised using five groups of statements formulated in the summary by the working group and the most significant views on these statements, which

will illustrate the polarity of attitudes and approaches to the issues. We consider them in detail below.

**Statement from the Summary Document.** ‘History textbooks give a mythologised version of the Ukrainian nation’s origin and mix up the notions of ethnicity and nation, representing the existence of the nation as a linear, teleological, continuous and uninterrupted process from the pre-historical epoch’.<sup>3</sup>

### Opinion 1: Leonid Zashkilnyak, Historian

The modern world and perceptions of it at the beginning of the twenty-first century differ considerably from the [views on which the] conditions of national unity creation [have been traditionally based], together with all [their] attributes of teleology, regularity and heroism. A modern (sometimes known as *postmodern*) picture of the world is being formed on the grounds of the cultural, anthropological and civilizational diversity of existing societies, with acknowledgement of the inevitable plurality of worldviews among their members. *Individualistic* ways of thinking and perception have replaced *collectivist* ones, and it has become obligatory to consider each person’s right to think differently. Not taking this into account would mean trying to transfer past patterns to the present time, which may result in inadequate orientation of young generations in the modern world and them making inappropriate choices of life purposes. Obviously, such an option can barely suit those who are concerned with the future destiny of Ukraine.<sup>4</sup>

### Opinion 2: Ihor Hyrych, Historian

There is a national concept of history based on the Ukrainian academic scheme of the nation’s historical process, worked out by the tradition of historiography from the Ipatiy chronicle through to the modern academic school ... The accusation [that modern textbooks are based on the scheme of history set beforehand, and not on real historical events] is absolutely *a priori* and groundless. There cannot be any economic or cultural progress without a state.<sup>5</sup>

**Statement from the Summary Document.** ‘History textbooks place the major emphasis on an ethnocentric vision of history, disregarding almost entirely the principles of multi-ethnicity, multiculturalism and multi-religiousness, although these principles are among the central priorities of education in schools in modern, open societies’.

## Opinion 1: Valeriy Stepankov, Historian

The attempt made by Natalia Jakovenko to present the ‘history of Ukraine not on ethnocentric grounds as we observe it today, but as a history which includes national minorities who used to live and continue living on our territory, due to Ukraine being varied in terms of ethnicity’, is unacceptable, as much as it is not acceptable to throw out of the textbooks the notion of the ‘nation’s common interest’ and place the heroes of liberation movements on an equal moral footing with traitors and apostates ...

Firstly, I will point out that modern textbooks do contain information on other national minorities. However, one must agree that [the extent of this information] is insufficient and it should be increased considerably. Nevertheless, even nowadays, to say nothing of the Middle Ages and the early modern period, Ukraine remains, unlike the USA, Canada, Switzerland and Belgium, a mono-ethnic country (Ukrainians, if I am not mistaken, constitute about 78% of its population), and, therefore, the abandonment of the Ukrainian content of Ukraine’s history will cause damage the scale of which is difficult to imagine.<sup>6</sup>

## Opinion 2: Vladyslav. Hrynevych, Historian

Enthusiastic Ukrainian patriots still believe that the highest level of patriotism is the eulogy of Ukrainian ideas and the Ukrainian nation, forgetting that we are living in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society ... With regard to multi-ethnicity: the amount of space available in textbooks will surely not allow for broad discussion of all other ethnic communities on the territory of Ukraine; yet some of [these communities] (such as Russians, Poles and Jews) not only influenced the history of Ukraine, but also greatly propelled a number of political and cultural movements and this, undoubtedly, is to be demonstrated.<sup>7</sup>

***Statement from the Summary Document:*** ‘The textbooks are dominated by political and military history, described from a sociological perspective—with no attention paid to the human factor, to behavioural motivations of various social groups, or to ways of such groups’ organisation into self-governing communities and other forms of civil society’.

## Opinion 1: Yuriy Mytsyk, Historian

Regretfully, in the descriptions of Ukrainians’ fight for better destiny and independence, critics saw only ‘abundant militarisation’, glorification of violence, the veneration of ‘foul human instincts and actions’. It is important to highlight

the fact that Ukraine did not have any colonies, and our ancestors did not wage *aggressive* wars against Moskovia, Poland, Turkey, etc., but *defensive* ones; these were the wars for [Ukrainians'] preservation of themselves as [an] independent ethnos.<sup>8</sup>

## Opinion 2: Vladyslav Verstiuk, Historian

Today it is not necessary to convince school students who have been born in an independent country of the fact that Ukraine is a political entity and not an idea produced by the imagination of 'bourgeois nationalists'. It would be much more useful to implant in the young generation of Ukrainians the general principles on which a democratic society is built. Therefore, history teaching should transport other things besides the political ideas and the development of the nation. A fundamentally different, demilitarised kind of history should be taught, which details, alongside state institutions and military victories, the self-organisation of the nation's society. Finally, in a school textbook for students in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the idea of the individual should come to the fore.<sup>9</sup>

## Opinion 3: Oleksiy Tolochko, Historian

In my opinion, school history will only benefit from becoming the history of human experience, which is not always dependent on the development of national ideas. Only by developing in such a direction can it go beyond the limits of the distilled historical ideology that is not equally acceptable in the 'east' or 'west' of Ukraine.<sup>10</sup>

**Statement from the Summary Document:** 'The textbooks disseminate "pessimistic" ideas of Ukraine as a space with a perpetual "colonial status" lasting from the thirteenth to the twentieth century, implanting in students' minds the inferiority complex and the sense of being a socially marginalised civilisation which is characteristic of Ukrainians'.

## Opinion 1: Yuriy Mytsyk, Historian

The authors never aimed to disseminate a pessimistic view of Ukrainian history. They provided sufficient materials regarding the might of Kyiv and Galytsko-Volynsky states, the richness of native culture, prominent artists, victories achieved by Ukrainian weapons, democratic traditions of Ukraine, etc. Critics are also incorrect because the colonial status of Rus-Ukraine was not uninter-



rupted (fourteenth century, Galytsko-Volynsky state; thirteenth–fifteenth centuries, principalities; seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, Hetmanate), and this is clearly described in the textbooks. Further, unlike many other European peoples, Ukrainians indeed have not possessed their own state for a substantial period of time (to proclaim the Russian, Polish or Austrian states as belonging to Ukrainians is unacceptable); this gave rise to numerous dramas and tragedies for the people of the region in general and for every citizen of Ukraine in particular.<sup>11</sup>

## Opinion 2: Maryan. Mudryi, Historian

Through their constant emphasis on the past colonial dependency of Ukraine, taking the position of an insulted people, and their sympathy with the country as a monolithic spiritual whole, the textbook authors achieve the opposite of that desired: instead of getting rid of the worldview of dependency on former empires, they prolong it by imposing upon new generations of Ukrainians a view of the past as close to sacred and as the eternal antagonism between good and evil. A modern Ukrainian has difficulty picturing him- or herself beyond Polish, Austrian and especially Russian contexts (depending on the region). Polish, Austrian and Russian narratives appear to be present in the everyday consciousness of common Ukrainians and the modern Ukrainian intellectual élite, in part due to school textbooks on history. Such a situation will remain until a fully-fledged postcolonial discourse is developed that provides Ukrainians with an opportunity to view themselves not as victims of imperial politics, but as co-creators of imperial ideologies and practices.<sup>12</sup>

***Statement from the Summary Document:*** ‘In the pages of school textbooks, Ukrainian society is represented not as a mosaic of social groups and strata with their inherent interests and strategies for living, but mainly as the oppressed lower strata. The logical consequence of this depiction is that the positive portrayal of popular rebellions and riots has become a characteristic feature of Ukrainian textbooks, which in essence means approval of anarchic and anti-social behaviour’.

## Opinion 1: Valeryi Stepankov, Historian

Attempts to substitute a community, i.e. a people or a nation (the national interest) for a socio-political community, i.e. a society, representing the latter as a conglomeration of groups and strata, may not appear entirely acceptable from an academic point of view. In such a way students are deprived of the opportu-

nity to gain knowledge on the heroic and simultaneously tragic struggle of Ukrainians for their independence and for national liberation, which lasted for many centuries. At the same time, this approach firstly keeps silent about the expansionist policy of neighbouring countries towards Ukraine and consequently the reasons for its partition, and secondly 'frees' students from the realisation of the disastrous consequences for the Ukrainian nation of the government policies enacted by the foreign countries of which Ukrainian lands became a part. Finally, for the young generation of modern Ukrainians such an approach interferes with the formation of such values as patriotism, freedom and preserving the independence of their motherland.<sup>13</sup>

## Opinion 2: Natalia. Yakovenko, Historian

This is a presentation of the social structure of society according to the 'top down' principle: from the rulers and the elite to the lower groups. Such a presentation should be accompanied by the characteristics of specific interests and the behavioural motives of each group, both 'useful' ones from the Ukrainian national viewpoint and 'wrong' ones that may well have arisen from worthy motives. This would allow [Ukrainians] to model their image of themselves on something other than a homogenous 'community in homespun coats', but rather as a complex social conglomerate with varied compound elements and different life strategies and needs ([the discussion of] which are particularly important for creating tolerant attitudes to divergent views of society and its priorities).<sup>14</sup>

The professional debate on new approaches to history education was clearly illustrative of the changes to the paradigm of school history education in the twenty-first century. In particular, the findings of the monitoring group were significant for the further development of history education in Ukraine; they influenced the series of changes implemented in the introduction of new methodological approaches to teaching history, reflected in new standards, textbooks and curricula in the subject. However, a number of educators were unaware, for various reasons, of this work or its results.

A thorough analysis by historians monitoring school history textbooks has not only enriched the historical didactics used in schools but also brought about ongoing scholarly discussion on ways of developing history education, methodological principles of textbook authorship, the need to bring history education into line with the current state of research, and the teaching of controversial and sensitive issues in national history and memory.

Another challenge to history education is that there is ample evidence in today's Ukraine that the manipulation of historical memory has become a powerful tool in the management of individual and social consciousness within society, with younger generations particularly susceptible to such manipulation. In view of the fact that the past is still a site of conflict and political manipulation and remains an issue that can cause social discord, there arises the issue of creating a consensus on conflict-laden instances from the nation's history in the collective memory of the Ukrainian people.

The historian Marian Mudryi proposes a search for unifying common ground for the Ukrainian people, which would not appeal to historical memory. In his view, the aim of school history education is to enable its students to spot ideas that demonstrate bias and to understand human ways of thinking and decision-taking; to explain the motives and mechanisms of the behaviour of different groups within Ukrainian society in different historical situations; to provide a practical dimension to the study of history; and to keep alive the link between the past and present by demonstrating to pupils ways in which individuals and societies behave and interact under complicated historical circumstances.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, Leonid Zashkilniak states that 'historical memory as an individual and collective phenomenon can never be "identical" to academic historical knowledge that is based on various methodological approaches and that aims to consistently eliminate the subjective factor from the perception of history by taking into account a variety of views on the same events and deeds of the past'.<sup>16</sup> The historian Yaroslav Hrytsak is of the view that 'when pursuing Ukrainian historical policy we should not try to combine or merge different historical memories, submitting one to the other, but rather try to reconcile them'.<sup>17</sup>

According to Olexandr Zaytsev, another historian, what is needed is the creation of a historical narrative 'which would inspire moral solidarity not with "tyrants", even if they are "ours", but with victims and with those who saved them. Such an image of national history is one with which every morally upright human being would like to identify'.<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

The contemporary situation leads us to expect an increased interest in this topic within Ukrainian society. However, an underdeveloped political and civic culture, a lack of integration of all people into the idea of the modern nation and the politicisation of history are all factors which may prevent the

requisite careful examination of the issue in Ukraine. What is required at the present time is intellectual honesty and a professional commitment to open dialogue among academics and history teachers, as well as the introduction of changes into history teaching and the content of educational materials. The teacher's role is of paramount importance: teachers' readiness to engage in dialogue and practice, critical thinking, their professional and civic competencies, their commitment to civic culture and their ability to organise such a dialogue at a range of levels are indispensable to a proper examination of these issues.

Informal education, that is, education initiatives outside the formal teacher training system, and NGOs have contributed to enhancing teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching controversial and sensitive issues. 'The History of the Epoch through the Eyes of Individuals',<sup>19</sup> 'Together in One Land: A Multicultural History of Ukraine',<sup>20</sup> and 'Sharing History. Cultural Dialogue'<sup>21</sup> are all textbooks compiled by the All-Ukrainian Association of Teachers of History and Social Studies '*Nova Doba*', in cooperation with EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators. They aim to meet the challenges associated with conflicts surrounding historical memory in Ukrainian society and to bridge the gap between current standards and the new visions of history educators, including innovative methodologies based on European approaches to history teaching.

The problem of how to bring history teaching methodologies up to date should be viewed in the context of the search for effective instruments for securing peace, conflict prevention, reconciliation and understanding in contemporary Ukrainian society. A general acceptance of humanitarian values, respect for human rights and the promotion of tolerance, empathy, a sense of belonging, trust and solidarity within society will be fundamental to these efforts.

Responsible history teaching promoting critical analysis and open discussion of sensitive and controversial issues can contribute to overcoming social biases and stereotypes as well as to social integration and consolidation and thus support the sustainability of democratic change in Ukrainian society.

## Notes

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10. O. Tolochko, in *Ibid.*
11. Y. Mytsyk, ‘Nove chy pry zabute stare’.
12. M. Mudryi, ‘The Topic of the “Colonial Status” of Ukraine in History Textbooks’. In *Materialy robochoyi narady z monitorynhu shkilnykh pidruchnykiv istoriyi Ukrainy*, ed. N. Yakovenko (Kyiv: Olena Teliha Publishing House, 2008), 87.
13. V. Stepankov, ‘Kastraciia natsionalnoyi pamyati’.
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16. L. Zashkilniak, 'History and Social Commission', 64.
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# 54

## United Kingdom

Terry Haydn

### Introduction

It is, of course, often arbitrary to assign a precise date to when something ‘started’ in history. However, scrutiny of what has been written about history education in the UK reveals a generally accepted view that for much of the time that history has been a compulsory school subject in the UK, there was a broad consensus about its form and purpose which held until the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> This consensus started to fray in the 1960s as a result of a range of changes in universities, schools and society in general, and different views emerged about how and why history should be taught in schools, with several new approaches being taught in schools on an experimental but quite a large-scale basis. However, it was not until the decision to implement a National Curriculum for history that academic and educational discussion and debate turned into a high-profile public debate in the UK, with over a thousand articles in the national press focusing on what form a National Curriculum for history should take—more than for any other school subject.<sup>2</sup>

### Historical Background

#### ‘Traditional’ School History

For most of the time that history has been part of the school curriculum, it has taken the form of the transmission of a body of knowledge about the



nation's past. The emphasis was mainly on political and constitutional history and Britain's development as a great power. It was generally taught as a positive and celebratory rendering of Britain's past, focusing on the development of her system of parliamentary democracy and her position in the world. The other important characteristic about school history was that it was taught as a 'received subject', in the sense that pupils were taught 'what happened', rather than the idea that history was a construct, and more than one story could be fashioned out of the study of the past. The main aim was that young people would leave school with a knowledge and appreciation of the national past which would contribute to their sense of identity as a British citizen. It is important to stress that this form of school history was remarkably tenacious and was to be the dominant mode of school history in the UK well into the second half of the twentieth century.

## Challenges to Traditional History

A range of factors contributed to the erosion of this consensus about the form and purpose of school history. In part it stemmed from the decline in social deference towards traditional institutions: the crown, commonwealth and empire were no longer universally regarded as 'a good thing'. The study of history at university was moving away from a central concern with political and constitutional history and encompassed a range of new approaches to the study of the past, including 'history from below', women's history, post-colonial history and influences from sociology, psychology and other disciplines. Concern about the traditional form of school history also came from history teachers themselves. A major study conducted by the Schools Council revealed that the majority of pupils regarded history as useless and boring, and concerns were expressed about the survival of history as a school subject.<sup>3</sup> Many history teachers felt that something had to be changed if this situation was to be rectified.

## 'New History'

Alternative models of school history were to emerge from these developments in the 1970s and 1980s. One example was the Humanities Curriculum Project, led by Lawrence Stenhouse at the University of East Anglia. Stenhouse's view was that the humanities curriculum should relate to the interests and situations of young people rather than focusing primarily on political and constitutional history and argued that history should focus on topics such as

family relationships, relations between the sexes, the position of adolescents in society, racial prejudice, law and order, living in cities and power and ambition. The main teaching strategy would be enquiry- and discussion-based, with groups of pupils discussing issues in the light of evidence and under the guidance of the teacher.<sup>4</sup> Another manifestation of 'new history' was the development of the Schools Council History Project, with its emphasis on pupil enquiry and active modes of learning and a broader range of content, including local history, development studies and depth studies. There was also an emphasis on the development of pupils' understanding of second-order concepts such as cause, change and evidence.

## The Debate

The existence of two contrasting models of school history marked the outbreak of a 'history war' in the UK. 'New history' did not replace traditional history; only one-third of secondary schools adopted the 'progressive' Schools Council History syllabus as an examination option: most schools stayed with more traditional syllabuses.

The decision in the late 1980s to introduce a National Curriculum for history in the UK intensified the debates about what form school history should take. In the end, the first version of the National Curriculum for history, introduced in 1991, was an uneasy compromise between the 'Great Tradition' mode of history education and components borrowed from the 'new history' which had emerged in the 1970s and 1980s.

The continuing emphasis on the development of pupils' understanding of historical interpretations was a clear departure from the tradition of history as a 'received subject' which transmitted one authoritative version of the past. All four revisions of the original 1991 version of the curriculum (in 1995, 2000, 2007 and 2014) retained an emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of history as a discipline and on second-order or 'procedural' concepts such as significance, cause, change, chronology and interpretation, but in a draft proposal for revision, circulated by a Conservative secretary of state in February 2013, the role of these second-order concepts was reduced, and a much heavier emphasis was placed on the transmission of a body of knowledge of the national past, with a much more substantial volume of prescribed content.<sup>5</sup> This draft curriculum, and the statements of Conservative politicians in support of it, seemed to mark a return to the 'Great Tradition' model of school history.<sup>6</sup>

However, the consultation process which followed the publication of the suggested new history curriculum evinced a hostile reaction from the history

education community. A survey conducted by the Historical Association, which elicited over 1600 responses from history teachers, revealed that only 4 per cent of them thought the new curriculum was a positive change.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps in consequence of the scale and vehemence of the response to the draft proposals, the final version of the new National Curriculum for history, introduced into schools in September 2014, was significantly modified, with much more continuity with the previous version and a retained balance between substantive historical knowledge and disciplinary understanding.<sup>8</sup>

## Documentation

Politicians of all political parties have tended to espouse the traditional mode of school history, with the idea that the primary purpose of school history is to provide young people with a coherent factual grasp of the 'big picture' of the national past and an appreciation of Britain's achievements as a nation.

The policy briefings and public statements of Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education from 2010 to 2014, clearly indicated a desire to return to the sort of school history which prevailed in the UK in earlier times: 'I'm an unashamed traditionalist when it comes to the curriculum; most parents would rather their children had a traditional education, with children sitting in rows, learning the kings and queens of England'.<sup>9</sup> In a speech to the Conservative Party Conference, he argued that 'there is no better way of building a modern, inclusive, patriotism than by teaching all British citizens to take pride in this country's historic achievements. Which is why the next Conservative Government will ensure the curriculum teaches the proper narrative of British History—so that every Briton can take pride in this nation'.<sup>10</sup>

The majority of history teachers and history teacher educators have tended to favour the move away from the 'Great Tradition' model of school history, with the caveat that 'mistakes have been made' and too much attention may have focused on the study of sources divorced from their historical context, with a need to move back to a more appropriate balance between 'stories' and 'sources'.<sup>11</sup> A study of *Teaching History*, the main journal for history teachers in the UK, and *Debates in History Teaching*,<sup>12</sup> the most recent collection of papers by history didacticians and teachers in the UK, demonstrates the belief that the study of the past is helpful to young people both as a body of knowledge and as a *form of knowledge*, with its rules and conventions for handling information and ascertaining the validity of claims to knowledge. Disagreements about the form and purpose of school history also extended to disagreements

about the 'end date' of school history, with governments being suspicious of a school history which included reference to contemporary events and issues, and history education professionals insisting that school history should address controversial and contemporary issues, as evidenced by the *T.E.A.C.H. Report*, a Historical Association publication on how teachers should approach the teaching of emotive and controversial issues.<sup>13</sup>

The following extract from a chapter by Peter Lee and Rosalyn Ashby is one of the most helpful contextualisations of the history wars that have been fought over the past decades in the UK and the case for developing pupils' understanding of second-order or procedural concepts, as well as their knowledge and understanding of the substantive past:

In the early 1960s, reform of school history was almost entirely discussed in terms of historical content, by the early 1990s, although content issues figured large in public debate, the new National Curriculum focused on history as a discipline. To make sense of the changes, it is necessary to distinguish between *substantive* history on the one hand and *second-order* or *procedural* ideas about history on the other ... The changes in English history education can therefore be described as a shift from the assumption that school history was only a matter of acquiring substantive history to a concern with students' second-order ideas.

Lee and Ashby are at pains to stress that this change is not about 'skills versus knowledge', as commonly portrayed in media coverage: 'There was no retreat from the importance of students acquiring historical knowledge. Instead, "knowledge" was treated seriously, as something that had to be understood and grounded'.<sup>14</sup> For the majority of history didacticians, a key element of school history was the idea that pupils should understand that different accounts could be constructed from the past: in the words of Lee, a key aim was 'to equip students with an intellectual toolkit that gives them strategies for dealing with conflicting accounts of the past'.<sup>15</sup>

In some of the more recent skirmishes of the history wars being fought in the UK, academic historians have also contributed to the debate on school history. Several high-profile historians (that is to say, those who have appeared on and made television programmes) were invited by the government to advise on the review of the history curriculum. For the most part these contributions tended to be critical of 'new history' and have called for less emphasis on source analysis and a return to the transmission of the narrative of the national past as the central purpose of school history. The historian Niall Ferguson argued that the move away from traditional school history had

reduced the subject to ‘odds and sods’, and Simon Schama lamented the absence of ‘the long arc’ of time from current models of history teaching.<sup>16</sup> However, not all historians have taken this position: Richard Evans, for example, has argued that ‘a return to narrative in the classroom—to passive consumption instead of critical engagement—is more likely to be a recipe for boredom and disaffection’,<sup>17</sup> and Schama conceded that developing in pupils ‘the capacity to decide which version of an event seems most credible’ should be one of the proper aims of school history.<sup>18</sup>

The schools’ inspectorate, Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), also took a position in the debate on the state of the health of history education in UK schools. Whilst acknowledging and criticising pupils’ lack of an overarching mental framework of the past, Ofsted is strongly supportive of the moves towards developing pupils’ understanding of history as a form of knowledge as well as a body of knowledge. One report argued that ‘Above all else, history needs to provide young people with the ability to make up their own minds’.<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

The accession of a right-wing government in 2010, which has argued for a return to traditional school history (a body of knowledge to be transmitted to pupils under such topic headings as British political history; kings and queens; what every child should know ...; ‘our island story’) has polarised the debate over the form and purpose it should take, given that the majority of history teachers and history teacher educators have reservations about this mode of school history.<sup>20</sup> Divergence of opinion about the purposes of school history education has been further sharpened and politicised by Secretary of State Michael Gove’s descriptions of elements of ‘the educational establishment’ critical of his curriculum reforms as ‘The Blob’<sup>21</sup> and as ‘the enemies of promise’ and his statement to a national newspaper that he refuses ‘to surrender to the Marxist teachers hell-bent on destroying our schools’.<sup>22</sup> There is now, more than ever, a stark contrast between the views of governing politicians (as evidenced in their public pronouncements about school history) and the views of history education professionals (as evidenced by the main professional journal for history teachers, *Teaching History*), as to what school history is for, what its content should be and what form it should take.

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## United States of America

Gary B. Nash and Ross E. Dunn

### Introduction

Several characteristics of state school education in the United States set it apart from most other nations. Firstly, decentralisation has been the rule since the advent of state school education in the first third of the nineteenth century. The United States has never had a national curriculum, national tests administered by the federal government, mandatory national standards, national teacher training programmes, or nationally approved textbooks. The United States had no federal Department of Education until 1980, and this department has never considered creating an official history curriculum. Each of the 50 states can set its standards and curricular frameworks if it wishes—or set none at all. In many states, decision-making power devolves to cities, counties, and locally elected school boards. These boards have power over teacher salaries, textbook choice, and even the scope and sequence of particular history courses. This has the advantage of flexibility, leaving teachers to innovate and bring their own pedagogical ingenuity to bear on what children learn and how they learn it once the classroom door closes. The downside is that teachers have been exposed to shifts in political sentiment, where local citizens, ousting one school board and electing a new one, can demand that teachers change their textbooks, modes of instruction, and even the words and phrases they use in the classroom. In a recent example, the Texas Board of Education demanded that references to ‘the Atlantic slave trade’ be replaced by ‘the triangular trade’ and ‘capitalism’ be removed in favour of ‘the free enterprise system’.<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, because the United States has always been a nation of immigrants—a constantly shifting amalgam of peoples, cultures, languages, and religions from every part of the world—its state schools have accepted the mission not only of teaching academic subjects but also of socialising and ‘Americanising’ pupils, many of whom have arrived in the United States speaking no English. This also has put a premium on teaching a history that downplays conflict and emphasises unity. But for a long time, this led to schoolbooks in which minority groups were ignored or disparaged. Fighting against this, Roman Catholic and African American educators published their own textbooks for parochial and segregated Black schools that gave voice to such large groups ignored in White-dominated school districts.<sup>2</sup>

Only in the 1960s did mainstream history educators begin to pay more than token attention to religious, ethnic, and racial minority groups. This happened gradually, partly owing to the demands of liberal educators and historians for a more inclusive approach to American history and partly because immigrant children, flooding into the country after the Immigration Act of 1965, were becoming the majority of state school pupils, particularly in urban districts, where most immigrants settled. Today, teachers in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston hear a babel of tongues spoken by pupils from every point on the compass. Meanwhile, multiculturalism and an emphasis on multiple perspectives have become the norm.<sup>3</sup>

Thirdly, a distinctive element in American education has been a greater commitment to international history in primary and secondary school curricula than ministries of education in many countries have thought necessary. Between 1900 and the end of the First World War, most American high schools taught ancient Greco-Roman history, medieval and modern European history, English history, and American history and government in a four-year sequence. Under pressure from education specialists and rising university social science departments, this curriculum gave way after the war to a one-year high school course in world history that emphasised the recent past and contemporary affairs. Like the four-year sequence that preceded it, this course defined non-American history largely as a narrative of the European past. Whether an elective or a required element of what came to be called the ‘social studies’ curriculum, this course has continued to be a fixture of pre-collegiate education in many states and localities. It reflects a public consensus that all children should know something about the world beyond American shores. On the other hand, the course has gone by many names—world history, world civilisations, world cultures, and world history and geography—and has always lacked conceptual purpose and clarity other than a general

presumption that world history after 1500 CE may properly confine itself mostly to the story of Western civilisation.<sup>4</sup>

What educators, political leaders, teachers, and parents in the United States share with those in most modern nations is the belief that history is a vehicle for promoting *amor patriae*: representations of the past that support national cohesion and engender civic pride. In a democracy, knowledge of history is regarded as the precondition of political intelligence. Without history, citizens cannot undertake sensible inquiries into the political, social, or moral issues they confront nor become members of the informed electorate which is essential to the effective operation of the democratic processes of governance.

Yet general agreement on the utility of history has not prevented history education in the schools from becoming a battleground, where competing sectors of the public have struggled to shape the school curriculum, monitor the teachers, and influence the writing of the textbooks from which pupils imbibe historical knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. The competition for shaping representations of the past in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been particularly intense in the United States for several reasons. But before addressing these reasons, it is useful to recall briefly the intensity of arguments over history education that occurred decades before the history wars of the 1990s.

## Context and Background

Contention over independence from England can be said to constitute the first argument about American history, a debate over the origins and consequences of the American Revolution that still continues. The same can be said about the American Civil War (1861–1865). For decades, young pupils in the southern and northern states read different interpretations of this conflict. In a democracy where the federal government promulgates no official history, contention over the past that young learners should study is almost to be expected.

It was not until the 1920s, however, that teachers began losing their jobs, and books were cast out of libraries or burnt in the streets because they were insufficiently patriotic. That alone raised the question of what constituted ‘patriotism’. As early as 1903, educators had argued that ‘true patriotism, by common consent, does not consist in magnifying our own country at the expense of England, the North at the expense of the South, or America, right or wrong, at the expense of the world. To cultivate fair-mindedness and honesty, to see clearly both sides of an historical controversy, is ... the true stan-

dard of historical study'.<sup>5</sup> But such attempts to wean politicians, as well as parts of the public, off bombastic nationalism were never entirely successful.

That became apparent in the aftermath of the First World War. Ultra-nationalistic groups attacked textbook writers who dared, for example, to present the point of view of colonial loyalists who would not fight against the British for independence (1776–1783) or historians who explored the economic self-interest of members of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Thus began the first widespread public dispute over the proper relationship between history and national identity; an argument that morphed into a discussion of whether it was even permissible to encourage critical thinking in pupils.<sup>6</sup>

This brought the public, especially the conservative sector, into direct conflict with academic historians, many of them trained at German universities, whose leadership of a professionalised discipline encouraged new attitudes about history in schools: not only the subjects young Americans should study but also how they should sharpen their analytical skills. Allying with progressive educators, the 'New Historians' argued that the dry, limited subject matter and verbatim recitations were ill-suited to a fast-changing multiethnic society, where serious analysis and interpretation of the past were the keys to responsible democratic citizenship.

In the 1930s, the rise of relativism in the sciences and the correlative tenets of the history profession that viewed historical judgements always as tentative, as well as the belief that multiple perspectives manifest a democracy's robustness and maturity, led to charges that historians were infatuated with 'collectivism' and bent on 'Sovietising our children'. Amidst the global Great Depression and the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe and Asia, a spokeswoman for the conservative right complained bitterly that the American child was being given 'an unbiased viewpoint instead of teaching him real Americanism. All the old histories taught my country right or wrong ... We can't afford to teach [the pupils] to be unbiased and let them make up their own minds'.<sup>7</sup>

Such attacks waned when the outbreak of the Second World War set aside such curricular arguments. But the Cold War brought renewed efforts to ferret out alleged communist subversion in public schools. More than half of the 50 states required teachers to sign loyalty oaths and 33 states passed legislation authorising the dismissal of teachers found to be 'disloyal', though the definition of that word remained murky. Ultra-patriotic groups attacked textbooks that pictured American slums and lines of unemployed citizens during the Great Depression or steered pupils to authors and books deemed too progressive on issues of labour, race, or gender.

Periodic campaigns to cleanse the history curriculum of progressivism and critical inquiry could not, however, prevent the seismic changes transforming the history profession from a White, male, and largely Christian guild into a diverse body open to all comers, with women and Jews becoming particularly prominent within the profession. Even if African Americans and other minority groups remained small in number in history departments, their insistence on representation in the history curriculum, inspired by the Civil Rights and women's movements, slowly led to major changes in what young Americans learnt about United States and world history. The fact that by the 1970s access to secondary education in state schools was nearly universal made these changes all the more important.

## Debate and Documentation

The first attempt to establish national standards for schools in various disciplines began in 1989 when President George Bush and the National Governors Association called for 'world-class' standards and voluntary achievement tests to assess progress towards meeting them. The federal role, while limited, was to be proactive. Hence, the Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities funded the National Center for History in the Schools (NCHS) at the University of California, Los Angeles, to oversee the construction of history standards in both United States and world history.<sup>8</sup>

With 31 organisations involved and overseen by a National Council for History Standards, the NCHS formed teacher task forces to work with academic historians for three years to write the standards. Braided into the chronologically arranged content standards in world and US history were historical thinking skills emphasising the need for pupils to become adept in chronological thinking, historical analysis and interpretation, and historical research methods.<sup>9</sup>

Some 60 classroom teachers and academic historians were involved in constructing the standards in a series of drafts circulated to the 31 participating organisations and discussed at great length in 11 meetings of the National Council in Washington, D.C. Including all those who participated in offering comments and criticism of the drafts, more than a thousand history educators were involved before the standards were approved by the National Council in October 1994.

In developing the US standards, inclusiveness became a key principle: that the history of every component of the American population should be given

due attention so that pupils, in all their variety, could see people like their own parents and grandparents involved in the building of an American economy and an American social mosaic. At the same time, the common values and heritage that Americans shared should be a vital element of the standards. Among the criteria constructed to guide the writing of the standards, one insisted that '[t]he history of any society can only be understood by studying all its constituent parts ... Therefore, standards for U.S. history should reflect the nation's diversity, exemplified by race, ethnicity, social status, gender, and religious affiliation. The contributions and struggles for social justice and equality by specific groups and individuals should be included'.<sup>10</sup>

Although the National Council believed they struck a balance between *unum* and *pluribus* in adopting criteria for constructing standards for American history, partly because textbooks had already moved towards an inclusive approach, the search for consensus in how to present world history was long and tortured. For some members, the master narrative of world history should be how Western values and institutions came to dominate the world. This reflected the fact that the definition of world history as virtually synonymous with Western civilisation had remained largely unchallenged through the 1960s.

But other council members, not accepting the fact that European expansion over the previous four centuries was the key event in global history at large, argued that societies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas had histories worthy of close attention because their inter-societal, distance-stretching relations over many centuries had much to do with the shaping of the modern world. They were mindful that by the 1980s, globalisation in its many facets was slowly imposing itself on the world's consciousness as the reality took hold of what some scholars call the 'Anthropocene', a new geophysical era in which the planetary environment has been changing largely as a consequence of human action. Members of the World History Association, founded in the United States in 1982, recognised, along with many other teachers and scholars, that world history should be conceived not as the study of different cultures as historical silos but as an investigation of topics that address change over time in the human community as a whole. The National Council finally agreed upon criteria specifying that '[s]tandards in world history should treat the history and values of diverse civilizations, including those of the West, and should especially address the interactions among them'.<sup>11</sup>

Fully supported by the National Council and endorsed by all but one of the 31 organisations involved, the National Center for History in the Schools published the standards in November 1994. Immediately, conservative political operatives and media personalities attacked them. Though a multitude of



teachers and scholars had constructed the standards to reflect the most respected scholarship of recent decades, the guidelines were far too multicultural and open-ended for the conservative right, whose leaders did not hesitate to misrepresent the standards. For example, many followed the charge of Lynne Cheney, former chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities that provided much of the funding for the project, that the standards excluded study of the US Constitution. This was patently untrue, for an entire section of Era 3 was devoted to the formation and implementation of the Constitution. Indeed, the Constitution, amended many times into the late twentieth century, received repeated attention. Nonetheless, conservatives maintained, as one critic put it, that 'the whole document strains to promote the achievements and highlight the victimization of the country's preferred minorities, while straining equally to degrade the achievements and highlight the flaws of the white males who ran the country for its first two centuries'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, from this point of view, the standards simply embodied radical trends in postmodernist, feminist, and multicultural approaches to education.

In radio and television cross-fire debates, and in metro op-ed pages, conservatives targeted the US history standards, understanding that parents would be most concerned about what their children learned about their own nation's history. Largely ignored were the World History Standards, though the few critics who bothered to consult them usually alleged that they underrepresented Western civilisation while paying too much attention to what they regarded as 'exotic' parts of the world. To judge by their silence, no critics of the content standards in US and world history ever read or cared to discuss the historical thinking skill standards, which the governing council regarded as the key to pupil historical literacy.

While the media stoked the controversy, members of the Advisory Council felt compelled to respond. As one member, a Japanese historian at Columbia University, wrote: 'Over more than two years, nearly six thousand teachers, administrators, scholars, parents, and business leaders had their say in the drafting' of the standards. Continuing, the historian asserted that if the standards had been hijacked – and this was a frequent charge – 'they were hijacked by America, through an admirable process of open debate that could probably only happen in the United States'.<sup>13</sup>

The cascading controversy over the standards took an ominous turn in January 1995, when Republicans, who had won control of both houses of Congress in the November 1994 by-election, found a way to demonise the guidelines. Speaking on the Senate floor with a speech written by one of Lynne Cheney's employees, Slade Gorton (Rep.-Washington) interrupted a three-day debate over an Unfunded Mandates Bill, part of the Republicans' Contract with America, to roundly condemn the standards and to introduce

a proposal to block any endorsement of them by the important National Education Goals Panel while denying the award of any federal money to the National Center for History in the Schools. Without calling committee hearings or even debating the standards, the Senate overwhelmingly adopted a compromise measure to pass a non-binding 'sense-of-the-Senate' resolution. Less than two weeks later, at the behest of Democrats, the Senate voted to strip the Unfunded Mandates Bill of all extraneous provisions, including the resolution disapproving the history standards.<sup>14</sup>

To help resolve the fiery debate over the standards, a time-honoured American tradition was invoked: appoint a blue-ribbon commission composed of visible and respected figures who could independently assay the controversy and make recommendations for revising the standards in the service of better history education. The Pew Charitable Trust and the bipartisan Council for Basic Education (CBE) led the way in this endeavour. After months of examining the standards, the commission, split into world history and US history sections, offered modest revisions while affirming that the standards 'provide a reasonable set of expectations for learning and a solid basis for strengthening history teaching'.<sup>15</sup> Among the recommendations were clarification of certain concepts, more effective connection of ethnic and gender issues to their wider historical contexts, and more attention to Russian history and to the role of technology in changing American society. The commission found little evidence that Western civilisation had been marginalised, and it supported the validity of genuinely globe-encircling history.

The CBE published its report on the standards in January 1996. With advance copies of the draft, the NCHS was already preparing a revised edition that followed almost all of the commission's recommendations. The NCHS published the new edition in April 1996. After that, the controversy died down, and the revised standards began serving their purpose of providing a framework for studying US and world history. More than 100,000 copies found their way to classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators across the nation. In creating their own standards over the next several years, many states borrowed liberally from the national standards.

## Conclusion

As the tempest over the standards drove historians and history educators to defend the profession more vigorously, they forged alliances that outlived the media wars. At all levels, history educators and historians recognised more clearly their common goals and how much they needed one another to protect the scholarly

gains and curricular reforms that the field had made since the Second World War. Thus, history faculties at colleges and universities began connecting with history teachers in local schools. The federal Teaching American History grants from 2001 to the present were instrumental in this bridge-building effort, providing professional development opportunities for thousands of primary and secondary school teachers of US history to work closely with academic historians in summer and weekend institutes. However, none of this money, exceeding a billion dollars, was allocated for world history teacher professional development.

Nonetheless, the redefining of world history in 'humanocentric' rather than either Eurocentric or multicultural terms continued. For example, the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) course and examination in world history, which offers high school pupils university credit for introductory courses, was deeply influenced by the National World History Standards. Between 2002, when the programme commenced, and 2016, the number of pupils sitting for the AP World History test grew from approximately 21,000 to more than 250,000. The national standards inspired some states to situate the history of the United States in the stream of world history. The use of the Internet also hastened the dissemination of new approaches to world history as reflected in the World History Standards. One example is World History for Us All, a model curriculum for world history in schools.<sup>16</sup> In 2012, pre-collegiate and university educators joined together to found the Alliance for Learning in World History, an international association to advance the development of pupils' knowledge and skills in this field.

History education in the United States will continue to stimulate debate for as long as public education is a hot political topic. Because curricular changes in history are still state-centred, the furore that attended the creation of the national standards, which were always understood to be voluntary, has devolved to the individual states. In Texas, for example, an acrimonious controversy erupted in 2010 over revised primary and secondary school social studies standards created by the state board of education. The debate, which persisted for several years, attracted international attention, especially because fundamentalist Christian conservatives tried with some success to reshape the teaching of US history and other social studies subjects. In Colorado in 2014, members of the Jefferson County school board censured a new framework for the AP US course for failing to emphasise 'patriotism and ... the benefits of the free-enterprise system' and suggested that the guidelines encouraged 'civil disorder'. A number of right-wing commentators joined in the attack, the controversy reached the national media, and the responsible history education leaders responded appropriately. The Jefferson County board backed

down when pupils and teachers from more than a dozen local high schools staged public protests. 'The negative parts of American history aren't necessarily unpatriotic', one pupil observed. 'We need to know those things so we don't repeat them in the future'.<sup>17</sup> The Texas and Colorado episodes show that politics are likely to continue to play a role, for better or worse, in history education.

## Notes

1. For the Texas controversy, see K. A. Erikson, ed., *Politics and the History Curriculum: The Struggle over Standards in Texas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
2. J. Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004), chapters 3–4.
3. G. B. Nash, 'The Great Multicultural Debate', *Contention* 3 (1992), 1–28.
4. G. B. Nash, C. Crabtree & R. E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 1997), 46–52.
5. C. A. McMurray, *Special Method in History: A Complete Outline of a Course Study in History for the Grades Below the High School* (New York: Macmillan, 1903), 7–8, quoted in G. B. Nash, C. Crabtree & R. E. Dunn, eds., *History on Trial. Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 35.
6. G. B. Nash, et al., *History on Trial*, 26–36.
7. Quoted *ibid.*, 45.
8. The politics of creating the National History Standards is covered in G. B. Nash et al. *History on Trial*, chapter 7. The paragraphs below are drawn from chapters 8 and 9.
9. The standards are available here: National Center for History in Schools (NCHS), 'National Standards for History Basic Edition', last modified 1996, accessed 29 May 2017, <http://nchs.ucla.edu/history-standards>.
10. Quoted in G. B. Nash, C. Crabtree and R.E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), p. 163.
11. G. B. Nash et al., *History on Trial*, 174.
12. C. Krauthammer, 'History Hijacked', *Washington Post*, November, 1994, quoted in G. B. Nash et al., *History on Trial*, 190.
13. Quoted *ibid.*, 198.
14. This paragraph and the two that follow are drawn from *ibid.*, chapter 9.
15. Quoted *ibid.*, 249.
16. National Center for History in Schools, ed., 'World History for Us All', accessed 29 May 2017, <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>.

17. J. Brundin, 'After Protests over History Curriculum, School Board Tries to Compromise', *National Public Radio*, 3 October 2014, accessed 29 May 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2014/10/03/353327302/school-board-wants-civil-disorder-deemphasized-students-walk-out>.

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## Venezuela

Tulio Ramírez

### Introduction

The use of textbooks as vehicles of ideological content assumes particular significance when they are written and produced in dictatorial or strongly authoritarian state contexts or even, at the other extreme, manifestly populist contexts. Hugo Chávez's Venezuela, a country adhering to what has come to be known as socialism of the twenty-first century, was guilty of resorting to works that 'sold' the image of its leader. It is, however, important to note that although the regime certainly demonstrated a strong ideological bias, it only undertook, as part of public policy, the production and free distribution of academic texts for education in primary and secondary schools until 2011.

As is illustrated later in this chapter, many sections contained in these textbooks appeared to undermine Venezuela's modern history. Important facts were deemed either to have been omitted or falsified or to have been ascribed a skewed interpretation designed to align with the socialist project, initiated in 1998, or alternatively, were considered to condemn the events of the period known as the IV Republic, which refers to the years from 1958 until the election of President Hugo Chávez in 1999.

### Historical Background

The only policy to have been consistently upheld by the education ministries of successive Venezuelan governments since 1958 was that of public authorities requiring certain administrative procedures to be adhered to in the sale of

domestically and foreign-produced textbooks in order to exercise a degree of control. In each legislative period since the fall of the dictator General Marcos Pérez Jiménez in 1958, the educational and academic quality of textbooks had been rigorously supervised as a cornerstone of public policy. Certain governments, such as those of Betancourt (1959–1964) and Raúl Leoni (1964–1969), vigorously encouraged the mass production of textbooks in order to enable their free distribution to young learners. Production needed to grow in order to cope with the stimulus provided by Government Decree 567 in 1966, which led to the construction of schools throughout the country and also guaranteed the production and free distribution of textbooks without restricting private sector marketing.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the subsequent governments of Rafael Caldera (1969–1974), Carlos Andrés Pérez (1974–1979) and Luis Herrera Campins (1979–1984) abolished the policy of manufacturing textbooks, they maintained the inspection and revision of such texts by selected experts, which had been an essential part of the education ministry's prior marketing process. Through this procedure, they were able to ensure the harmonisation of the books' content with the education ministry's curricula. In addition, measures could be taken to ensure that no content was incorporated that could compromise usual procedure/best practice or values widely accepted throughout Venezuelan society, or that adversely affected the social interaction that underpinned the democratic system.

During the first government under Rafael Caldera, prices for textbooks were frozen, and they were adjudged to be basic educational requirements. Ministerial Decree 4116 issued in 1972 authorised this price freeze. Another significant document, issued in 1974 during the administrative period of Carlos Andrés Pérez, advocated, through decree number 169, that the government become a manufacturer of textbooks in order to compete with private publishing houses after the creation of the welfare state. This policy did not prove successful.<sup>2</sup>

After the administration of Luis Herrera Campins, the subsequent governments (Jaime Lusinchi, 1984–1989; Carlos Andrés Pérez, 1989–1993; and Rafael Caldera, 1994–1999) drafted official government plans aimed at re-categorising books as basic educational requirements, as mentioned earlier, which involved price controls being introduced in order to prevent such materials becoming commodities which those who most needed them could not access. This was all done without replacing with commercialism the traditional policy of supervision and authoritarianism, which the education ministry had been following since 1958.



At the commencement of the initial Chávez administration (1999–2006), the education ministry was subjected to a series of restructuring measures, which repeatedly confused internal government plans. In this process of continuous restructuring of responsibilities and ministerial roles, the office with authority for textbook supervision and production disappeared, thus introducing applications for textbook permits into the marketplace. Only the office of public procurement retained responsibility for textbooks—those secured by the Ministry of Education and Sport to equip school libraries.

The office of public procurement did not answer to any new policy. A committee had been founded in 1986, during the administrative period of Jaime Lusinchi, by Government Decree number 113 dated 1 April 1986 and titled *Comité de Selección de Materiales Bibliográficas y no Bibliográficas* (Selection committee for bibliographic and non-bibliographic material). This body was accused by the national office of bibliographic services for schools of not fulfilling its task of ensuring that material acquired by the ministry, to fulfil its requirement to equip school libraries, was of sufficient educational quality and corresponded with the curricula or school syllabuses.

When enquiries were made as to the primary reasons for dissolving the authority charged with marketing textbooks, it emerged that none of the officials had been made aware of these facts. There are also no other official ministry documents containing information about the criteria used to justify dissolving the office.

During the Bolivarian revolution, three contradictory, yet ultimately harmonious, sets of circumstances coexisted. On the one hand, there was a deeply critical anti-neoliberal debate, which was unreserved in its criticism of any form of mercantile connection and harshly condemnatory of capitalist interests being put before the interests of the people, and on the other hand a government that was willing to turn a blind eye to its undeniable responsibility to rigorously supervise and control the quality of material in textbooks. All this was despite the requirement, fixed in the constitution, of *Estado Docente* (obligation of the state to provide education) through which it had the absolute authority to regulate all matters relating to the education sector.

So quality control of these texts was left to the fluctuating forces of supply and demand, with the exception of those procured by the Ministry of Education for school libraries. This procedure was supposed to ensure that consumers, that is, teachers and parents, selected those texts which fulfilled the requirements of pedagogical quality and adequate content in accordance with the official government programme. Producers and importers, for their part, were expected to guarantee that the products on offer satisfied demand in order to survive in a competitive market.

The absence of textbook controls became apparent in the midst of a scandal surrounding accusations made by teachers and researchers. These were in relation to the circulation of a text which blatantly promoted discrimination and xenophobia in schools and in so doing contravened a government resolution, that is, violated the national constitution.<sup>3</sup>

In 1999, a text called *Manual de Instrucción Premilitar* (Pre-Military Instruction Manual) came on to the market, aimed at pupils in year 7 of non-denominational schools. This text was required for military instruction classes in this year group. In 2000, a group of teachers and university professors made accusations in the press that the book contained material of a racist and xenophobic nature. They were particularly concerned with the ramifications of such content for migrants who had moved to Venezuela from neighbouring countries and southern Latin America. The text contained passages such as the following:

After the 70s ... an unchecked and uncontrollable wave of immigration began, of Columbians, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Dominicans, Cubans, immigrants from Trinidad and other central and south American countries, the majority lacking formal education, with no specific trade, traumatised or full of disease and seeking the easy money that Venezuela offered.<sup>4</sup>

And if this were not offensive and xenophobic enough, the author also questions the behaviour of these foreigners in the country, demonstrating feelings of deepest contempt. Here are examples of some of the questions:

How many of them are dedicated to spying or to sabotaging the electricity supply or oil production? We know of entire quarters in Caracas, Valencia, San Cristóbal, Maracaibo and many other cities in the country that are entirely populated by foreigners and who fly their national flags on national Venezuelan holidays. How many of them have penetrated our communications media with their warped ideology? How many of their women offer their bodies, in order to have children that will give them a legal right of residence in the country? How many use our hospitals although the beds are needed by Venezuelans?<sup>5</sup>

In addition to clear syntactical and textual errors in the original, this text expresses sentiments far removed from the concept of traditional Venezuelan hospitality and tolerance and is in contravention of the country's constitution, which expressly forbids racist expressions and vows to protect basic liberties.

Despite these issues and due to the lack of traditional control by the educational authorities, the text quoted from above was widely distributed and was included on the recommended book list for year 7 learners at non-denominational schools, who, according to state statistics, are aged 13–14.

As accusations of defamation against the publisher were made public in the media, the public began to vigorously express its displeasure. The education ministry, represented by the Minister, Dr. Héctor Navarro, whose office had never approved this publication, condemned the text and ordered its immediate withdrawal.

In 2011, the government of Hugo Chávez changed its political line with regard to textbooks. It departed from the mechanisms of the free market economy and produced 12 million copies of texts for languages, science, social science and mathematics, which it then distributed free of charge for use by pupils in years 1–6 of state primary schools. The use of these texts was made compulsory. It is important to emphasise that these texts had not been subject to a revision process of any kind by experts in the relevant fields. The government then dispensed with pure neo-liberalism and its complete control over the preparation and distribution of textbooks by ceding the private publishing houses the opportunity of offering their products to private schools, which comprised 40 per cent of the total market, a decision which would have significant consequences for the competitiveness of these companies and for the market as a whole.

President Chávez's government provided the following three arguments to justify their production and free distribution of textbooks for state schools: (a) the existing textbooks were not in harmony with the outline of the strategic 'Simón Bolívar National Project 2007–2012' or the 'National Plan' (regarded as unconstitutional by the opposition as it contained much socialist ideology not explicitly stated in the constitution, and subsequently caused much unrest nationally); (b) the curriculum was not consistent with Bolivarian education, which defined the education process of the Ley Organica de Educacion (LOE) (as is discussed later, this was a draft curriculum, which was rejected by the majority of Venezuelans and subsequently not implemented by the national government); and (c) the general absence of basic teaching materials for use by teaching staff in the classroom and particularly those which corresponded with the educational aims stipulated (an argument which contradicts itself, as the Venezuelan market was constantly flooded with textbooks, produced by private publishers and not subject to control by the national government). This rationale can be found in the '*Collección Bicentenario. Un logro en materia de educación liberadora*'.<sup>6</sup>

The policy of producing and distributing free textbooks was not restricted to satisfying the demand among primary school pupils. In the 2012–2013 academic year, the ministry announced the distribution of 48 million textbooks for upper secondary school leaving exams.

This brief summary of policies relevant to textbooks introduced by each successive government since 1958 demonstrates that although attempts were made to continuously increase the numbers of Venezuelans in the school system (which was, incidentally, a highly successful policy), any concerns surrounding textbooks appeared limited to price controls on their sale, in order to reduce the financial burden on the poorest section of society, which coincided with the progressive reduction of their academic control.

## Debate and Documentation

Since 2006, the government, under President Chávez, had promised to implement a draft curriculum for basic education (now fixed in primary and middle schools by the Organic Education Law<sup>7</sup> introduced in 2009). However, civil society groups, education experts and parents, as well as politicians, resisted the proposal. The fundamental concern was that, through this draft, the principles traditionally passed on to children could be eroded by the introduction of content communicating socialist values that only remotely reflected the values of democracy and tolerance stipulated in the constitution adopted in 1999. The cause of this controversy was the radical revisions made to the contents of the Venezuelan history programme across the various educational levels. The following conclusions can be drawn from analysing the proposed curriculum for the subsystem of secondary Bolivarian education and its subsequent rejection by Venezuelan society:

1. The new draft of the curriculum declared, at textbook level, its aims to educate new republicans, cognate with the new social model to be established in the country. This new social model was nothing more than socialism for the twenty-first century, to be implemented by means of constitutional reform; however, this was rejected by a referendum of advisors on 2 December 2007. Although not explicitly stated in the text, it is apparent that when one speaks of the disorder of capitalism, its proposed counterpart is the new, socialist, society.
2. The history of Venezuela is depicted as a series of individual situations, making it difficult to view it as an ongoing process. Military heroes are raised

above the civil protagonists who played an important role in the process of creating a republic in Venezuela.

3. The final draft of the national basic curriculum proposed that Venezuelan schools become the saviours of historical memory in order to galvanise Venezuelan national identity; however:
  - a. omissions made in the subject of history have attracted attention; for example, Marcos Pérez Jiménez's period of dictatorship is omitted from natural sciences for year 4. In a similar vein, the democratic period that lasted from 1958 to 1999 is raced through at lightning speed, and the only two topics addressed are the Punto-Fijo pact and the oligarchy pact. This is clearly an interpretation boorishly oriented to contemporary history only.
  - b. the emphatic and prominent actions of the government, since 1999 (the year in which Chávez commenced his term in office), are afforded prominence, such as the endogenous development, the Zamoran property distribution and the social programmes known as the Bolivarian missions. When the curricula appeared to be more about government propaganda than education, an explanation was demanded of the government. No mention was made of the terms in office of the previous democratic governments (1958–1999), much less the unfinished government projects distributed around the country.
4. The language used was charged with political rhetoric and bombast, and contained statements such as: 'The Bolivarian education system is conceived in such a way as to rupture the current system of education, which persists in the theoretical imperative of justifying exogenous models'.
5. Epistemologically, it is assumed that knowledge is constructed by social stakeholders committed to an educational role, which is built upon the knowledge and understanding of the people. This statement grants that the people are an original source of all knowledge, particularly of common sense. And whilst this can certainly be considered to be knowledge, to maintain that scientific or technological knowledge will automatically result is somewhat overstated.
6. There is a military tendency that is not advocated by the civilian population. The fourth and fifth years of the course for the upper secondary school leaving certificate are dominated by topics related to external and internal security and pre-military training. Rather than educating pupils in alternative mechanisms of conflict resolution in the social and civil

sciences, they are taught in ‘military parades, in closed ranks, without moving from the spot, in the heat of the battle’. ‘Eighty per cent of the content of the education consists of military service’.<sup>8</sup>

7. The components of equality, fairness and social inclusion in social and civil science education have been replaced in the curriculum by government propaganda.

Civil society reacted immediately and protested vociferously against the various mass communication media. The mass of criticism caused the government to falter in taking decisive steps to push through the draft of the curricula which falsified history, according to the parent organisations, academic staff in the education system, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), committees, teachers, and political and academic personalities. The fact that the government blinked first gave impetus to these groups of critics, who, through public condemnation and mobilisation, managed to prevent the implementation of a government initiative. The education ministry saw itself obliged to postpone the implementation of the draft, while Adán Chávez, brother of the then president of the republic, was in office as Education Minister. It was a triumph of the civil population over the authoritarian regime, which was forced to implement damage limitation measures in order to conceal the fact that an image-damaging U-turn had been made.

Responding to the criticism from civil society and experts in education, the government of President Nicolás Maduro (who was elected in 2013 after the death of Hugo Chávez) organised, in February 2014, a large consultation for Quality Education. According to official data, more than 7 million people participated in this consultation, including students and teachers. One of the themes of this consultation was the textbooks of the Bicentennial Collection. A promise was made to the country that they would be reviewed on the basis of the consultation, and, in fact, in June of that year, a new edition of the texts was published. In reviewing the text for year 6 social sciences, I found that, apart from a few minor editorial changes, the same mistakes, omissions and misrepresentations found in the previous edition were retained, as well as the same political bias in favour of the work of the Chávez government.

## Conclusion

The government of Hugo Chávez advanced a long way in its attempts to impose on the Venezuelan population its particular vision and interpretation of history. Among other tactics was the use of mass media to ceaselessly indoctrinate the population and undermine historical facts in an attempt to impart a more adaptable interpretation, one that would justify the political project of socialism in the twenty-first century. Schools were also used for these aims, as they are excellent locations to educate young people in the values of the political project driven forward by President Chávez. Nonetheless, this task did not prove to be easy, as the population reacted in such a way that children's education maintained its protective character. The ultimately frustrated attempt to impose an entirely ideological draft curriculum had come up against a brick wall represented by parents, university representatives and non-governmental organisations, whose vehement opposition had prevented such an offence taking place. Latterly, the government went on the offensive, this time using textbooks. The reaction was swift in coming, but the struggle is ongoing. The government has brazenly demonstrated its continued intention to indoctrinate young Venezuelan schoolchildren. The proof came in the form of an affirmation by the government official Professor Aristóbulo Iztúriz, who is a representative of the education ministry and who said, in a statement to the media, 'yes, our education is ideologised, what of it?'.<sup>9</sup>

## Notes

1. T. Ramírez, 'El texto escolar como arma política Venezuela y su gente: Ciencias Sociales, sexto grado', *Revista Investigación y Postgrado* 27 (2012) 1, 163–195.
2. T. Ramírez, *El texto escolar en Venezuela. Políticas públicas y representaciones sociales* (Madrid: Editorial Académica Española, 2012).
3. Ramírez, T. *Del control estatal al libre mercado. Políticas públicas y textos escolares en Venezuela (1958–2005)* (Caracas: Ediciones de la Biblioteca Central-UCV, 2007).
4. M. Vásquez Díaz, *Instrucción pre-militar: 1er. año de educación media diversificada y profesional* (Caracas: Biosfera, 1999), 58.
5. *Ibid.*, 59.
6. Transl: 'Two hundredth anniversary collection. Aims in the area of free education'. Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación. 'Colección Bicentenario. Un logro en materia de educación liberadora'. 2011, accessed 6 June 2017, <http://es.scribd.com/doc/98665328/Coleccion-Bicentenario>.



7. Ley Organica de Educacion.
8. Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación, *Subsistema de Educación Secundaria Bolivariana. Liceos Bolivarianos. Currículo y orientaciones metodológicas* (Caracas: Fundación Centro Nacional para el Mejoramiento de la Enseñanza de la Ciencia, 2006), 69.
9. Piña, Vilorio, Yanrely (2013) 'Representantes piden participar en diseño del currículo escolar'. Diario La Verdad.com, accessed 1 February 2018, <http://www.laverdad.com/zulia/42012-representantes-piden-participar-en-diseno-del-curriculo-escolar.html>. This statement was made by Iztúriz on television in 2006, repeating what President Chávez had said in an interview with the television channel GLOBOVISION. See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cajToqq3f\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cajToqq3f_0), accessed 1 February 2018.

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## Zimbabwe

Marshall Tamuka Maposa

### Introduction

*Chimurenga* is a Shona word which, basically, refers to the War of Liberation.<sup>1</sup> The Zimbabwean nationalist narrative features the First *Chimurenga* (1896–1897) and the Second *Chimurenga* (1967–1979), culminating in the elections which Robert Mugabe and his ZANU party won in 1980. After two decades in power, with waning support, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF)<sup>2</sup> invoked the memories of those periods of war, labelling the farm invasions that characterised the Zimbabwean land reform as the ‘Third *Chimurenga*’. In this turn to extremist politics Zimbabwean education was not spared. Indeed, supporting one of several controversial policy moves affecting education, one of the ruling party’s chief advocates, Tafataona Mahoso, proclaimed in the state-owned weekly newspaper *The Sunday Mail*: ‘Third *Chimurenga* comes to education institutions’.<sup>3</sup> This populist headline was a confirmation of how education in Zimbabwe was turning into a battleground for an intense ideological war, especially after 2000, with school history being the main arena of conflict.

### Historical Background: History Education After Independence

Since independence in 1980, the major contentions regarding history education in Zimbabwe had originally been centred on curriculum issues. Barnes (2007) delineates three phases of history syllabus development in post-

independence Zimbabwe. Although the Mugabe government was credited with early efforts to improve education infrastructure and literacy, there were concerns that the curriculum had barely been altered from the Rhodesian system. The inherited history syllabus, now called Syllabus 2160, was still dominated by Rhodesian-era discourses despite the publication of the first locally authored, post-independence history textbook, *The African Heritage*,<sup>4</sup> in 1982.<sup>5</sup> In the second phase, the government produced the 'nationalist' History Syllabus 2166 in 1991, which was aimed at promoting the values of the liberation struggle as viewed by the ruling nationalist party.<sup>6</sup> New history textbooks for this syllabus were released at the same time. The third phase, which is narrated and contextualised in more detail later, accompanied the 'Third *Chimurenga*', whereby the nationalist history syllabus was 'suddenly subjected to radical surgery and reorientation in 2002' to suit the discourses of patriotic history.<sup>7</sup> Yet the same history textbooks remained in use; for example, *The African Heritage* survived all three phases, albeit with a few, somewhat token, revisions. According to Kriger, the advent of patriotic history did not usher in entirely new discourses; rather, there was a continuation of the same nationalist discourse that had dominated public dialogue since 1980, only now more dogmatic.<sup>8</sup> Therefore history found itself 'at the cutting edge of the process of politicising the curriculum content', returning to the days of Syllabus 2166.<sup>9</sup>

## Debates in History Education: The 1990s

The political manipulation of school history in Zimbabwe was not an entirely new phenomenon in 2002. Syllabus 2166 had not undergone the regulatory five-year trial period when 'the National History Subject Panel reviewed it in 1992'.<sup>10</sup> As a result, there was considerable resistance to Syllabus 2166 in private and in church schools, the former concerned about the conflict between the economic nature of their schools and socialist doctrine, and the latter disgruntled at the socialist views on religion.<sup>11</sup> The philosophy of Syllabus 2166 was not surprising, as the National History Subject Panel was selected by the chairperson of the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), and the members of the panel were required to be 'decided Socialists'.<sup>12</sup> This resulted in an ideological conflict, since not everyone who qualified to be on the panel was socialist; some were progressive, others conservative.<sup>13</sup> The basic composition of the CDU was 'one lecturer from each of the teachers' colleges, the Subject Education Officers (inspectors), and one elected teacher representative from each province'.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, all members of the CDU were civil

servants who were regularly reminded on which side their bread was buttered. Academics from the universities—who enjoyed some degree of academic freedom—were deliberately left out.

Once the syllabus was concluded, the CDU's evaluation unit would appraise the suitability of the textbooks which were to be produced around the syllabus.<sup>15</sup> Government support of local publishers meant that no foreign textbooks would be approved for use in schools if a syllabus-compliant local version was available.<sup>16</sup> While this policy did promote local publishing companies, it also ensured state control over ideologies that were to be promoted through school history. For instance, the *People Making History*<sup>17</sup> textbook series was unabashedly 'advertised as having been written from a "socialist perspective"'.<sup>18</sup> The dominance of economic historians as history textbook authors was also a manifestation of the Marxist trend. The textbook publishing companies, being primarily profit-oriented, were obliged to comply with the state's curriculum requirements if they wanted their textbooks to be endorsed and schools to purchase and utilise them. Ultimately, the publishers had to find authors who either agreed with the state philosophy or who were malleable enough to toe the ideological line.

The end of the 1990s witnessed the dawn of a crisis period in Zimbabwe. The emergence of the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change, led by Morgan Tsvangirai, presented a genuine political challenge to Mugabe, who had only recently warded off the threat of disgruntled veterans of the War of Liberation. In a bid to retain his grasp on power, Mugabe intensified his nationalist rhetoric; he won the veterans' favour by giving them hefty lump sum payments and monthly pensions, and endorsed the appropriation of white-owned farms by any means. The immediate result was political and economic meltdown. However, as Ranger explains, '[t]he Zimbabwe crisis was not merely a ruthless struggle for wealth and power. It was also an ideological combat, partly powered by and partly reflected in ideas'.<sup>19</sup> In the midst of this process, the patriotic History Syllabus 2167 was hastily unveiled by the new Education Minister Aeneas Chigwedere. Contrary to the ideal procedure, no 'base-line surveys' were conducted 'to establish [any] real need to implement reforms'.<sup>20</sup> Because of the pressing situation that led to the sudden curriculum change, the patriotic history syllabus was adopted with very little discussion. There was no time for consultation with history experts or teachers,<sup>21</sup> whose consensus was not guaranteed in any case.

Through the dissemination of patriotic history, the 'Third *Chimurenga*' had indeed come to the schools. Ranger describes patriotic history thus: 'It is a doctrine of "permanent revolution" leaping from *Chimurenga* to *Chimurenga*. It has no time for questions or alternatives. It is a doctrine of violence because

it sees itself as a doctrine of revolution'.<sup>22</sup> Tendi developed Ranger's conceptualisation of patriotic history by identifying its four central themes: 'land; no external interference based on "Western ideals" such as human rights; race; and a "patriots" versus "sell-outs" distinction'.<sup>23</sup> The apparent main agent in the ideological drive in schools was Minister Chigwedere himself. To begin with, he made history one of the five compulsory Ordinary Level subjects in 2005. This led to conflict with both history and non-history teachers. Some non-history teachers felt that history was not important enough to warrant its new, obligatory status, while some history teachers preferred to teach only the learners who were interested lest they seemed like propaganda mouthpieces.<sup>24</sup> In fact, given the frenzied dissemination of patriotic history in public discourse, the compulsion to study history in schools made pupils more averse to the subject. In the three Matabeleland provinces, history as a compulsory subject meant the exclusion of *SiNdebele* (the local language subject) as a core subject, much to the displeasure of the local population.<sup>25</sup>

In a spiralling political and economic situation, the CDU became more politicised and promotion to education officer was partly determined by political affiliation as the Zimbabwean Teachers' Association became overtly pro-ZANU PF. In addition, the association's prominent representatives were mostly teachers in primary schools, where history did not exist as a subject. A report prepared by the Zimbabwe National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the two education ministries gave a conflicting viewpoint. It claimed that 'decisions about curriculum issues are made in close consultation with pupils, parents, teachers, heads of schools, education officers in the regions, the examinations council, subject specialists, commerce and industry, teachers colleges and universities' in addition to 'industry and commerce and religious organizations'.<sup>26</sup> Such statements were characteristic of the Zimbabwean situation where the ideal and practice were worlds apart.

The promotion of patriotic history in the new curriculum came at a time when a parallel history curriculum was being run in the controversial youth service camps and in the compulsory National Strategic Studies in the tertiary colleges. The main textbook for these courses was *Inside the Third Chimurenga*<sup>27</sup>, which Ranger describes thus:

The manual is historically simplistic and racist and glorifies recent ZANU-PF national heroes along with the land resettlement programme. It consists entirely of speeches made by President Robert Mugabe since 2000, among them his addresses to ZANU-PF party congresses, his speech after the 2000 election result, and funeral orations for deceased ZANU-PF heroes.<sup>28</sup>

In schools, history teachers were under pressure to conform to patriotic history lest they be labelled sell-outs. In response to the alleged torture of teachers, Chigwedere responded, 'I've no assurance to give them and I don't want to give them any ... We employ them for the core business of teaching. I advise them not to become players, otherwise they will be bruised'.<sup>29</sup> Newspapers, television and radio were weapons for attacking all imagined or real enemies of Zimbabwe. While the main history textbooks being used in schools had been written by academics who had previously displayed a socialist bias, government distrust of the academics was also on the rise. To illustrate this suspicion, the then ZANU PF Information and Publicity Secretary for Bulawayo, Sikhumbizo Ndiweni, regretted that his party had committed the blunder of allowing 'colleges and universities to be turned into anti-Government mentality factories'.<sup>30</sup> School history textbooks were lambasted for promoting the Western agenda since they were authored by 'hostile and clearly biased white supremacists who have often wrongly depicted the liberation struggle as a war between barbaric black Africans and white Rhodesian emissaries of civilisation'.<sup>31</sup> Suddenly history textbooks that had been recommended by the government's own Ministry of Education were being deemed counter-revolutionary and anti-patriotic. The fact that most of the history textbook authors were white served to strengthen the anti-Western crusade, as whites are often referred to as 'British' or 'Western' even if they are Zimbabwean citizens.<sup>32</sup> However, these books remained in use as economic troubles hindered further publications. Even the government's annual financial allocation, which schools used to receive for textbook purchases,<sup>33</sup> was discontinued. To remain relevant, publishers resorted to token revisions of the old textbooks.<sup>34</sup> For example, later versions of the *People Making History Book 4* included information on the 'Third Chimurenga'.

Minister Chigwedere had himself written history textbooks that were used in the teaching and learning of patriotic history in schools. Interestingly, these books (the *Dynamics of History* series) were written under the pseudonym S. Mukanya.<sup>35</sup> Although it took some time for many teachers to identify the author, the bias in the textbooks was manifest. Meanwhile, Jonathan Moyo, the then Minister of Information and ZANU PF chief propagandist, was in the process of writing history textbooks to be used at Advanced Level since the 'Third Chimurenga' was now examinable content.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, Chigwedere's *Dynamics of History* never eclipsed traditional texts such as *The African Heritage*, *People Making History* and *Focus on History*.<sup>37</sup> This should not necessarily be interpreted as a rejection of Chigwedere's book on the grounds of its content; rather, the economic crisis crippled government funding of the patriotic history project. So bad was the situation that David

Coltart, the Minister of Education in the Government of National Unity—GNU (2008–2013), reported that, on average, 30 learners were sharing one textbook. Prior to the rise of patriotic history, a series of textbooks had been produced by teachers from education colleges with the help of UNESCO and the Danish International Development Agency. These textbooks were never approved by the government on the pretext that they represented ‘bogus universalism’.<sup>38</sup> They followed neither Syllabus 2166 nor Syllabus 2167, and they focused on human rights and interrogation of the history of independent Zimbabwe.

## Current Debates

This ideological conflict in Zimbabwe’s history education has also manifested itself in the form of ethnic tension. The reconfiguration/rewriting of the role of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) in the independence struggle into the common ZANU PF narrative has drawn the ire of former ZAPU supporters, none more so than those who bore the brunt of supporting ZAPU in the Matabeleland bloodbath of the 1980s.<sup>39</sup> According to Barnes (2004), neither the nationalist nor the patriotic history syllabi did enough to promote racial and ethnic concord. This criticism extended to the curriculum’s accompanying textbooks.<sup>40</sup> One critic of the history curriculum is Pathisa Nyathi, a historian who has written on Ndebele history in his native Ndebele language, but has found that his books cannot be approved for use in the history curriculum so are confined to SiNdebele lessons.<sup>41</sup> Nyathi argues that the recommended history textbooks are ‘rather “pro-Shona” and “not very kind to the Ndebele”’, especially in their portrayal of King Lobengula.<sup>42</sup> Chigwedere’s *Dynamics of History* also evidently incensed the Ndebele population. For example, contrary to Ndebele collective memory, he refers to the violence of the 1980s as ‘a response to ZAPU’s dissident efforts to disrupt government efforts because they couldn’t accept electoral defeat’.<sup>43</sup> Chigwedere also views Shaka Zulu’s reign as ‘the worst possible exploitation of people by an Iron Age kingdom’.<sup>44</sup> Such contentious sentiments in a context which promotes unquestioning historiography have served to damage rather than build Zimbabwe as a nation.

Another major conflict concerns the teaching of the ‘Third *Chimurenga*’ in such a volatile context. Not all authors complied with the revision of their textbooks to suit patriotic history. Alois Mlambo, the author of *Focus on History Book 4*, is quoted as having had such concerns:



I think it is unfortunate that the present Minister of Education is amending the syllabus in ways that are clearly designed to further the interests of the ruling party. Recent [O-level] examination questions included questions about the farm invasions and the so-called '*hondo yeminda*' or 'fast-track land reform', referring to them in an approving way when the issue is still extremely controversial and, in any case, is still too recent in the country's experience to be considered as history.<sup>45</sup>

This refusal to revise history textbooks could only be interpreted as unpatriotic. However, the place of Chigwedere's book in the patriotic history scheme can be illustrated through the story of an alleged torture victim who recounted how he was ordered to read chapters on the slave trade and the First *Chimurenga* from *Dynamics of History*.<sup>46</sup> Such a story reveals how the proponents of patriotic history viewed contemporary history textbooks and how textbooks could become a weapon in manifestations of ideological warfare.

During his GNU tenure, Minister Coltart was involved in a project meant to provide textbooks for schools. By December 2010, the Education Transition Fund run by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other Western funders, had printed and delivered over nine million textbooks.<sup>47</sup> This bid to acquire new textbooks has also been beset with conflict. In *The Sunday Mail*, Minister Coltart was accused of trying to 'smuggle Western ideology into the country' as he had allegedly abandoned certain history textbooks in favour of those 'that contain dodgy political undertones'.<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, the procurement of textbooks for other subjects was taking place smoothly, but the ideological war continued when it came to history textbooks. Coltart was accused of sidelining African and Zimbabwean history, replacing it with Western history. However, this concern was not based on an actual review of the textbooks, but rather on assumptions suspecting the whole process to be a conspiracy against the 'Third *Chimurenga*'. The fact that the history textbooks were being produced outside Zimbabwe was condemned in the *Zimbabwe Guardian* as part of the process of 'McDonaldisation' of the country.<sup>49</sup> Another allegation was that local publishers had been overlooked while an unnamed textbook from Central Africa was being brought in.<sup>50</sup> Local publishers such as the Zimbabwe Publishing House and the College Press complained that Longman, an international company, was creating a monopoly in the sector. However, local publishers were given approvals, and they had been engaged in the production of new books. *The Herald*, the state-run daily newspaper, gave the following glowing review of the new *Focus on History Book 1* published by the College Press:

[It] goes an extra mile in providing an in-depth and comprehensive study of the subject to students and lays the foundation for them in their studies of the subject. It also adopts a local and Afrocentric approach in teaching students about historic events that occurred in Zimbabwe and across the African continent.<sup>51</sup>

## Conclusion

The occurrence of the so-called Third *Chimurenga* affected many aspects of Zimbabwe, school history included. Starting in 2000, the government embarked on a patriotic history project that entailed the reconfiguration of the history curriculum and endorsement of new material. However, as the government had no funds to pay for a supply of patriotic history textbooks, the old textbooks, revised or not, remained in use. As Barnes correctly states, 'Older textbooks written for earlier syllabi will be read and used until the pages disintegrate'.<sup>52</sup> Patriotic history ushered in intensified nationalism, patriotism and identification of enemies of the state. The ideological war continues, with discontent being voiced on grounds such as religion, political and economic ideology and ethnicity.

In 2008, the education ministry was taken over by the opposition party, which only served to fire up the ideological war with Coltart at the centre of it. He initiated a comprehensive curriculum review project, the first since the introduction of the nationalist Syllabus 2166. According to Coltart, the first step in the reform would be a reconstitution and reconfiguration of the CDU to make it more representative.<sup>53</sup> Still, the need for a political solution to the Zimbabwean situation cannot be underestimated if new discourses are to emerge. An episode in 2011 in which war veterans in Mashonaland Central Province notified a school headmaster of their intention to come and teach history at his school<sup>54</sup> is just one piece of evidence that the ideological history war continues in Zimbabwe.

## Notes

1. Scholars such as David Beach, Terrence Ranger and Aeneas Chigwedere debate *Chimurenga* from varying standpoints.
2. The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) signed a unity accord with the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1987 to form the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF).
3. T. Mahoso, 'African Focus', *The Sunday Mail*, 9 May 2004.

4. M. Sibanda, H. Moyana and S. Gumbo, *The African Heritage* (Harare: ZEB, 1982).
5. T. Barnes, 'Nationalism, Race and Ethnicity in Zimbabwean High School History Textbooks, 1980–2001' (paper presented at Carnegie Council Project on History Education and Reconciliation, Cape Town, South Africa, January 2003).
6. T. Barnes, "'History Has to Play Its Role": Constructions of Race and Reconciliation in Secondary School Historiography in Zimbabwe, 1980–2002', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33 (2007) 3, 633–651.
7. *Ibid.*, 635.
8. N. Kriger, 'From Patriotic Memories to "Patriotic History" in Zimbabwe, 1990–2005', *Third World Quarterly* 27 (2006) 6, 1151–1169.
9. H. Chitape, 'Postindependent Zimbabwe's New O-Level History Syllabus 2166: A Crisis of Expectations' (Department of Curriculum and Arts Education, University of Zimbabwe), 9–10.
10. *Ibid.*, 9.
11. *Ibid.*, 10.
12. *Ibid.*, 14.
13. Barnes, 'History Has to Play Its Role', 639.
14. *Ibid.*
15. J. Jansen, 'The State and the Curriculum in the Transition to Socialism: The Zimbabwean Experience', *Comparative Education Review* 35 (1991) 1, 76–91.
16. L. Czerniewicz, 'Publishing in Zimbabwe', *The African Book Publishing Record* 16 (1990) 4, 229–236.
17. T. Barnes et al., *People Making History* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1994).
18. B. Lindgren, 'Power, Education, and Identity in Post-colonial Zimbabwe: the fate of King Lobengula of Matabeleland', *African Sociological Review* 6 (2002) 1, 46–67.
19. T. Ranger, 'The Uses and Abuses of History in Zimbabwe'. In *Skinning The Skunk—Facing Zimbabwean Futures*, ed. M. Palmberg and R. Primorac (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2005), 7–15 (here 7).
20. Zimbabwe National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture; and the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, *The Developments in Education: The Education System At The End Of The Twentieth Century 1990–2000. National Report Of The Republic Of Zimbabwe* (Harare: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2001), 22.
21. B.-M. Tendi, 'Zimbabwean History in Context: A Comparison of the History Book with Existent History Curriculum and Teaching', review of *Becoming Zimbabwe. A History from the Pre-colonial Period to 2008*, by A. Mlambo, 2010, accessed 16 June 2017, <http://www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com/latest->

[reviews/59-becoming-zimbabwe/317-review-of-becoming-zimbabwe-tendai-rtp.html](http://reviews/59-becoming-zimbabwe/317-review-of-becoming-zimbabwe-tendai-rtp.html).

22. T. Ranger, 'The Uses and Abuses of History', 8.
23. B.-M. Tendi, 'Zimbabwean History in Context'.
24. T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of The Nation: The Struggle Over the Past in Zimbabwe', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30 (2004) 2, 215–234.
25. B. Lindgren, 'Power, Education, and Identity', 13.
26. Zimbabwe National Commission for UNESCO; the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture; and the Ministry of Higher Education and Technology, *The Developments in Education*, 13, 21.
27. R. G. Mugabe, *Inside the Third Chimurenga* (Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe: Dept. of Information and Publicity, Office of the President & Cabinet, 2001).
28. T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography', 219.
29. R. Mukumbira, 'Teachers Caught in a Dilemma', *News from Africa*, February 2003.
30. T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography', 218.
31. T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography', 229.
32. B. Lindgren, 'Power, Education, and Identity', 12.
33. T. Barnes, 'Reconciliation, Ethnicity and School History in Zimbabwe'. In *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, ed. B. Raftopoulos and T. Savage (Harare: Weaver Press, 2004), 145.
34. T. Barnes, 'History Has to Play Its Role', 638.
35. S. Mukanya, *Dynamics of History* (Harare: College Press, 1994).
36. T. Ranger, 'The Uses and Abuses of History', 13. This project appears to have been aborted in 2005 when Moyo was suspended and subsequently resigned from ZANU PF, although he did later rejoin the party.
37. A. Mlambo, *Focus on History* (Harare: College Press, 1993).
38. T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography', 224.
39. *Ibid.*, 221.
40. T. Barnes, 'Reconciliation'.
41. B. Lindgren, 'Power, Education, and Identity'.
42. *Ibid.*, 13.
43. T. Barnes, 'Reconciliation', 146.
44. *Ibid.*, 146.
45. T. Barnes, 'History Has to Play Its Role', 649.
46. Harriet, 'MDC-T Torture Victim Seeking Help Puts Faith in Viomak—Zimbabwe aspiring woman president', *Ground Report*, 27 September 2010.
47. K. Mlotshwa, '13 Million Textbooks Distributed to 5300 Primary Schools', *Newsday*, 29 December 2010.
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49. S. Dube, 'Align Book Donations with Local Education Needs', *Zimbabwe Guardian*, 23 September 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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