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## **Education and Transformation of Society**

### ***The Case of History Textbooks***

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## Content

1.	Introduction.....	3
1.1	The Impact of Educational Systems on Nation-building JULIA NIGGEBRÜGGE.....	3
1.2	Variations of History Textbooks TANJA ROTHER.....	4
2.	(Getting beyond) One-Dimensional Teaching of History – Eight Examples from Europe.....	5
2.1	Schoolbook Reform and the Teaching of History in the United Kingdom NICK PARROT.....	5
2.2	Schoolbook Reform in Macedonia MERI ANGELESKA.....	6
2.3	Textbook Reform in Moldova ARON BUZOGÁNY.....	7
2.4	GDR-FRG History Textbooks – The Case of “Hidden Curriculum” PHILIPKLEVER.....	8
2.5	The History of Schoolbook Reform in Italy ELENA BITTASI.....	9
2.6	History Textbook Reform in Albania SELMA BELSHAKU.....	10
2.7	History Textbooks in Serbia SELMA BELSHAKU.....	11
2.8	The Right to Education in the Mother Tongue for Members of National Minorities in Croatia GORAN BANDOVIĆ.....	12
3.	Concluding Remarks HANS SACHS.....	14
4.	References.....	15

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The Impact of Educational Systems on Nation-building**

by JULIA NIGGEBRÜGGE

How can one best explain the interconnectedness of state-organised education, institutionalised school education and the surge and continuity of nation-states? For their ethnographical research on schools, George and Louise Spindler define “education” as follows: „We see education as cultural transmission, and of course cultural transmission requires cultural learning, so learning and transmission are separated only by convention. Further, we see that aspect of cultural transmission in which we are most interested – education in the broad sense, schooling in the narrower sense (including initiations, rites of passage, apprenticeships, as well as schools) as a calculated intervention in the learning process“ (Spindler 1987: 3). The state thus intervenes directly in the socialisation of the young generation by using this calculated intervention process. Therefore, it is not a new fact that the public school system can be described as the most important and most efficient and also most legitimated mechanism by whom “children become citizens and individuals political persons” (Schiffauer 2002: 1). There would be no collective national identity without a public school system and no possibility to accomplish the dominant political culture.

Therefore, most of the governments in Europe since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw mass public education as one of their highest priorities in order to create a loyal, homogeneous citizenship. The school system became the basis for distributing the national identity that was defined along a standard of presumably shared values and norms (Schiffauer 2002).

The problem here is that the state’s interests in the teaching of history often cannot easily be noticed, as they are part of a so called “hidden curriculum”, as explained in the following way: „Central to recent critiques of schooling is the notion of a ‘hidden curriculum’ that subtly and selectively guides educational practices, structuring classroom interactions in ways that seem natural but are in fact culturally determined, so that students from different cultural backgrounds experience frustration and failure at a disproportionate rate. The hidden curriculum also transmits to students an ideology about themselves and the world in which they live, an ideology that is all the more insidious because it is generally unacknowledged and thus unchallenged“ (Luykx 1999). In this context, the teaching of history plays a special role – it is one of the most important means for shaping national identity and historical awareness and it helps to construct a community. Pupils at an early age are confronted with images of their own nation, its place in history and the images of the other, especially neighbouring people. The content of the textbooks and the dominant ideology, as far as the view of the past is concerned, coincide to a considerable extent, which leads to the assumption that textbooks and teaching materials do have an impact beyond the classroom (Koulouri). They do not only transport factual knowledge, but also those historical images, notions of space and time, of agents, of political and social values which a society wants to convey to the next generation. History textbooks always reflect a selective view on the past, highlight what needs to be known for understanding the present and omit what is thought to be meaningless – determined by the dominant political elite. They also explain who belongs to the nation and who does not and they transmit the basic principles of the national order.

In consequence, the teaching of history and history textbooks as one of its main tools must be seen within the powerstructure of the nation-state. The teaching of history surpasses not only educational tasks, it is also an instrument of state politics.

## 1.2 Variations of History Textbooks

by TANJA ROTHER

As mentioned above, schoolbooks transport values and interpretations which a society wants to conserve for the following generations. But the relationship between national culture and school varies with a changing historical and political context. According to this context, the manner in which history is dealt with and the way it is transmitted to the next generation changes. E.g. in Europe after the Second World War and Nazi-Germany one finds a general let-go of national pathos and sentiments in all schoolbooks.

One may argue that textbooks alone are not responsible for national stereotypes and a revision cannot eliminate ethnocentric or nationalistic interpretations of the past. But still, the content of textbooks and the dominant ideology, as far as the view of the past is concerned, coincide to a considerable extent, which leads to the assumption that textbooks and teaching materials do have an impact beyond the classroom. In addition, they construct national images of one's own community or nation, as well as those of others. As history shows, textbooks have frequently been instrumentalised for war, for demonising the opponent and to justify one's own national standpoint. When it comes to a re-writing of schoolbooks one has to consider that all agents of school history (curricula, textbooks, teachers, and the ministries of education) are complementary and need to interplay.

A superficial analysis of textbooks often leads to the impression that authors try to be politically correct by avoiding negative adjectives or explicitly hostile phrases. Two kinds of textbooks fit into this category:

- Textbooks that – rather than presenting negative pictures – leave out parts of history, enlarging the coverage of other countries' history, mainly of Western countries.
- textbooks that seem to be descriptive accounts of political and military events without evaluation or value judgments. A closer look often shows underlying ethnocentric stereotypes, namely those who lie within the very structure of historical narrative: historical concepts, interpretation or changing of periods, and terminology that reflect negative attitudes.

Of course, chronology and terminology are no innovations of school history. They come from the historiographic canons. In so far, it is absolutely necessary that academic history passes on the outcomes of its research, especially when new interpretations of the past change historical "truth". In a post-conflict country school history and schoolbooks need to also promote tolerance and eliminate the old stereotypes.

We believe, the reason for schoolbooks is not "to inspire patriotism" but rather a comprehensive, critical understanding of the past. Therefore the following demands should be taken into consideration:

1. Schoolbooks should teach *diversity* instead of creating a picture of national homogeneity. Strong and persistent national myths have to be deconstructed and the multi-ethnicity of society should be pointed out.
2. *Comparative history* should help to avoid the prevailing idea of history to be "objective" or there being something like "one historical truth".
3. *No "beautifying history"* should be taught. Past conflict should be dealt with and not be silenced in order to avoid stereotype-generating ignorance.
4. Political and military history should be reduced for the benefit of *economic, social, and cultural history*. Not only are epic heroic accounts less interesting for the pupils, they do not encourage critical thinking. Cultural history e.g. can describe and analyse common historical experience, such as "war", and thereby help pupils understand why terrible events happened and to contextualize them. Purely names and dates oversimplify the complexity of history and furthermore lack much of an explanation.

## 2. (Getting Beyond) One-Dimensional Teaching of History - Eight Examples from Europe

### 2.1 Schoolbook Reform and the Teaching of History in the United Kingdom

by NICK PARROTT

British government policy with regards to education can be seen as currently being very broad in its reach. A White Paper in 2001 stated the aim of policy regarding schooling as follows:

“The success of our children at school is crucial to the economic health and social cohesion of the country as well as to their own life chances and personal fulfilment.”<sup>1</sup>

This illustrates the manner in which education policy is clearly seen as being key to shaping the nation. The analysis here will focus specifically on the teaching of history and development of learning about the past through the middle and end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in British schools.

At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, schools in the UK were not required to necessarily even teach history. The subject was considered to lie within the area of humanities, and the humanities entitlement for students was met by making available a minimum of one course from the existing national curriculum for history and geography.<sup>2</sup> A study about history in British schools in 1976 showed that adolescents need to possess the skills in order to understand the world in which they live, their personal identity, the processes of change and how to think critically.<sup>3</sup> The thinking was that reflecting on history can be a means to these elements of learning. This is reflected by the manner in which the teaching of history in the UK has developed. It also has increasingly been seen as a way of teaching students to assimilate knowledge and analyse information rather than sitting through a “static heap of received information” to learn about what happened in the past.<sup>4</sup> This can also be seen as the historical discipline in general and the way it is taught in schools, as being concerned less with the communication of accepted facts than with the making of informed judgements.

The introduction of the General Certificate of Education examination system in place of ‘O-Levels’ in 1988 was aimed at making teaching more intellectually challenging by asking questions on historical documents and by including student papers and projects.<sup>5</sup> In line with this method of teaching, particularly in the later years of schooling, history courses can be quite specific. Topics such as the English Civil War or the Holocaust are commonly studied with varied methods of teaching and learning methods. A criticism facing this system, however, particularly from those with more traditional opinions, is that this ‘critical thinking’ comes at the expense of a greater awareness of historical developments. There has been, in the opinion of some, a loss of understanding of the nature of events over the recent centuries and the chronology of the development of civilisation to date.

An interesting further comparison of the evolution of the teaching of history can be seen through the mould of the ethical level through which learning about others is taught. Much of current teaching is about understanding other cultures or trying to explain not only “what”

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Schools – achieving success’, Government White Paper, Department for Education and Skills, 2001

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education and Skills, [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Schools’ Council History 13-16 Project, A New Look at History Teaching, Holmes, MacDougall, 1976 cited in Partington, Geoffrey, ‘How Can Curricula Be Analyzed? The Case for History Syllabuses’, The History Teacher, Volume 18, Number 2, February 1985

<sup>4</sup> Fitzgerald, James, ‘History in the Curriculum: Debate on Aims and Values’ in History and Theory, Volume 22, Number 4, December 1983, p.94

<sup>5</sup> Weber, William, ‘History in the English Schools and Universities’ in The History Teacher, Volume 22, Number 3, May 1989

something is, but also “why” it is so. This is particularly the case with the British Empire. From the very early history of the period and the teaching of American Indian civilisation an empathy and understanding of others is supposed to be taught. This extends through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the focus has been increasingly on civil rights movements and independence struggles, in contrast to earlier teaching, which stressed colonial administration, having been heavily influenced by the British perspective.

In conclusion, the teaching of history in British schools can be seen to have developed greatly over recent decades in favour of both more liberal thinking and topic-based learning and thinking.

## 2.2 Schoolbook Reform in Macedonia

by MERI ANGELESKA

It is a common issue in most post-war and post-conflict societies to rewrite history in a certain way. What is the Macedonian experience regarding schoolbook reform? After the flare-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia we could witness the making of new and sovereign republics. All of these newly founded republics – Macedonia being one of them- were facing new waves of events and were confronted with the need to pursue profound reforms. This applied also to the education system and the politics of dealing with the cultural heritage. Several changes occurred in this area, including on language, topical and political influences. I will focus here on the main areas of reform.

During the *socialist period*, history textbooks focused on the “glorious wars” and the “heroic fight” of the partisans against fascism. After the reform, other periods of history, including mainly ancient history, the history of the Byzantine Empire, the middle ages and the history of the Balkan wars received their due and more balanced position in the history schoolbooks. Being a strip of land almost 500 years under Ottoman domination, Macedonian history textbooks were reflecting this period of time as “damned” and tended to overemphasise the negative aspects during this decisive period of history. Nowadays, due to the wish to show *tolerance* towards the Turkish *minority* still living in the country, negative comments on historic Turkish behaviour are not used anymore in Macedonian textbooks.

The long conflict over the name of the country and its *identity* with neighbouring Greece has led to several compromises and in some cases to re-naming of historical heroes. The most well-known example for a conflict of this type is the one concerning Alexander, whose heritage is being contested by both countries. The same applies also for the name of the country, Macedonia being also the name for Northern Greece. A sort of consensus was found in using the name Alexander the Great instead of Alexander of Macedonia, which is not connected anymore to the state of Macedonia.

The aforementioned cases exemplify that the schoolbook reform in Macedonia has led to more objectivity and tolerance than some years ago, proving also the fact, that politics can have a positive bias on education policy. But what about the church and its influence on education in Macedonia? The proposal of introducing *religious instruction* in the curricula was declined. The explanatory statement said that pupils aged 10-12 are not mature enough for it, as religious instruction can even lead them in a wrong direction.

I want to close with some ideas regarding the history of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia. At the moment these are rarely mentioned in Macedonian textbooks. Even if there are some remarks about the wars, these tend to be rather short and are absent of further analysis. Is it too early to speak about these wars? Or does Macedonia, like Serbia, dislike to take position regarding these issues yet. Or, is it literally unable to clarify its common position?

### 2.3 Textbook Reform in Moldova

by ARON BUZOGÁNY

The modernisation of the educational system in Moldova has been going on for the past few years. It has mainly focused on the following issue areas: teacher training, curriculum review, learning assessment and textbook reform. Here I will focus only on the last issue, taking the case of history textbook reform.

Two issues are worth mentioning for a short background on Moldova. First, post-Soviet Moldova is a multi-ethnic state. About one third of the Moldovan population belong to ethnic minorities, Russian, Ukrainian and Gagauz (Turkic-speaking Orthodox Christian) being the largest ones. At the same time, there are divisions within the majority population on the question of defining themselves as ethnic Romanians or seeing Moldovans as an ethnic group of its own. Second, Moldova is also a post-conflict state. After proclaiming its independence from the USSR, the new state was facing a civil war which resulted in the secession of the Transnistria region in the eastern part of the republic. Although internationally not recognized, Transnistria still manages to survive as a quasi-state. More than a decade of OSCE-led conflict-management has not led to a viable solution for this “frozen” conflict.

The question of history textbooks in Moldova is closely connected with the uneasy and unfinished nation-building of the country and is among the most politicised debates over identity fought in the last decade. Immediately after reaching independence there was no viable concept of Moldovan historiography which would provide a historical legitimisation for the newly gained independence, then-president Mihai Snegur, even had to outline a history of Moldova himself in a newspaper article.

After trying to replace the *History of the Romanians* textbook, introduced in Moldovan schools in 1995, with a *History of Moldova* textbook, the newly elected President Vladimir Voronin faced popular unrest for several months in 2002. The new Moldovan history was written at President Vladimir Voronin's request by a group of historians of the Soviet-era theory of "Moldovenism." According to this theory, Romanian and Moldovan are two different languages, and Moldovans and Romanians are two distinct nations, Moldovans being Slavic and speaking a mix of Latin and old Slavonic, while Romanians are descendants of the Romans speaking a Latin-based language. By emphasising Moldova's separateness from Romania, it also tries to counter those pro-Romanian Moldovans who want to form a union with Romania.

After the protest, the government nevertheless introduced the controversial integrated history course (still in the experimental phase) in at least 360 schools across the country during the 2004-05 academic year. Whether or when the Romanian history programme will be withdrawn from the curricula is still a question. Specialists in the field are bitterly criticising the integrated history project of the communist authorities, saying it was based on political rather than scientific factors. If this criticism holds true remains to be seen after the parliamentary elections in Moldova, where the Communist Party managed a sharp U-turn and is presenting itself as pro-Romanian and pro-European.

To make it even more delicate, secessionist Transnistria has its very own conception of history, which is based on a Soviet concept of multi-ethnic statehood, although the Russian or Russian-speaking population tends to predominate, producing Slavic-national undertones. Legitimation of the Transnistrian “nation” and “state” – none of them recognised internationally – play the most important role here. The school system also tends to hinder education in the Romanian/Moldovan language. In summer 2004 there were serious protests by Romanian speaking parents, who demonstrated for the rights of their children to receive education in their mother tongue and to follow the Latin script – Transnistria is using Cyrillic script also for Romanian. Most parents realised very well that the studies based on the Cyrillic

script and Soviet curricula do not have much perspective in Moldova. If they would continue this way, their children would be unable to pursue higher studies anywhere in Moldova or around the world. Teachers from Romanian schools secretly teach the students in Romanian, based on the Latin script, and use the handbooks published in Chisinau. However, the curricula are imposed by the secessionist authorities and Transnistrian inspectors visit these schools from time to time.

## 2.4 GDR-FRG History Textbooks – The Case of “Hidden Curriculum”

by PHILIP KLEVER

This short essay aims at pointing out one example of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) history textbooks, each for the subtle and selective shaping of national identity by the means of exclusion and of omission as laid out in the introduction.

A history textbook of the former GDR from the year 1979 (“Geschichte 10” – “History 10”) tries to legitimise the construction of the Berlin Wall in the following way: Not only is there a potential aggression inherent in the West-German capitalist system, so the textbook claims, but on top of that Western Germany effectively pursues an imperialist policy of preparation for war. The “progresses according to plan” of socialism in the GDR have alarmed the West to the point that it is putting a “concept of incorporation” and assimilation of the GDR into action<sup>6</sup>.

The pursuit of this policy by the FRG lead to disturbances in the East German economy, to agitations in favour of strike for instance, which were incited by “infiltrated agents of different imperialist secret services” – the example brought forward in the textbook is the insurgence of 17th June 1953<sup>7</sup>. The Berlin Wall was built in 1961: The „first offensive attack [how the insurgency was described] of West German imperialist circles could be smashed at the very beginning already by the strength of the power of workers and peasants in the GDR as well as by the unity and unanimity of the socialist countries bound to us in fraternal solidarity!”<sup>8</sup>

The Berlin Wall hence was in this way implicitly and explicitly legitimised as “anti-imperialist protective barrier”: a textbook example for shaping national identity by virtual exclusion. The internal development of the GDR is almost completely missing in West-German history textbooks from the beginning of the 1980s. If there was any mention at all it was quite superficial and would only touch upon the way legislative framework conditions allowing for travel and trade into the GDR had changed<sup>9</sup>.

The two Germanys were always dealt with as two separate states, the discussion on the “German question” (of eventual reunification) was kept open without conclusion<sup>10</sup>. The FRG, however, was always portrayed as the acting Germany, as leading the initiative in the bilateral rapprochement. The “Ost-Verträge” (East-Treaties) are one of the given examples. Here is then an example for shaping national identity by omission.

Summarising, one can often speak of the „reciprocity”<sup>11</sup> of the mutual portrayals of the other system in respective West and East German history textbooks. To exemplify this again, one

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<sup>6</sup> All quotes out of the GDR history textbook „Geschichte 10“, 1979, emphasis there, p.129: “Ein Konzept der Einverleibung“ – quoted in Körber, 2001, p.15

<sup>7</sup> „eingeschleuste Agenten verschiedener imperialistischer Geheimdienste“, compare Arnswald, 2003, p.2ff

<sup>8</sup> „[Der] erste offensive Angriff der imperialistischen Kreise der BRD hatte bereits im Ansatz zunichte gemacht werden können durch die Stärke der Arbeiter- und Bauernmacht in der DDR, sowie durch die Einheit und Geschlossenheit der brüderlich verbundenen sozialistischen Länder!“ *Geschichte 10* (1979), p.162

<sup>9</sup> Compare Körber, 2001, p.39

<sup>10</sup> See also: Mickel, 2000, chapter III

<sup>11</sup> Körber, 2001, p.40

can take a look at the question of life standard: citizens in the West were in the East German perspective always the oppressed by Western imperialism – citizens in the East in the Western perspective in turn were always the exploited by socialism. The methodical approach though was different. In the GDR the priority was to learn everything by heart, whereas in the FRG there was the possibility and necessity to check through questions the taught material (sources and articles).

Today one can come to the conclusion that the history textbooks of the GDR were right: the FRG did indeed incorporate and assimilate the GDR. For a long time after the tumbling of the Berlin Wall there were only new editions of old textbooks, simply with complementing chapters like “The way to reunification 1985-1989”, “The 2+4 Treaties”.

However, in the latest generations of history textbooks there has been a clearly qualitative reevaluation of the political history of the GDR as well as the dimensions of every day life and social history<sup>12</sup> which can be assessed as a successful history textbook reform.

## 2.5 The History Schoolbook Reform in Italy

by ELENA BITTASI

A current debate about how to reorganise the teaching of history in both schools and universities is taking place in Italy. In fact, in order to make the new students’ generation aware of different perspectives of interpretation about the past events, the teaching of history needs to be revisited as soon as possible.

The historiography has certainly undergone deep changes in the last sixty years and the possibility to make an overt comparison among contrasting historical theses poses the most complex challenges today.

Therefore, the reconsideration of the role of history in the framework of the Italian youth’s education mainly focuses on the programs’ reform – which has given a central position to contemporary history and, in particular, to the relationship between the historical reconstruction of national identity and the process of European integration.

Until the First World War, the study of history in Italy coincided with the study of the nation-building during the Italian *Risorgimento*. Then, the rise of the Empire from the Roman period on was described, conceived as a historical justification for fascism, in the framework of the national ideology and in harmonious continuity with the past – as fascism always wanted to underline.

After the fall of the fascist dictatorship, the foundation of the history textbooks provided by the Gentile’s reform<sup>13</sup> in 1923 had to be substituted *in toto*, but – due to a lack of an alternative historical model – in the period after the war, the history programs of the two last decades were suspended. Nevertheless, even now, there is no accepted key of interpretation in Italy concerning the “short century”.

Also for this reason, the Italian school suffered in the last years of several ideological interpretations, which have often altered, even if slightly, historical events for political purposes. For example, the development of communism in the former Soviet Union has been completely ignored.

Thus, the necessity to delineate new principles according to which it is possible to elaborate a more appropriate method for the teaching of history is now considered as fundamental. Since the history textbooks represent the didactic instrument used for the students’ learning and the means through which students form their own critical knowledge, the adoption of a history textbook should – according to the last resolution approved by the Italian Parliament<sup>14</sup> – fulfil

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<sup>12</sup> Compare Körber, 2001, p.17f

<sup>13</sup> Giovanni Gentile was Minister for Public Education from 1922 to 1924, under Benito Mussolini’s government

<sup>14</sup> Resolution 7-00163.

the criteria of transparency and objectivity as much as possible: “The historical truth has to be respected and protected, through a correct analysis of the past, especially the most recent one”<sup>15</sup>.

At present, the “unifying historical paradigms” – which were giving the guidelines for historiography research – are being seriously re-thought at a ministerial level. Besides, the idea of history as an explanation of the past and forecast for the future according to a view of progress, and often transformed in the history of the nation’s progress, no longer exists. History has become more and more a source of reassurance for the current identities.

In order to overcome this *impasse*, it is fundamental to teach universal history<sup>16</sup>, since the world is visibly interconnected and since it is necessary to describe the past relevant interconnections in order to explain the current situation. In addition, today there is a plurality of cultures in many states, also in Italy, as a consequence of immigration.

All these reasons constitute an input for the definition of new school programs concerning worldwide history. This does not mean that the historical study of the national space, neither of local spaces, nor of supranational political projects, has to disappear.

On the other side, the history textbooks have to change – having already had some partial improvements in this direction – their structures: from a history explained from the point of view of national identity, where the other was inevitably stereotyped, to handbooks where stereotypes have been eliminated, though, more for an imitation of the “politically correct” phenomenon than not because of a historiography reflection.

Even if the historiography set up in a nationalistic sense has been substituted, another problem is represented by the problematisation of concepts such as, identity, culture, and tradition – as if they were “things” rather than processes.

At last, some history textbooks have shown some difficulties in the definition of Europe and in the historical explanation of its progressive enlargement towards the East, in the historical analysis of globalisation and in the chronological delimitation of contemporary history.

In order to find a suitable solution, a common “trans-cultural” curriculum has very recently been proposed, to which the national curricula should be added. The Italian Chamber of Deputies and the Senate will soon gather and vote on this proposal.

## **2.6 History Textbook Reform in Albania**

by SELMA BELSHAKU

During 45 years of the communist regime the majority of Albanians knew their history as it was presented in schoolbooks and other publications. In fact, it was falsified and influenced by communist ideology of the Hoxha regime. Those few ones, who knew more about history, were forced to absolute silence. Not only was the time period after World War II a great lie, but also history preceding this period. Usually, facts and historical persons who could not be included into communist history projection became the „enemies of the people“ or were simply forgotten. Just to name some examples:

1. In history textbooks, the first school with Albanian curriculum is dated back on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1887. In fact, the first school with Albanian as the language of education was opened 249 years earlier by Catholic clerics. But since the communist regime regarded the Catholic Church – along with other churches - as one of its enemies, its positive role regarding education was not mentioned in history textbooks.

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<sup>15</sup> See [www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/varie/ris7\\_00163.html](http://www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/varie/ris7_00163.html)

<sup>16</sup> See P. Zagatti, Conference “Historiography and teaching of history: is it possible a new alliance?”, Bologna, 19-20 October 2004, [www.storiaefuturo.com](http://www.storiaefuturo.com)

2. The period when Albania was ruled by Ahmet Zogu, first as a prime minister, then as a king, was described extremely negatively. Communist history textbook mentioned this period as an era of extreme poverty and hardship. In fact, Ahmet Zogu introduced politics which lead to the advancement of the economic situation and is regarded today by some historians as the „golden age“ of Albania.
3. The representation of the war against fascism became also a subject of several falsifications. It was asserted, that the popular resistance started with the foundation of the communist party led by Enver Hoxha. Members of the right-wing „Balli Kombetar“ were regarded as collaborators of the fascist regime. The truth about the role really played by the Communist Party became known only in the last decade.

After the regime change, Albanian historians started to introduce new history textbooks, which were free of ideology. However, these changes were not always consequent enough. Observers hold the opinion, that some of the newer school textbooks are characterised by superficiality and extreme neutrality. Important historical developments, like the regime change are described rather abbreviated. This shows that there still is a need for a thorough textbook reform in Albania.

## **2.7 History Textbooks in Serbia**

by SELMA BELSHAKU

During the Tito era, history schoolbooks in Serbia as in other Yugoslav member republics were usually strongly patriotic. Up to 70 percent of their content was ideological and political in nature. Education underlined the common heritage of the Yugoslav nations, a process, that gave birth to a Yugoslav collective identity parallel to the particular national identity. This allowed Yugoslavs to feel at the same time as Serbs, Croats and so on. The Communist Party led by Tito was thus particularly successful in uniting the nations of Yugoslavia under the „Common Yugoslav Roof“. „Brotherhood and Unity“ became the slogan of the Party and this idea also dominated the education system.

Following Tito's death, the vision of a Yugoslav nation has also vanished. The breakdown of the communist regime gave the way free for an ideological vacuum, which was rapidly replaced by nationalism. This period was in Serbia characterised by Slobodan Milosevic's politics, who used „Great Serbia“ as a leitmotiv of his political activities. Very much like the media, he used history education to introduce a strong feeling of collective identity among the Serbs. History textbooks became the work of historians with radical views, which reflected the political and ideological viewpoint of the nationalist regime.

Several analyses (Stojanovic, Ivica *et al.*, 1997) of history textbooks reveal the most popular strategies of nationalist textbook writing.

1. Overaccentuation of values like national sovereignty, freedom, patriotism by ways of describing a glorious past
2. Overaccentuation of historical merits and the oversimplification of acts of national heroes
3. Describing wars as „just“ in case of victory, „unjust“ in case of defeat.
4. Falsification of historical facts in order to steer national self-identification by creating the feeling of „eternal injustice“ against the own nation.

Following 1999, history textbooks were once again a matter of change. As part of reforming the whole education system, the new textbooks were introduced in September 2002. Having the same titles as before, the books hold new contents written by different authors. Passages inciting to hatred and xenophobia are now totally absent from these textbooks. Other changes include the problem of commenting the wars of the last decade. One textbook for 13-14 year old pupils contains a chapter on the wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. There are no comments, however, on the role played by Milosevic.

Despite of distancing itself from the „Greater Serbia“ concept, which was one legitimacy source for the regional wars, there still remains quite a bit of national and patriotic fervour as an important element in the new school books.

## **2.8 The Right to Education in the Mother Tongue for Members of National Minorities in Croatia**

by GORAN BANDOVIĆ

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, members of national minorities and ethnic communities are entitled to use their own language and script in special kindergartens and schools, which represent their history and cultural heritage. This issue area is specified in the Law on Education in the Language and Script of National Minorities.

This law came into force on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2000, when it was proclaimed by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Stjepan Mešić. It specifies the rights of the minorities in educational matters, including the language of education as well as other forms of education (seminars, summer or winter schools, etc.). It also allows national minorities to start schooling with a lower number of pupils as is the case for the Croatian majority population.

Pupils educated in schools with full or partial minority language education are required to learn the Croatian language and the Latin script according to the official curriculum. In regions, where the languages of national minorities are used as official languages according to the local statute, pupils following Croatian language education are required to take classes in the minority language.

The Republic of Croatia is compelled to follow Art. 12, 13 and 14 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

### ***Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities***

#### ***Article 12***

- (1) The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.
- (2) In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.
- (3) The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

#### ***Article 13***

- (1) Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.
- (2) The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.

#### *Article 14*

- (1) The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.
- (2) In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.
- (3) Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

In addition to the official language, which is Croatian, there are two groups of languages which are used in the education system: traditional languages (of minorities) and other languages. Regional and/or minority languages include: Italian, Serbian, Hungarian, Slovakian, Czech, Russian, Ukrainian. Non-regional minority languages include German, Hebrew, and Latin. Members of a national minority group can use their constitutional right to education in their own language according to three models and specific forms of education.

#### *Models and Forms of the Education in the Languages of the Minorities<sup>17</sup>:*

*MODEL – A:* Education is taking place only in the minority language, but with the Croatian language being a compulsory subject. This model is normally used in special schools but can be used also in schools with special classes in minority languages. This model is used by Italian, Serbian, Czech and Hungarian minority groups.

*MODEL – B:* Education is taking place both in Croatian as well as in the language of the national minorities. Natural sciences are educated in Croatian, Social Sciences in the minority language. As a rule, this kind of dual use is specific to schools with Croatian language education, but having special classes for minorities. This model is predominantly used by the Italian, Serbian, Czech, Austrian, German and Hungarian national minorities.

*MODEL – C:* The language of education is Croatian, but there are 5 hours per week reserved for education in the language of the national minority. This includes language education, history, geography, arts and music. The curricula is developed by the Ministry of Education in close collaboration with experts belonging to the national minority. This model is frequently used by the Serbian, Czech, Slovak, Russian, Hungarian and Ukrainian national minorities.

*SPECIAL PROGRAMMES:* Serbian, Montenegrin and Romanian national minorities are using special programmes of Summer Schools. The Italian national minority uses a special programme where the language of a minority is learned as the language of the surroundings.

The *OSCE Mission* in Croatia criticises mainly the situation of the Serbian national minority in the Danube area. Allowances of the Serbian minority for having their own schools in this region are not observed, although this point was included into the peace treaty<sup>18</sup>. Another point is the problem of the teachers in this area, who worked here during the Serbian occupation. The Croatian Education system foresaw their integration into the school system, but most of the Croatian re-migrants into this area are not willing to send their children to

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<sup>17</sup> Izvješće Republike Hrvatske o provodenju okvirne konvencije za zaštitu nacionalnih manjina, Zagreb, 2004, pp.32-38

<sup>18</sup> 12.11.1995, „Abkommen von Erdut“ with officials of the Serb-controlled areas in East Slavonia, Baranya and West Sylvania about reintegration in Croatia after UN-administration (UNTAES), [http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/laenderinfos/laender/laender\\_ausgabe\\_html?type\\_id=9&land\\_id=88](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/laenderinfos/laender/laender_ausgabe_html?type_id=9&land_id=88)

schools where these teachers work.<sup>19</sup> Together with the Ministry of Education and the local self-government, the OSCE now seeks a solution for this problem.

Summarising, the Republic of Croatia has made enormous steps in the field of education of national minorities towards European democratic standards, which are very important, the small objections notwithstanding.

### **3. Confluding Remarks** by HANS SACHS

The contributions published here demonstrate several issues. First, as evident from most case studies, accounting for and presenting modern history in school curricula is still an uneasy task in most of the countries analysed here. Second, this applies even more to post-conflict states and societies, where recent history is still conflictual and full of emotions, lacking also an agreed-upon scientific canon. However, third, it is exactly modern history, which is in most cases highly important for identity- and nation-building.

In case of a schoolbook reform, the main question arising is which actors should be in charge of implementing it. First of all, attention should be given to even representations of actors coming from different parts of the society, since only this can secure the production of history schoolbooks as a basis for a conflictpreventive identityfinding. These actors usually reach from historians, politicians and representatives of the civil society, the latter being particularly important for representing different aspects and positions within society. Also churches, specialised NGOs or representatives of national minorities can play an important role. Thus, ideally, history schoolbook reform is based on a wide debate within society.

As evident from the Albanian example, even after a more or less succesful schoolbook reform, not all the problems can be solved at once. This highlights the need to regularly examine the history schoolbooks, in order to adapt them to the changes in self-perception inherent in society. Herewith, the reform of history textbooks can become a more central element of sustainable peace in post-conflict societies.

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<sup>19</sup> OSZE-Mission in Croatia, Report/Juli, Zagreb, 2004, p.12

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#### **Further Information:**

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- Europarat: <http://www.euoparat.de>
- European Union: <http://www.europa.eu.int>
- Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research: <http://www.gei.de/english/projekte/southeast.shtml>
- International Bureau of Education: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org>
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- OSZE: <http://www.osce.org>
- South East European Educational Cooperation network: <http://www.see-educoop.net>