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**IPE**  
International Perspectives  
in Adult Education

# 1914-2014 – Remembering the past to live the present and shape the future

The contribution of European adult education

Thekla Kelbert and Emir Avdagić (editors)

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## International Perspectives in Adult Education – IPE 72

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# Editorial

2014 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, a historical event which had implications for people all around the world and which is remembered in different ways and with varying emphasis in different parts of the globe. The question of how to constructively involve people in reflecting on a violent past in order to learn lessons for a peaceful present and future must not be underestimated, given that the number of violent conflicts causing people to leave their homes in search of a secure future elsewhere for themselves and their families is a growing concern the world over.

Scholars, educators and practitioners working in the fields of memory studies, in peace and conflict studies, as well as in youth and adult education, are among those who can make such a constructive reflection happen. A growing, diverse field of youth and adult education providers is engaged in activities that foster reconciliation and dealing with the past, employing a wide variety of approaches that are adapted to the widely-differing contexts in which they work, such as democratisation processes, nation- and identity-building in post-conflict environments, collecting and working with memories and oral history accounts, eye-witnesses work, handling blame and/or denial, etc. In order to meet the resulting demands in terms of professional capacity and responsibility for organisations and experts working in this field, it is important to create forums for inquiry and exchange to find answers to the following questions, amongst others:

What does adult education mean in the context of violent conflict and reconciliation? What can it contribute? What should be considered, and what requirements must be met in order to achieve the objectives without doing harm in settings that are frequently highly sensitive? Which stakeholders should be approached in order to guarantee balanced discussions and adequate access to relevant educational services? What approaches, concepts and measures exist, and which of them have been put to beneficial use?

These are some of the questions and topics discussed in this issue in order to contribute towards sharing the lessons learned, and to offer tools enabling these issues to be addressed successfully.

History and remembrance are topics that have been of central concern to DVV International – the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association – for many years. This is because they play a frequently crucial role in the development of the countries that DVV International actively supports in their development towards building a peaceful society with a secure future for all its members by opening up access to quality education. Not only in the Balkan Region, which receives particular attention in this volume and in which DVV International has been active since the late 1990s, but also in other Eastern European countries, in Russia and the Caucasus, in Central and Southeast Asia, and in several African countries, it has been a central concern to initiate and facilitate education activities, the objectives of which include reconciliation through history and remembrance initiatives.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of WWI, the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) launched a project together with DVV International on the topic of “Remembering for the Future”, with the aim in mind of enhancing the process of learning from our shared history through adult education initiatives in order to build a common future and foster the potential for long-term peace and cohesion in Europe and beyond.

The main objectives of the “Remembering for the Future” initiative were as follows:

- to implement reflection and dialogue on World War I in EU countries on a national, regional and/or local level,
- to bring World War I-related activities together in order to create dialogue, research and discussion,
- to tie World War I to current developments in Europe in order to learn from history and to awaken an interest in discussing a joint, European future,
- to establish networks for adult educators and learners, and
- to raise awareness among EU citizens concerning the impacts of nationalism and xenophobia.

The initiative’s concluding conference, which received additional financial support from the German Federal Foreign Office, was held on 13 and 14 November 2014 to reflect on the role that adult education in all its variety can play for processes of remembering and reflecting on the common European history and future. Scholars, journalists, policy-makers and adult education practitioners were invited to contribute their views, experience and best practice initiatives. The “Remembering for the Future” conference held in Sarajevo concluded a creative and fruitful year of shaping, implementing and learning about history and remembrance initiatives in adult



education, and at the same time it served as a starting point for future initiatives and cooperation in adult education for peace and conflict resolution.

The Sarajevo conference also served as an arena in which to hand over the 2014 EAEA Grundtvig Award in the two categories: “World War I remembrance initiative” and “Adult education projects that promote peace and conflict resolution”.<sup>1</sup>

This compendium of articles is intended to complement and expand on some of the topics and discussions that were prominent at the “Remembering for the Future” conference, and to provide additional impulses for future initiatives. At the same time, it provides an insight into the work that DVV International and other players and their local partners carry out in different places.

In this volume you will find nine articles – some from a more localised perspective, some from a more overarching European one – covering various topics such as: the importance of introducing dialogue and multi-perspectivity when working with young people on the commemoration of World War I in Europe, an example of using online resources and oral evidence to teach the topic of the First World War to the younger generations in Bulgaria, youth and adult education methods applied in dealing with the past based on experience from a Turkish-Armenian reconciliation project, initiatives for remembrance and reconciliation at community level in Srebrenica, and the role that the media can play in interpreting the violent past and providing a source of intercultural and media-critical history education.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the authors for their contributions, all of whom had already contributed to the highly inspiring, insightful exchange that took place in Sarajevo during the conference. But we would also like to thank all the other colleagues who are dedicated to creating opportunities for reconciliation through peaceful dialogue and interaction in education programmes that are carefully adapted to the various contexts. Through this they contribute to perspectives for establishing a peaceful future for many. The editors sincerely hope that the compendium and the associated conference will be of interest to academics, educators, policy-makers and the general public alike.

**Thekla Kelbert and Emir Avdagić**

DVV International

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<sup>1/</sup> More information on the annual Grundtvig Award and a brochure presenting the 21 Grundtvig best practice examples of 2014 is available online at <http://bit.ly/1PAhWM5>.

## Should we remember for the future?

*The present wave of public commemorations throughout Europe has placed history at the forefront. In this article I question whether commemorating is really helpful for crafting the future, or does remembrance just burden the future? During historic anniversaries we notice a concentration on personal and public memory, which does not always concur with the findings of academic research. History practitioners have a duty to shape students' historical understanding in such a way that it helps their orientation for the future. EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators, works with large numbers of actors to develop and implement supportive tools and strategies for sound historical remembrance.*

“The idea that you’ve finished learning once you get your degree is nonsense. It never stops. That’s what makes life so beautiful.”

**Armin van Buuren, Disc Jockey (2014)**

On 11 October 2014 I posted on Facebook “Simply happy in Sarajevo”. The same day, Juha-Pekka from Finland wrote in reaction “I can never be completely happy in that great and beautiful city. Every time I have been there, the sad side of history shadows my mind”. I took this message to my friends in Sarajevo and asked them for comments. Is it possible to live happily again in Sarajevo, or is this city so haunted by unhappy memories that the lives of its citizens are completely overshadowed by them? My colleagues felt that, despite all the current problems in Bosnia and Bosnia’s often difficult past, they were able to enjoy life and realize their future.

However, the post made me think. Slogans such as “Remember the past for the future” are used on a very regular basis for events, projects and papers everywhere, even in psychology and neurology. But is remembering really helpful, or does it just burden the present and the future as well? Even in 2015, everyday politics are loaded with the use of national remembrance. The Dutch journalist-historian Laura Starink depicts in her recent book *De Schaduw van de Grote Broer* (The Shadow of the Big Brother 2015) how for Latvia, Poland, Russia and Ukraine remembrance of 20th Century history continuously feeds into the current political debates and developments.

In 2014, public commemorations throughout Europe focused on the centennial of the beginning of World War I and on the 70th anniversary of D-Day. A series of public anniversaries is taking place in 2015 – including the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt, the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, the 150th commemoration of the murder of Abraham Lincoln, as well as the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Dresden and the end of WW II.

## **Memory or history**

Many of these commemorations are based on public memory, the ways in which individuals and societies choose to remember (or forget) certain persons, events and developments in the past. But historians recognise the hazards of such an approach when our remembrance of the past is primarily based on memory. Oliver Sacks (2013) notes in his essay *Speak*,

*Memory*: “I accepted that I must have forgotten or lost a great deal, but assumed that the memories I did have – especially those that were very vivid, concrete and circumstantial – were essentially valid and reliable; and it was a shock to me when I found that some of them were not”. Indeed, we tend in our recollections to exaggerate and make events better or worse than they actually were. We are undeniably inclined to idealise, to romanticise, to boast or to victimise. Our narratives often change over time, as we forget details and add information we think we remember.

Individual memories are substantial for building our knowledge of the past; however they have similar drawbacks as any other historical source because they are incomplete. It is only by questioning their reliability, cross-referencing them and evaluating their contextual information that historians might be able to get as close as possible to the past. The famous American world historian Professor William H. McNeill (1985) wrote about the relationship between memory and history “Historical knowledge is no more and no less than carefully and critically constructed collective memory”.

Unfortunately, these procedural requirements are not always applied by those who use history, and this caused Paul Valéry to reflect in 1945 that “History is the most dangerous product ever to emerge from the chemistry of the intellect. Its properties are well known. It leads to dreaming, it intoxicates whole peoples, engendering false memories; it makes them overreact, prevents their old wounds from healing, leaves them no rest, gives them delusions of grandeur or of persecution; it makes nations bitter, proud, unbearable and vain” (own translation from: Valéry 1960: 935).

Looking at the present commemorations, unfortunately much of this reflection is still valid. National historical narratives, and therefore also national curricula and school textbooks, are written based on mirrors of national pride and pain, placing the emphasis on suffering, and victimisation and pride. The damage done to others and the mere fact that others could even have been victims of one's own country are issues which are generally downplayed or not mentioned at all. This mirror was beautifully illustrated in an official Ministry brochure about the system of education in Lithuania in 2012. The last page was devoted to a short history of the country. It mentioned the deportations of Lithuanian citizens in 1941 and from 1944 onwards to the Gulag by the Soviet regime, but did not refer to the fact that, in the same period, around 200,000 Jewish people were killed in Lithuania and a similar number of Polish people were expelled. However, this is just an example; every country has its own mirror. Bigger and (formerly) powerful countries such as Great Britain and Russia like to emphasise pride, whilst smaller countries with less impressive national

pasts such as Armenia, Slovakia or Estonia tend to play the victim card. But all countries have a hard time addressing the skeletons in their cupboards such as colonialism, slavery and atrocities that they have committed, or totalitarian pasts.

Changing political systems and ideas regularly lead to a reinterpretation and therefore rewriting of a nation's history. The way in which the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo has been commemorated and contested over the past century in Sarajevo demonstrates this very well. In 1917, the monument *To Murder* was erected by the Austrian-Hungarian Government on the site of the shooting. It was however removed in 1919, to be replaced by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by a commemorative plaque for Gavrilo Princip and the other assassins. It also established a common tomb for the killers at the cemetery of the Archangel Michael in Sarajevo. One of the first acts of the German occupying forces in Sarajevo in 1941 was to remove the commemorative plaque. After 1945, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia erected a new commemorative plaque, and in 1953 the so-called Latin Bridge was renamed as Gavrilo Princip Bridge and footprints were added, indicating the position of Princip at the moment of the assassination. The end of Yugoslavia brought fresh changes. In 1992, the plaque and footprints were removed and ultimately, to commemorate the centennial of the event in 2014, a new commemorative plaque and an evocation of the monument *To Murder* were placed on what is again called the Latin Bridge. The changes of remembrance of Gavrilo Princip, wavering between a foreign terrorist and a nationalist freedom fighter, are perhaps an extreme example, but politicians in almost every country interfere in the way history is told and therefore remembered. Re-currently remembering the past continues to be a political minefield.

## **Why and what should we remember for the future?**

The answer to the question of why should we remember the past is nevertheless simple: We cannot avoid it. Or as the British historian Professor Penelope J. Corfield (2008) wrote: "History is inescapable". And Howard Zinn (1992) wrote: "History is important. If you don't know history it is as if you were born yesterday. And if you were born yesterday, anybody up there in a position of power can tell you anything, and you have no way of checking up on it". Klaus Bergmann (2001) just remarks "History is a current reflection on the past."

The question which then arises is: "What should we remember?" And: "Which of the issues that we choose to remember will help us to shape the future?" Many of these abovementioned commemorative events

place war and misery at the forefront. Much less attention is paid to events related to peace-building and to issues associated with economic, cultural or everyday life. And although many of the anniversaries are connected to international developments, they are generally commemorated within a national framework. The European Union has shown an increasing interest in commemoration, memory and remembrance during the last decade. The differentiation in experience of 20th Century history between the twenty-eight Members of the EU has produced multifarious emotional debates, conferences and academic papers. Since 2007, as a response, the *Europe for Citizens* programme has developed a special action devoted to remembrance. Until 2014, this programme had a special focus on breaches of the European Union's fundamental values such as freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. Currently the programme has specified "Europe as a peace project", which means that it wants remembrance projects to focus on the causes of the totalitarian regimes and "other defining moments and reference points, and consider different historical perspectives". In 2015, the programme prioritises "World War II and the associated rise of intolerance that enabled crimes against humanity and the consequences of World War II for the post-war architecture of Europe, its division and the Cold War and the beginning of the European integration process following the Schuman Declaration in 1950".

EUROCLIO, the European Association of History Educators, has several projects running in the EU Remembrance programme questioning what is remembered, how it is remembered and why it is remembered, and making participants aware that answers to these questions may vary over time, from one generation to another, from one community to another and from one nation to another.<sup>1</sup> Current projects develop (digital) teaching tools<sup>2</sup> related to teaching the commemoration of the Napoleonic

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1/ EUROCLIO, established in 1992, supports the development of responsible and innovative history, citizenship and heritage education by promoting critical thinking, mutual respect, peace, stability and democracy. It promotes a sound use of history education towards the building and deepening of democratic societies, connecting professionals across boundaries of countries, ethnicities and religions. EUROCLIO believes that the past does not stop at national borders and that history education has a significant impact on how people look at the world around them. The Association propagates an approach to history education that deconstructs historical myths and negative stereotypes.

2/ HISTORIANA – Your Portal to the Past is an online educational multimedia tool that offers students multiperspective, cross-border and comparative historical sources to supplement their national history textbooks. See: <http://www.historiana.eu/>.

Wars, Waterloo, World War I and concentration camps used by different totalitarian systems.<sup>3</sup>

When teaching history, politicians traditionally try to direct the way students will remember their nations' past. The centennial of World War I led the UK Prime Minister David Cameron to declare that the commemorations in the UK would "capture (our) national spirit in every corner of the country". His Minister of Education Michael Gove wanted historians "to ensure that pupils learnt Britain's 'island story'". He claimed that this was needed "because left-wing ideologues had undermined education". Putin is known for his statement regarding school history. He complained that schoolchildren were confronted with too many versions of their country's history, and he therefore favoured a single-interpretation school history textbook. (This attempt incidentally failed.) But also the Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has urged a rethink of the national history curriculum, claiming that "it underplays the heritage of Western civilisation, gives too much focus to trade unions and overlooks conservative Prime Ministers". He accused the previous Labour Government of politicising the narrative by a "lack of references to our heritage, other than an indigenous heritage, too great a focus on issues which are the predominant concern of one side of politics", and "I think the unions are mentioned far more than business. I think there are a couple of Labour Prime Ministers who get a mention, from memory, not a single Coalition Prime Minister".

## How should we remember for the future?

In 2013, the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee actively debated the *Draft Report on Historical Memory in Culture and Education in the European Union* by the Polish Euro-parliamentarian Marek Henryk Migalski. At the request of the European Parliament's Directorate General for Internal Policies, the historian Markus Prutsch produced a background document entitled *European Historical Memory: Policies, Challenges and Perspectives* (Prutsch 2008). Prutsch highlighted the value of different, multiple perspectives and noted that perspectives vary within societies and are not uniform within the borders of a country. He therefore

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<sup>3/</sup> The EUROCLIO and Europe for Citizens Remembrance programme focuses on the development and implementation of comparative online teaching modules and supports placing national (re)interpretations of key moments in a nation or region's past into a broader European and global perspective. Educators will be better equipped to make students stand back from the risk of glorification or victimisation of a tragic past seen through the national prism.

also concluded that a shared European memory cannot mean a single memory, and furthermore that “historical events should be studied not in isolation, but bearing in mind their transnational dimensions and repercussions”. He opined that a parallel critical examination of history at both national and European levels would be beneficial.

Their views are very much in line with the vision of EUROCLIO. It is not easy for history education practitioners to find an independent and professional way in which to avoid this politicisation of the subject. The question is, how can remembering the past matter, how to make it significant for a young person’s life. Cornfield (2008) wrote that history education “studies the past and the legacies of the past in the present. Far from being a ‘dead’ subject, it connects things through time and encourages its students to take a long view of such connections”. EUROCLIO agrees, and believes that the significance of school history is related to current experiences and challenges, and that therefore history and heritage education should nurture students’ understanding of the world in which they live and support their orientation for the future.

In order to achieve this, EUROCLIO emphasises the need for lifelong learning for the teaching profession, based on a wide set of principles required to teach innovative and responsible history, heritage and citizenship education. These values are described in the *Manifesto on High Quality History, Heritage and Citizenship Education*<sup>4</sup> containing 15 principles related to three basic goals of preventing the misuses of the past, promoting an inclusive approach to the study of the past and advancing educational innovation. Key concepts for achieving these three main goals are complexity, multiperspectivity, critical thinking, diversity, dialogue, equality, engagement, competences and autonomy. Such an approach requires recognising that there is no one, single historical truth, and requires a readiness to address sensitive and controversial issues. The Association stimulates a learning and teaching of history based on developing students’ and teachers’ competencies, which are understood as a combination of knowledge, skills as well as attitudes and dispositions. In order to achieve competence-based learning, EUROCLIO acts as a training provider in many countries. In 2003, it started working with historians and history educators from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, and by

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4/ Available online at: [http://www.euroclio.eu/new/images/EUROCLIO\\_Manifesto\\_on\\_high\\_quality\\_history\\_heritage\\_and\\_citizenship\\_education.pdf](http://www.euroclio.eu/new/images/EUROCLIO_Manifesto_on_high_quality_history_heritage_and_citizenship_education.pdf)



2010 academic experts and practitioners from all of the Former Yugoslavian countries were involved.<sup>5</sup>

It is obvious that we have to remember the past, but the way we do this has major repercussions for the future. History educators have a serious responsibility when it comes to shaping responsible approaches towards remembering the past. Howard Zinn shows a good way forward “TO BE HOPEFUL in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasise in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don’t have to wait for some grand Utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory” (Zinn 2006: 270).

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<sup>5/</sup> This work resulted in several teaching tools such as: “Macedonia: Retelling the History of a New Nation” (2007); “Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Country. Every Day Life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia between East and West 1945 & 1990” (2008) and “Once Upon A Time... We Lived Together: Joint Work in a Multiperspective Approach” (2014). In addition, the project established the cross-community Association EUROCLIO-HIP, helped build the capacities of national history educators associations in the region as active civil society organisations, and trained more than 500 local teachers.

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# Changing the perspectives: Initiating a dialogue on the commemoration of World War I in Europe

*Despite the memory boom in 2014 about World War I, to this day there is no consensus on how to jointly commemorate the “great seminal catastrophe” of the 20th Century in Europe. The war’s significance differs too widely in the respective national memories. Nonetheless, it is precisely this difference that offers the chance for historical-political education if remembrance in Europe is not understood as a uniform narrative, but rather as a process of dialogue linking differing perspectives. This article demonstrates by means of a practical example – the HistoryCampus “Europe 14/14” – the potential achievements of memorial work in dialogue.*

More than virtually any other war, World War I occupies very different places in the memorial cultures of individual European states, even after 100 years. These differences provide both a challenge and an opportunity for historical-political education in Europe. This is because a transnational discussion on history can succeed despite – or precisely due to – divergent memories and narratives. With the aim in mind not of eliminating differences and identifying a uniform, closed narrative, but rather of opening up a dialogue that allows for different perspectives. This article will show, through the work of the Körber Foundation and its partners, what form such remembrance in dialogue can take.

Let us first examine the great challenges that remembrance of World War I in Europe implies for historical educational work. World War I is regarded as Europe's "great seminal catastrophe" of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as it was famously called by George F. Kennan (1979: 3). It cost the lives of ten million soldiers and almost nine million civilians, not only across Europe but world-wide, and the upheavals it caused in the European states and economic order were felt for decades. Yet despite this shared experience, despite countless military cemeteries and war memorials across the Continent, and despite a flood of books, exhibitions and movies in the centennial year 2014, memory is divided, inconsistent and fragmented across Europe. In Belgium and France, for example, the "Great War" plays an important role in the national memorial culture. The pillaging and violent excesses committed by the German military at the beginning of the War, and the subsequent occupation, shape the remembrance of the War in Belgium – as the first victim. France, too, suffered under these attacks and lost more victims than during World War II, as a site of the notorious "trench warfare". However, victimhood is not discussed at official French memorial events; rather, the victory and thus the successful defence not only of its own nation but of "national values" are celebrated. For France, just as for Great Britain, the day of the ceasefire on 11 November is a central, positive reference point.

In Germany, on the other hand, 11 November opens the Carnival season. Here, the Day of Remembrance on the second weekend of November is dedicated to the memory of the victims of World War I. This particular significance of the day is barely known to the German public. Until 2014, World War I was generally hardly present in German memorial culture. Only the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary brought great attention to this forgotten war in Germany, not least due to the debate on war debt that Christopher Clark's book, "The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914", triggered. This debate has also shown how insecure the Germans remain with regard to their role in World War I. This certainly has something to do with the political instrumentalisation of the events already shortly after the end of

the War in 1918. Above all, however, the German confrontation after 1945 with the National Socialist dictatorship and the Holocaust was for obvious reasons so pivotal that World War I faded away completely from the memorial culture.

In most states of Eastern Europe, World War II and its ramifications for the national self-image are much more important as well, even though the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire and the Tsarist Empire had far-reaching consequences for the region. These consequences are commemorated in different ways: As the achievement of independence for the Polish, Czech and Slovak peoples; as a national humiliation in Hungary; as prehistory to Revolution, civil war and Soviet Communism in Russia. Yet World War I seems truly present in the contemporary memorial culture only where its legacy is still disputed. In the Balkans, for instance, the debate continues about whether Gavrilo Princip, the assassin of Sarajevo, should be remembered as a hero or a terrorist – tantamount to a war about memory that is clearly more about political instrumentalisation than about new findings in historical research.

Furthermore, conflicts and shifting borders since 1918 contribute to the difference in memories. Accounts about World War I vary by region, religion, ethnicity and social groups. One's "own history" is contrasted with that of "the others" in the categories of guilty and innocent party, perpetrator and victim, victor and defeated; heroisation or victimisation and the bestowal of national or ethnic import are carried out. Time and again, remembrance of World War I was and is utilised to renationalise the collective memory and as a weapon of memory politics.

These different national interpretations were also present to a greater or lesser degree in 2014, despite many obvious efforts to emphasise the overlapping European dimension of the War at memorial events, exhibition openings, academic congresses, or in editorials. At least it became clear – more than ever – that remembrance from a European perspective is important. Contours of a European framework began to emerge, suggesting that a comprehensive dialogue on remembrance is necessary. This European framework is an opportunity for civic institutions that are active in transnational educational work and are working to achieve understanding of different, occasionally also conflicting views of history.

How can such a comprehensive understanding succeed in the face of all the differences and oppositions? The following is an example from the long-term experience of a civic network. The EUSTORY history network in Europe, initiated by the Körber Foundation almost 15 years ago, set itself the task of establishing a broad intercultural understanding and a common dialogue of remembrance, as a bulwark against the abuse of history as a national ideological munitions factory (Frindt/Tetzlaff 2014). Under the mot-



*History Campus Europe 2014*

to of “Understanding Differences, overcoming Divisions”, EUSTORY brings together civic institutions such as foundations, teachers’ organisations or historical associations – from 25 countries in Europe ranging from Finland to Spain, from Russia to Portugal – that inspire 13,000 young Europeans annually to delve into local history. Central to the networking are multi-day Europe-wide History Camps for participants from EUSTORY member countries, in which students work on and debate key issues of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (dictatorships, wars, collaboration, minorities, migration, poverty, etc.) in a multi-perspective approach. Prior and subsequent to the international camps, the young Europeans can discuss their hypotheses and results with each other, write blog entries, stimulate debates on current issues of memorial politics, and prepare articles for the media – all on the Internet platform [historycampus.org](http://historycampus.org).

To mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of World War I, the Körber Foundation organised the major History Campus “Europe 14/14: Look back, think forward” in cooperation with the German Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Robert Bosch Foundation (Tetzlaff 2015). Almost 400 young adults from more than 40 countries gathered in Berlin for one

week to discuss personal, national and European aspects of remembrance of World War I. The connecting question of the History Campus was summed up by a 21-year-old from Great Britain: "How can a war that happened a century ago still have an impact on our lives today and continue to do so in the future? We always hear about a 'lost generation,' and destroyed landscapes across Europe. But what of the more lasting effects of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's first global conflict?" Many civic and cultural institutions were involved in the History Campus, which – in more than 20 workshops – offered very different ways to approach this history in both content and method.

The starting point for most participants was family memories of war, together with materials and sources drawn from the respective national historical narrative. The exchange concerning traces of the war in families, the analysis of concepts of the enemy, myths and propaganda or of concepts such as "patriotism" and "honour" in the respective countries enabled the participants to establish relationships between individual life stories and national memories. Moreover, the organisers encouraged the participants with invitations to contribute creative writing, video or multimedia production as well as theatre pedagogics, to not only refresh their knowledge but to develop individual viewpoints and to formulate messages. The workshop aimed to turn the participants into storytellers (Fausser 2014). They had to reduce the highly complex topic of war to individual fates in order to personalise the experiences, adopt subjective perspectives and trace the ramifications of war in biographies. This reduction of complexity was a first step. A further step was to develop a common thread for the story, in other words to choose the stakeholders, determine the beginning and end of the story, note relevant events and separate the important issues from unimportant ones.

The development of individual stories and their integration into a national narrative framework set the stage for the subsequent telling and presenting of stories and engaging in dialogue. The objective was to learn the point of view and understand the story of the other, and to remove one's own national eyeglasses for this, i.e. to practice a form of understanding referred to as dialogical remembrance by the German cultural scientist Aleida Assmann. In her latest book, she identified the opportunities of this dialogical remembrance for Europe in light of a deeply divided memorial narrative between World War II and the Holocaust on the one hand and the Stalinist crimes of mass killings and forced labour camps on the other (Assmann 2013). The primary challenge for her is to find a path towards an integrated and common memorial culture. In her view, a great opportunity lies in the concept of dialogical remembrance. Dialogical remembrance means listening and understanding a story from the perspective of others

and understanding that perspective as a complement of one's own narrative. The point here is definitely not to level the differences and develop a uniform historical narrative for Europe, a kind of master narrative. Rather, different narratives are compared with one another in order to make it possible to learn about one another on the basis of acceptance and acknowledgement, and to question apparent "truths". A participant in the History Campus on World War I put it this way: "We need to learn to understand history in a transnational way and consider different views in order to avoid stereotypes and myths."

The respectful approach to views of history that might initially seem "foreign" succeeded impressively at the History Campus – say organisers and participants. Based on the experiences of the History Campus and the work on EUSTORY projects, some points for dialogical remembrance as a didactic concept for educational work on World War I can be noted:

- States cannot relate their history to one another; only people can. Therefore, it is important to move the recounting of history from the national



*History Campus Europe 2014*



level to a personal one. This is achieved through personal approaches. Family history – in diaries, memoirs or photographs – is a perfect starting point. The discovery of history in its everyday, local and individual manifestations appeals especially (but not only) to young people, and enables them to create personal connections to a topic which frequently appears abstract.

- A prerequisite for personal work is a profound knowledge of history and important milestones. To this end, it is vital to establish a foundation of historical knowledge based on historical research. As the educational work continues, however, the focus shifts away from history as an objective reconstruction, and towards history as an experience. Experience and memory are by nature subjective. Such subjective, individual and family historical narratives should give participants the space in the framework of political education to analyse how their own narrative fits into the historical context and the respective national history view. The contradictions and confusions that frequently occur may be used productively.
- In a further step, the stories are told in pairs or groups. The mutual narration is contingent on a willingness to accommodate others and develop empathy. In a good pedagogic setting, this implies not only addressing the emotional aspect or concluding with an immersion in the story of the other. Rather, empathy also has – depending on age – cognitive attributes that enable us to understand and reflect on feelings rationally. This cognitive involvement is crucial. It is about achieving a balance of proximity and distance between partners in dialogue.
- Those who learn to see the world from the perspective of others will also learn, at the latest when they resume their own perspective, that theirs is not the only possible, sensible or legitimate view of the world. Willingness to understand the other means practicing tolerance and questioning the friend-enemy approach.
- Working on a European history narrative – whether on World War I or other key events – should not aim to develop a new, closed, common narrative. It is about identifying relationships and differences, mutually reflecting on interpretations of history and acknowledging the other and his or her view of events. This act of acknowledgement is pivotal in order to promote open-mindedness and create a basis for trust.

From this kind of joint work on different narratives, an identity could be formed in Europe that would use the violent history and painful memories of World War I as well as of World War II towards reconciliation and understanding of the common Europe of today and tomorrow. As Aleida Assmann points out: “It is this approach to remembrance, not limited only

to one's own heroism and one's own sufferings but also, and especially, including one's own responsibility for the suffering of others, that draws positive and future-orientated values out of a negative history. It is in this transformation of one's own violent past into positive values on the basis of a dialogical memory that a specifically European legacy could arise. In this respect, for Europeans, dream and trauma are literally neighbours" (Assmann 2012: 154).

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# Popular history magazines as a source of intercultural, transnational and media-critical history education

Based on the example of the First World War

*This contribution deals with the presentation of the First World War in popular history magazines, which constitute a mass-media sector of the public historical culture. The contribution refers to the EU-LL project entitled “European History Crossroads as Pathways to Intercultural and Media Education” (EHISTO) whose analysis of popular history magazines aims at building and promoting transnational and media-critical skills in history education.*

The start of the First World War 100 years ago has been attracting considerable attention in the mass media. European and international history magazines are no exception to this. Since 2013, magazine titles referring to the “First World War” have been increasingly found on the magazine shelves of supermarkets, kiosks and station bookshops. With cover pages showing battle scenes, trenches, prominent political actors such as the German Emperor Wilhelm II, or also the Sarajevo assassination, the magazines seek to make potential buyers want to take them home.

This contribution deals with the topic of the First World War in the mass media from the point of view of the genre of popular history magazines. It thus refers to the EU-LL project entitled “European History Crossroads as Pathways to Intercultural and Media Education” (EHISTO)<sup>1</sup> whose analysis of popular history magazines aims at building and promoting transnational and media-critical skills in history education.

We will first introduce below the considerations on which the project is based, before going on to briefly outline the concept. In the third part, some selected observations on the presentation of the First World War in European magazines are outlined, which were drawn from the comparison of the magazines examined.

## **The popular culture of remembrance in a transnational perspective**

The theoretical basis of the EHISTO project is the concept of the “European History Crossroads” (EHC) developed by the Council of Europe. The project hence follows the concept of “Shared Histories in Europe”<sup>2</sup>. This in turn refers to the fact that even though the European states and regions were indeed involved in many transregional historical processes, and therefore “share” many historical experiences, they have nevertheless often had very different historical experiences which remain manifested to the present day in diverging and sometimes also controversial interpretations and constructions. One example is the Sarajevo assassination (28 June 1914), which forms part of all national narratives (“shared histories in Europe”). The nar-

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1/ Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de/> (1 March 2015)

2/ Cf. the e-book resulting from the Council of Europe's project “Shared histories for a Europe without dividing lines” (2010-2014), URL: <http://bit.ly/1ywwRAd> (1 March 2015). EHISTO follows on from the broad spectrum of successful EU projects, which have so far fostered the intercultural dialogue in Europe by developing shared European themes for history teaching and by presenting multi-perspective approaches in terms of intercultural dialogue (e.g. European Council projects such as “Shared Histories for a Europe Without Dividing Lines” and “The Image of the Other in History Teaching”).



*Popular history magazines with the topic of World War One*

ratives are however fundamentally different. Amongst other things, this can be seen when looking at the remembrance and commemoration culture on the occasion of the centennial: In June 2014, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra gave a memorial concert in the Vijećnica, the former town hall in Sarajevo, 100 years after Gavrilo Princip fired shots at the Austro-Hungarian Crown Prince and Princess, whereas in the Serbian part of Sarajevo, a statue was revealed the day before the concert to commemorate the heroism of the Gavrilo Princip. In this way, Princip's struggle for freedom against the occupying power Habsburg was honoured.

In the project, only the historical topics that met the following three prerequisites were considered as European History Crossroads:

- a) the topics are present in the national historical narratives of the partner countries<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>3/</sup> Besides the Chair of History Didactics at Augsburg University (coordinator), the Universities of East Anglia (UK), Dalarna (Sweden), Łódź (Poland) and Salamanca (Spain) as well as the Institute for Film and Images (FWU) in Grünwald, Munich, are also involved.

- b) the topics are represented in the popular history magazines of all partner countries, and
- c) the topics are featured in the school curricula of the partner countries.

The transnational comparative analysis of the nationally presented historical topics of the “shared history” is of great importance for history education because the path to a European awareness of history hardly leads to a linear pan-European “master narrative”, but rather has to aim at the reciprocal perception and the fundamental acceptance of pluralistic historical experiences and interpretations in Europe. This idea corresponds with Jörn Rüsen’s postulate of “overcoming ethnocentrism through the experience of difference” (Rüsen 2002: 57-64) as the centrepiece of a European construction of historical identity. This implies the idea of a European identity centred on the perception and acceptance of the plurality of historico-cultural experiences and identities in (and outside of) Europe, as well as dealing with differences in a democratic, peaceful manner, and a corresponding tolerance of ambiguity.

### **The EHISTO project (2012-2014)**

The EHISTO project started with the finding that history magazines (a) are issued throughout Europe, (b) usually illustrate the national representation of history and (c) thus have certain pan-European topics in common.

The main focus of our interest was the question concerning a transnational popular culture of remembrance in Europe, which becomes visible in popular history magazines and can be analysed in a media-critical way. A first approach to this field was made with the international comparison of national magazines on the same historical topics. Furthermore, the decision to analyse this was also determined by the fact that the market for history magazines – a comparatively traditional medium in the age of audiovisual and interactive communication – is expanding worldwide (Popp 2015; Springkart 2015). Moreover, the reception of magazines is usually combined with a deliberate purchase decision. This in turn permits conclusions to be drawn on a certain segment of the popular interest in history and leads to the question of how “history” is constructed and presented so as to guarantee the commercial success of the product.

Popular history magazines have nevertheless attracted comparatively little attention so far from history and media studies as well as history didactics, even though these historical and journalistic products form an in no way insignificant sector of historical culture. Lastly, history magazines were also chosen as the object of investigation and as an educational

Lifelong Learning Programme

PROJECT
NETWORK
OUTCOME
NEWS
EVENTS
GET INVOLVED
PRESSROOM
CONTACT

- Baseline study
- Teaching and learning modules
- Initial teacher training
- In-service teacher training
- Final conference
- Final publication

ARREST OF FERDINAND SCHIR IN SARAJEVO, PHILIPP RUBEK, 1914

EHISTO (European history crossroads as pathways to intercultural and media education) is concerned with the mediation of history in popular (science) media and the question of social and political responsibility of journalists and other mediators of history, especially teachers, in the field of commercial presentation of history. The project responds to the increasing significance of a commercialised mediation of history within the public historical culture and reflects the fact that these representations, which do not always meet the EU standards for history education, can have a lasting impact on the young generation's understanding of history.

Using the example of popular history magazines, the project shall, besides the necessary basic research, develop didactically reflected materials for both

*Presentation of the different outcomes on the EHISTO website: [www.european-crossroads.eu](http://www.european-crossroads.eu)*

medium because they feature a format that can be easily combined with learning and teaching structures as well as seminar structures, and which functions as a motivating factor for young people and adults alike.

The project consortium consisted of five university experts for history didactics and media didactics as well as the FWU (Institute for Film and Picture in Science and Education) as the institute for the production of educational media. All university partners worked in close co-operation with local "EHISTO partner schools". Eleven history teachers and more than 300 pupils contributed to the production of the interactive online modules ("Learning Objects"; teaching and learning materials); they also tested and evaluated the material with regard to its practical suitability. The consortium was supported by an international research network reaching from Augsburg to Shanghai as well as by academic advisors and international

networks such as the International Society for History Didactics (ISHD)<sup>4</sup>, EUROCLIO (European Association of History Educators)<sup>5</sup> and DVV International<sup>6</sup>, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association.

Even though planned and implemented as a project for schools, the EHISTO Project also attracted considerable interest from the field of adult education from the outset.

Basic research was conducted within the project during the so-called “baseline study”<sup>7</sup>: The empirical studies gathered data from the partner countries regarding the attitude of history teachers towards popular history magazines as additional class material, ascertained best-practice examples and examined the national curricula as well as history magazines for possible European History Crossroads. The partners then analysed the national schoolbooks with regard to national tendencies in the representation of the chosen topics (“Columbus and the ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’” and “The ‘outbreak’ of the First World War”)<sup>8</sup>. Lastly, an instrument for analysing popular history magazines was also developed which is available online and, in addition to addressing general questions, especially focuses on the magazine cover pages, editorials and the list of contents, picture series and articles. The instrument can be used e.g. in seminars and workshops to analyse any magazine topic and to mediate critical media competences.

Online materials were also developed for history classes in secondary schools<sup>9</sup>, for teacher training at higher education institutions and universities<sup>10</sup>, and for further in-service teacher training<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, extracts (e.g. articles) from history magazines were chosen, which are available for download free of charge in all five project languages. The EHISTO teaching, learning or study materials combine media-critical analyses and trans-

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4/ Cf. URL: <http://www.ishd.co> (1 March 2015).

5/ Cf. URL: <http://www.euroclio.eu/new/index.php> (1 March 2015).

6/ Cf. URL: [http://www.dvv-international.de/index.php?article\\_id=1405&clang=0](http://www.dvv-international.de/index.php?article_id=1405&clang=0) (1 March 2015).

7/ Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/baselinestudy/> (1 March 2015).

8/ The analysis of both EHCs moreover provides suggestions for the preparation of further intercultural, transnational and media-critical tasks so that teachers are able – especially with the help of the results of the baseline study – to independently analyse further EHCs.

9/ Cf. URL: <https://media.sodis.de/ehisto/en/index.html> (1 March 2015).

10/ Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/initialteachertraining/> (1 March 2015).

11/ Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/inserviceteacher/> (1 March 2015).



national comparative perspectives. These materials can be used not only in schools, but also in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Civic Education, as well as in adult education.<sup>12</sup>

So as to convey an impression of the different ways in which international magazines illustrate the EHC topic “First World War”, selected results from the EHISTO baseline study will be presented below.

### **Selected results from the comparison of the history magazines on the topic of the “First World War” analysed in the project**

Sarajevo as a European “lieu de mémoire”

When analysing the history magazines from the countries participating in the project as well as further magazines e.g. from France, Belgium and the Netherlands, it became clear that the Sarajevo assassination is an integral part of the transnational popular remembrance of the First World War in Europe as no other World War-related topic.<sup>13</sup> Since the amount of picture material (photographs, drawings) documenting this event is very limited, the same illustrations can be found everywhere; the picture caption wrongfully describing the depicted scene as the “arrest of Gavrilo Princip” is still prevalent.<sup>14</sup>

As expected, the Sarajevo assassination is presented as the key event in the historical background of the beginning of the War. In general, two different approaches can be observed: One narrative stages the “dramatic fall” of this event: one single, rather marginal incidence shaped by manifold “almost unbelievable” coincidences causes the downfall of the entire European pre-war order. This creates the prevalent visual idea that “Sarajevo” was the “spark” that lit the “fuse”, causing the European “tinder box” to explode (Metzger & Wilhelmi 2007: 22–27). In this way, the events which took place between the assassination and the beginning of the War are im-

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<sup>12/</sup> Cf. URL: <http://www.european-crossroads.de/outcomes/baselinestudy/analytical-framework/> (1.3.2015).

<sup>13/</sup> Cf. Geo Epoche 15 (2004); Damals 5 (2004); La Aventura de la Historia 69 (2004); G/ Geschichte 11 (2007); Muy Interesante Historia 17 (2008); Populär Historia 10 (2008); Allt Om Historia 9 (2011); History Review 69 (2011); Bbc History Magazine 11 (2012); Spiegel Geschichte 5 (2013); Die Zeit Geschichte 1 (2014); Geo Epoche 65 (2014); Geo Histoire 13 (2014).

<sup>14/</sup> The photograph by Philipp Rubel, which was further disseminated with the title “The arrest of the murderer”, shows the arrest of Ferdinand Behr who was accused of helping Gavrilo Princip when he was arrested. Ferdinand Behr verifiably had nothing to do with the assassination on 28 June 1914 (Hirschfeld 2009: 148-155).

aged to constitute a sort of “domino effect” which inevitably led straight to war. The other narrative however presents an open development in which important stages of the “July Crisis” are highlighted, action alternatives are discussed and reasons for as well as consequences of the chosen options are illustrated (Cf. Förster 2004: 14-19; Englund 2008: 24-30).

It is interesting to note in this context that the magazines analysed do not show any specific national differences in the perception of the assassination. Both narratives exist in every country; the significant “difference in quality” depending on the magazine types can be found everywhere. The magazine type presenting the “fuse” narrative generally features clear and strong tendencies towards personalisation<sup>15</sup>, emotionalisation, simplification and sensationalism as well as towards the use of insufficiently-verified and documented, sometimes also anachronistic picture material. The latter can also be found in the magazines that historicise the “July Crisis” and present it as an open process; nevertheless, these magazines are also prepared to “subject” their audience to controversial presentations, diverging opinions and open questions.

### The question of “responsibility for the War”

All the magazines connect the analysis of the Sarajevo assassination and the “July Crisis” to the question of “responsibility for the War”. Contrary to expectations, the international comparison showed no significant differences in interpretation and evaluation. Only the Polish magazines are an exception to this: Some articles speak of unambiguous “guilt” and – without discussion – clearly place the blame with the elites of the German Reich (Szlanta 2009: 32-36). In general, however, the magazines analysed endeavour to provide a differentiated, balanced presentation of this topic, making many references to controversies in research, including recent works – such as Christopher Clark’s “Sleepwalkers” (2012) – and presenting interviews with historians.

### The use of images

The European magazines’ “canon of images” used for the presentation of the First World War has not yet been completely examined (for an analysis of the “canon of images” in schoolbooks cf.: Müller & Wagner 2010:

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<sup>15</sup>/ Personalisation here means that the power to shape the historical process is above all assigned to “great personalities” (Heuer 2006: 139).

27-42). It is however clear that the picture documents are used for illustrative purposes only and their potential as informative sources remains unexplored. Moreover, no argumentative connection is established between the pictures and the texts. The low degree of diligence in the use of picture documents can be observed not only with regard to the captions; staged photographs, for instance, taken and distributed by the national propaganda system, or indeed pictures that were put together in the darkroom, are printed without further explanations – sometimes even on the cover pages of the magazines. However, this use of images, which violates the ethics of history mediation (Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers 2001), cannot only be found in history magazines, but also in some of the history schoolbooks.

### **“Blind spots” in the magazines’ presentations**

The content-related analysis of the magazines selected revealed that, on the one hand, the priority of the presentation of the battlefields of war clearly lies on the Western front (trenches, trench warfare). The Eastern front, the war in the Balkans, in the Alps and in the colonies merely play a subordinate role, if any at all. On the other hand, the European magazines broadly address – sometimes also from a comparative perspective – the phenomenon of war fever, whereas critical voices, the protest against the war, are virtually disregarded.

Especially in German magazines, the pacifist movements and the Hague Peace Conferences, especially the Hague Agreements and international humanitarian law, remain largely unaddressed. This also applies to the peace efforts of the Social Democrats prior to the “political truce”, to the consequences resulting from consenting to the approval of the war loans for the international workers’ movement, and to the further political history of the German Social Democratic Party SPD. Where these topics are addressed, this only takes place in a very marginal way and without the context of the events preceding the war, but rather with regard to the end of the war (example: Bischoff 2004: 144-161).

Moreover, it has to be said that the German magazines often interpret the First World War as the “great seminal catastrophe” (Kennan 1979: 3) of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, so that – whether explicitly or implicitly – a connection is made to the Second World War. Accordingly, the special issue of a large German magazine on the First World War depicted Wilhelm II together with Hitler on the cover page in 2004 (SPIEGEL SPECIAL 1/2004). The special issue in 2013 (SPIEGEL GESCHICHTE 5/2013) however suggests a change: The bold reference to the Second World War and the suggestion

of continuity have disappeared; at the same time, the personalised mode of presentation (“great men make history”) is also largely scaled back in favour of historical approaches, thus adopting a social, micro-level, mentality or experience perspective.

It should be noted in conclusion that the history of remembrance regarding the victims of the First World War, the different cultures of remembrance in Europe (and the world), or indeed the founding of institutions such as the German War Graves Commission (1919)<sup>16</sup> in connection with the idea of “reconciliation across graves” are addressed in neither the German nor the international magazines. The magazines themselves form part of the culture of remembrance, but neglect to consider the range of and the changes in the cultures of remembrance in Europe with regard to the topic of the First World War.

## Conclusion

The question of whether Gavrilo Princip can be regarded as the “elicitor” of the “great seminal catastrophe” of the 20th Century, or rather as “Mandela with the wrong means” (Dušan Bataković, in: Hofmann 2014) depends on one’s point of view. EHISTO sought – and continues to seek – to make a contribution towards acquiring the skills required to recognise one’s own perspective as such, and towards becoming aware of other points of view, improving ethical judgement – or rather enquiring about further perspectives and being able to tolerate such an indissoluble experience of difference.

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# The education function of the media as a tool for peace-building: The role of the media in interpreting the past in the Balkans

*The two key roles of the mass media in the contemporary media landscape are the educational and interpretative ones. The educational role is important since the media serve as informal educators. On the other hand, the interpretative role of the mass media is important when it comes to reporting about past events, and about conflicts which took place in the past, since the media do not necessarily report on the past objectively and truthfully, but very often in accordance with dominant societal narratives. This paper examines the role of the mass media in peace-building through conflict- and post-conflict-sensitive reporting. Using the examples of the print media in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, and their reporting on the opening of the Memorial Centre in Srebrenica, this paper promotes the argument that objective and truthful media reporting can contribute to reconciliation and positively influence peace-building, but only if the mass media seek to educate the audience about the past and to interpret it fairly.*

## **The mass media in contemporary society: The media as educators and interpreters, and not (exclusively) as mediators**

Most of the discussions related to the mass media and their role in society have as their starting point that the media are mediators of messages in society and a means of imparting information. However, the mass media have undergone dramatic changes in the 21st Century. With the rise of on-line and social media, the informative role of the mass media (print, radio and TV) waned as media users turned for information to new online media platforms and adopted the practice of obtaining information without traditional mediators and gatekeepers. This means that two other roles which the mass media play in society, that is the educational and interpretative ones, are becoming more and more important and extensively discussed among scholars.

From their very beginnings, besides imparting information and providing entertainment to their users, the media served as a tool for informal education, reaching a wide range of readers/viewers/listeners and influencing various members of society. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we may say that the educational role of the mass media has shifted towards the media acting as tools for imparting concepts and ideas, rather than information pure and simple (the media trying to provide understanding, and not only facts). These concepts and ideas that are promoted in the media and by the media can (and often do) teach people about important issues and actors in their environment/society and make them think about and reconsider their past, present and future. The mass media, with their four key attributes (broad appeal, speed, availability and low cost), play an important role when it comes to reaching various groups in society, that is people of different ages, genders, class, educational backgrounds, etc., and as such can serve as a “university for the common man”, as Fr. Francis Arackal puts it (Muniruddin 2005). Authors such as Jacques Gonnet claim that the influence of the mass media on people is equal to that of the educational institutions, since the mass media target large audiences, occupy much of their time and offer diverse content that can serve as an educational tool to change and reform society (Gonnet 1998). It would be wrong to claim that the media teach us how to think, but they most certainly do teach us (or try to point us towards) what to think about. In his explanation of this aspect of the influence of the mass media, Pierre Bourdieu uses the metaphor of eyeglasses, saying that just like with spectacles, we do not see the media in our lives all the time, but they determine the scope and quality of what can be seen in the first place (Bourdieu 2000: 14).

Another important role played by the mass media (especially in this context of the media being institutions that could point us towards



subjects about which we should think) is an interpretative one – since the media interpret events, and do not only impart information about them. As we pointed out earlier, the media are not merely mediators, but rather interpreters of our reality, past, present and future. That means that the context which the media create around certain events and their actors directly influences the way in which people think and feel about those events and actors.

The interpretative role played by the mass media is most evident when reporting on past events, especially past conflicts, since the media do not necessarily report on past events objectively and truthfully, but very often in accordance with dominant societal narratives. Free and impartial media reporting can significantly contribute to peace-building, but impartial media reporting on conflicts is unfortunately not so common. Although the media need to pay special attention when covering emotionally-charged issues (and conflicts, especially those that took place in the recent past, are definitely included here), as failure to do so threatens to heighten tensions, dominant societal narratives that the media often follow are usually not so conflict sensitive. On the contrary, post-conflict political actors very often set the agenda in post-war societies in such a way as to manipulate such tensions in order to achieve their specific goals. That is a key point where the interpretative role played by the mass media can slide into manipulation. Such tendencies are dangerous not only for the media, but for society as well.

### **The media in the Balkans: Are they all the same, or: Can former actors of war be future actors of peace-building?**

In his book “Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina”, Mark Thompson (1999) claims that the media in the Balkans played a significant role in the recent wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and that political manipulation of the media was a form of preparation for war in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s. The worst examples of the propaganda that fuelled the war’s atrocities were found in the print and broadcast media of all the former Yugoslav Republics. For example, a few days before the attack by the Serbian Army on Vukovar in Croatia (in August 1991), the Serbian media published news that Croatian forces had murdered 41 Serb children (aged four to seven) in a primary school near Vukovar. Serbian TV aired an all-night programme on that issue, and even hosted witnesses claiming that they had seen bodies. Serbian TV subsequently admitted that the information was false, but this story helped increase the number of people from Serbia ready to go

to fight on the Vukovar battlefield.<sup>1</sup> In his documentary film “Years Eaten by Lions” (*“Godine koje su pojeli lavovi”*), Sarajevo journalist Boro Kontić argues that journalists who spread war propaganda and used hate speech in the Balkans during the 1990s should be charged with war crimes, and reminds his viewers that many of those who used to be the worst promoters of crimes and atrocities still are working as journalists. The title “Years Eaten by Lions” is based on the war report from 1992 that was aired on the “Kanal S” TV station in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which reporter Rada Đokić “broke the news” (that was proven to be propaganda and completely false) that the Bosnian Army was feeding Serb children to the lions in Sarajevo Zoo. This provoked the Serb Army to launch a heavy bombing raid on the besieged city of Sarajevo.<sup>2</sup>

However, there were positive examples of impartial and conflict-sensitive reporting in the media in the Balkans during the wars (in 1992 for example, the daily newspaper “Oslobodjenje” from Sarajevo received the prestigious “Paper of the Year” award, which was a symbolic act of international solidarity with this paper, but also a recognition of Oslobodjenje’s objective, truthful reporting in wartime). Once the wars were over, some of the media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina tried to deal with the past impartially, to provide viewers and readers with interpretations of conflicts from various angles and to overcome the “us” and “them” paradigm, which usually considered “us” as the victims and the “good guys” and “them” (the others) as criminals and the “bad guys”. Opening space in the media for different perspectives and new actors (historians, NGO peace activists, etc.) who spoke about the need to express solidarity with all victims of the wars and to punish all war criminals was in fact one of the first steps towards peace-building in the region. The media who contributed to such positive steps were rare, their journalists often under pressure and in danger (for example, Slavko Ćuruvija, a journalist from Serbia, was killed in 1999 because of critical reporting on Serbian politics in the Balkans at that time). This makes their efforts even more valuable. B92, e-novine, Danas and some other media from Serbia, for example, aired and published stories about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and helped the voices of people who insisted on discussing the role of Serbia in the war and the genocide in Srebrenica (such as the NGO Women in Black – *Žene u crnom*) to be heard. That did not happen immediately following the war, but it did take place after 2000, which is relatively soon after.

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1/ More on this can be found at: <https://www.iwpr.net/global-voices/medias-role-balkan-wars>

2/ Trailer for the film [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY10R7I\\_1Cw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jY10R7I_1Cw); the whole film can be obtained on request from the Sarajevo Media Centre <http://www.media.ba>

## **Facts provided by the mass media as a tool for peace-building: The case of the Srebrenica Memorial Centre**

The genocide in Srebrenica, a small town in Eastern Bosnia, in July 1995, in which 8,372 people (mostly men and boys) were killed by the forces of the Bosnian Serb Army commanded by General Ratko Mladić and military and para-military forces from Serbia<sup>3</sup>, is one of the worst war crimes in the world committed after World War II, and as such received considerable attention in the mass media worldwide, but in the Balkans as well. The funerals of the first 600 identified victims in March 2003, and the official opening of the Memorial Centre in Potočari<sup>4</sup> in September 2003 (attended by the then US President Bill Clinton), were widely covered by various media from all over the world, and of course media from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia also reported extensively on these events (and continue to report on funerals and Memorial Day in Srebrenica/Potočari on 11 July every year). The way in which the media in the region reported on the opening of the Memorial Centre is an excellent example of the importance of providing facts to the public and reporting impartially in order to fulfil the educational and interpretative role of the mass media and contribute towards peace-building. The daily newspaper "Politika" from Belgrade reported objectively about the opening of the Memorial Centre on 1 April 2003, providing facts about the event, on the officials attending, their statements, etc. But more importantly, "Politika" explained the events that took place in July 1995 to its readers in the last two paragraphs by saying: "In the summer of 1995, approximately 9,000 Bosniak-nationality citizens of Srebrenica were killed or missing after the Army of the Republika Srpska commanded by General Ratko Mladić entered that city, which had been declared a safe, protected zone by the United Nations. Srebrenica was protected by the Dutch battalion of the UN at that time" (Politika, 1 April 2003). This was one of the rare unbiased reports regarding Srebrenica in the Serbian print media in which readers were able to obtain information on what had happened in Srebrenica in 1995. As such, this report, which at first sight seems to be a normal, facts-based report about events in Serbia's neighbouring country, can be considered as one which fulfilled educational and interpretative functions as well, providing the citizens of Serbia with a context about Srebrenica that was different from the dominant narrative in Serbian society at that time (it is important

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3/ A detailed description of the events in Srebrenica in 1995 in English can be found on: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk>

4/ More information on the Memorial Centre can be found at: <http://www.potocarimc.org>





# Svijet

## Ukratko

### 32 nova slučaja smrtonosne upale pluća u Hong Kongu

**HONG KONG** - Vlasti u Hong Kongu objavile su jučer da je otkriveno 32 novih slučaja smrtonosne upale pluća u samo petnaest dana. Čineći ih se broj smrtnih slučajeva u području Hong Konga povećao na 128.

Smrtonosnog akutnog respiratornog sindroma (SARS) trenutno je dijagnosticirano 12 osoba, a zabilježeno je njih 1.040. Na taj broj, prema zdravstvenim vlastima, je 213 smrtonosnih osoba, a posljednjeg smrtonosnog slučaja potvrdilo se smrti da se virus širi izravno, a ne kašnjenjem i izvan kožne se pojave bolesti.

Na taj slučajnost smrtonosni četvrti slučajevi smrtonosnog sindroma koji su zabilježeni u posljednja dva tjedna, da se smrtonosna bolest koja se širi iz usta kažu kao i preko krvi. Članovi u Hong Kongu, Japan, Singapur, Koreja i Sjeverna...

### Sustanak Schrödera i Aherna

**BERLIN** - Aher je u Berlinu na četvrtak susreo s američkim premijerom Billom Clintonom. Aher je u Berlinu na četvrtak susreo s američkim premijerom Billom Clintonom. Aher je u Berlinu na četvrtak susreo s američkim premijerom Billom Clintonom.

### Vrhovni sud odbio zahtjev vlade

**BEČ** - Vrhovni sud Austrije jučer je odbio zahtjev vlade da vrati nadležnost u području religiozne cenzure na lokalni sud u Salzburgu. Vrhovni sud Austrije jučer je odbio zahtjev vlade da vrati nadležnost u području religiozne cenzure na lokalni sud u Salzburgu.



### Palestinci ističu vlastitu borbu

**ISRAEL** - I dok je Izrael zasjedao svoj Palestinci se suočavaju s novim vrhom u sukobu između izraelaca i palestinskih terorista. Palestinci se suočavaju s novim vrhom u sukobu između izraelaca i palestinskih terorista.

### FLASH

**Irvi**  
Jučer su se na ulici u Beču pojavili veliki brojevi policajaca koji su kontrolirali promet i održavali mir. Jučer su se na ulici u Beču pojavili veliki brojevi policajaca koji su kontrolirali promet i održavali mir.

### Ludari

Na današnji dan, 1. svibnja, u Beču su se pojavili veliki brojevi policajaca koji su kontrolirali promet i održavali mir. Na današnji dan, 1. svibnja, u Beču su se pojavili veliki brojevi policajaca koji su kontrolirali promet i održavali mir.

### Bomba na parkiralištu vlade na Sj. Sj. Sj. Sj.

**JAKARTARA** - Istražitelji su jučer objavili da je bomba postavljena na parkiralištu vlade na sjeveru Jakartara. Istražitelji su jučer objavili da je bomba postavljena na parkiralištu vlade na sjeveru Jakartara.

### Čaklići pobunjenici poriču da ima prebjega

**LJUBLJANA** - Pobunjenici iz reda pučnika su danas poricali da su prebjegli u Sloveniju. Pobunjenici iz reda pučnika su danas poricali da su prebjegli u Sloveniju.

## Stamboliću pokop uz najviše državne počasti

**BEGRAD** - Srbijanska je vlada odlučila da se kralj Stambolić, bivši predsjednik Republike Srbije, pokopati u Beogradu. Srbijanska je vlada odlučila da se kralj Stambolić, bivši predsjednik Republike Srbije, pokopati u Beogradu.

Time je potvrđeno povjerenje u Stambolića, koji se obilježavao 12 godina u Srbiji. Time je potvrđeno povjerenje u Stambolića, koji se obilježavao 12 godina u Srbiji.

Stambolić je bio jedan od najvažnijih političara Srbije. Stambolić je bio jedan od najvažnijih političara Srbije.

## HAAG Milošević otpužio vlasti u Beogradu i Sud za kampanju protiv sebe

# Milošević zatražio zaštitu za obitelji

Cijelu sumnju za inicijaciju Stambolićeva ubojstva Milošević je preuzeo na sebe

U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

Potraga za Milanom Stambolićem, koji se pojavio u Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. Potraga za Milanom Stambolićem, koji se pojavio u Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.



U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

Milan Stambolić, bivši predsjednik Srbije, zatražio je zaštitu za svoju obitelj. Milan Stambolić, bivši predsjednik Srbije, zatražio je zaštitu za svoju obitelj.

### Uhićen Dušan Maričić Gumar

**BEGRAD** - Policijska agencija u Beogradu jučer je uhićila Dušana Maričića Guma. Policijska agencija u Beogradu jučer je uhićila Dušana Maričića Guma.

### Kritika crne Mape

U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

### Uhićen Dušan Maričić Gumar

U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

## BH Vijeće ministara Bosne i Hercegovine jučer je proglasilo dan žalosti zbog Srpskog pokopano 600 identifikiranih tijela žrtava srpskog masakra

# Pokopano 600 identifikiranih tijela žrtava srpskog masakra

**SARAJEVO** - U tijelu Bosne i Hercegovine jučer je pokopano 600 identifikiranih tijela žrtava srpskog masakra. U tijelu Bosne i Hercegovine jučer je pokopano 600 identifikiranih tijela žrtava srpskog masakra.

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### 600 žrtava od ukupno 8000

U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

### Jedna žrtva za najprijateljske

U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

### Jedna žrtva za najprijateljske

U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001. U Beču, 1. svibnja, 2001.

Article from Jutarnji list 1 April 2003, title: "Funeral for 600 bodies of identified victims of Serb massacre"

# Večernji list

BOŠNJA I HERCEGOVINA



## GOTOVINA POBJEGAO BRODOM

Hrvatska vlada otkriva čin da je bijeg  
generala Gotovini omogućio talijan STB. 10.

VRIJEME  
DANAS  
KOPNO  
26 / 30 °C

JADRAN  
26 / 30 °C

IZJAVLJENO 21. 09. 2003.

www.vecernji-list.hr

ODD. 47. BF. 14.337

1,5 KM

D 150 K, A 133 K, CH 330, NE 150 K, F 133 K, B 133 K, G 133 K, H 133 K, I 133 K, J 133 K, K 133 K, L 133 K, M 133 K, N 133 K, O 133 K, P 133 K, Q 133 K, R 133 K, S 133 K, T 133 K, U 133 K, V 133 K, W 133 K, X 133 K, Y 133 K, Z 133 K

# CLINTON: BIO JE TO GENOCID

Clinton otvorio memorijalni centar u Potočarima kraj Srebrenice STR. 3.

Molimo Te Bože  
Svemogući,  
Neka tuga postane  
nada!  
Neka osveta bude  
pravda!  
Neka majčina suza  
Bude molitva:  
Da se nikome nikad  
ne ponovi Srebrenica!

Reisu-l-ulema  
Srebrenička molitva  
Potočari  
11. juli, 2001



15 PRILOZI



HRVATSKE ZVLJEZDE | Ekshumirano

Article from Vecernji list 21 September 2003, title: "Clinton: It was genocide"





to mention that the first Serbian President to visit Potočari was Boris Tadić in 2010, seven years after the opening of the Memorial Centre. This says a lot about the dominant narrative in the Serbian political scene and society at the time when this report in “Politika” was published, which was based on disregarding events in Srebrenica). In Croatia, the daily newspaper “Jutarnji list” also reported on the first funerals that were held in Potočari in an article entitled “Funeral for 600 bodies of identified victims of Serb massacre” (Jutarnji list, 1 April 2003), and in September 2003, when Bill Clinton attended the official opening of the Memorial Centre, another Croatian daily “Večernji list” published that story on the title page under the headline: “Clinton: This was genocide” (Večernji list, 21 September 2003). The Serbian daily newspaper “Večernje novosti” reported on the opening of the Memorial Centre in an article headed: “Bill Clinton opened the Memorial Centre in Potočari near Srebrenica yesterday: This must never happen again” (Večernje novosti, 21 September 2003).

All these reports were mainly based on facts, and reported on a specific event, but the fact that the region’s media reported extensively about the Srebrenica genocide (using that word as well), and thus reminded their readership and audiences of crimes that had been committed in Srebrenica eight years previously, was significant to set in motion a trend of extensive reporting on Srebrenica, at least on 11 July – the Memorial Day of the Srebrenica genocide. These media examples are also important because they prove that the first step towards peace-building and shaping good relations in the future is to provide facts, and consensus based on facts, about past events. The media can (and must) contribute to that process.

## **Conclusion: Shaping the future by education through the media**

As was said at the beginning, the media are not only mediators of current events, but also interpreters of the past and educators for the future. The role of the media in interpreting the past (and especially the 1990s wars in the Balkans) is very important in this context. The media can (and do) play an important educational role, even when they merely report on current affairs and events.

In the Balkans, the media did have a negative role in the beginning and during the wars, but there were excellent examples of professional media reporting at that time as well. It would therefore be extremely unfair to those who did a good job in bad times to generalise and accuse all media and journalists of being wartime “partners in crime”. It would however also be naïve to believe that all media could be (and will be) actors in post-war reconciliation and peace-building, since there are still media in



the Balkans (as in other parts of the world) that do not follow professional standards, but which endorse dominant post-war political narratives and agendas that do not lead to peace-building.

However, examples of media which reported (and still report) impartially and conflict-sensitively, managing to bring different perspectives into their societies, underpin the statement that the media can be a significant tool in peace-building and in educating citizens about the past, something which is a precondition for shaping the future. This is especially important in the Balkans region, where there is still no consensus among historians on how to teach about the 1990s wars and where history books offer not only diverse, but actually opposing interpretations of recent history.<sup>5</sup> The educational role of the media, based on their readiness to offer interpretations that are different (from the dominant national(istic) ones of the past) is thus crucial for peace-building in the Balkans, but it can only be achieved if the mass media are willing to provide a forum for dissonant voices (diverging from the dominant paradigm) and to report factually and fairly. We can only hope that, in time, there will be more and more such media in the Balkans.

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5/ And not only history books; in his book "Dijagnoza – patriotizam" (2010), Nenad Veličković provides examples that prove his hypothesis that education in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the field of literature is based on nationalistic narratives and is strongly influenced by the dominant ideology.

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*Veličković, N. (2010): Dijagnoza – patriotizam. Belgrade: Fabrika knjiga.*

<http://www.potocarimc.org>

<http://www.srebrenica.org.uk>

<https://www.iwpr.net/global-voices/medias-role-balkan-wars>

## Remembrance and reconciliation on a community level in Srebrenica

*On 11 July 1995, a genocide took place in Srebrenica, in this so-called “UN Safe Area”, when more than 8,500 Muslim (Bosniak) men and boys were killed. Since then, the women who lost their family members, along with other survivors, have been working tirelessly for justice, for victims to be found, perpetrators to be brought to justice and a memorial for the victims to be established. Both UN tribunals (the ICTY and the ICG) ruled that what happened in Srebrenica was genocide. As women and other survivors continue their fight for justice, they still encounter a culture of genocide denial. The Serb community tries to equate their own suffering with that of the Muslims (Bosniaks) by building their own memorials and downplaying the genocide committed against their neighbour Muslims (Bosniaks). The question of how to reconcile the two communities in Srebrenica remains.*

## Remembrance

Based on forensic evidence, accounts told by survivors and expert witnesses, as well as admissions of guilt by Bosnian Serb military officers in an international forum, the ICTY has demonstrated that Bosnian Serb military forces carried out premeditated and meticulously-planned massacres which meet the criteria for genocide as defined by the UN Convention on Genocide. In February 2007, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Serbia, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) also ruled that the Srebrenica massacre constituted genocide (Di Caprio 2009).

Many women subsequently realised that their loved ones had been killed, and they established associations of women fighting for justice (The Mothers of Srebrenica, Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves in Sarajevo and the Women of Srebrenica in Tuzla).

The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) that was established in 1996 is the main organisation responsible for identifying the “missing” throughout the former Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serb military forces not only denied, but also attempted by malicious design to conceal, all evidence of the Srebrenica massacre. To avoid detection, the Bosnian Serbs often relocated remains from their original burial sites in or near Srebrenica to secondary mass graves. During this process, mainly carried out between August and November 1995, they deliberately damaged and dispersed remains with heavy operating equipment (Di Caprio 2009).

The mothers and wives of the Srebrenica victims embarked on an exhausting struggle to ensure that their loved ones would have at least a decent burial place. This struggle, according to their testimonies, was hard and painful.<sup>1</sup> Persevering against the opposition of the Republika Srpska authorities, and shortly before the fifth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre in July 2000, the survivors succeeded in obtaining permission to establish a memorial and cemetery in the field directly opposite the former headquarters of the Dutch peacekeepers. The first major commemoration of the genocide took place in Srebrenica on the 5th anniversary in July 2000. This was the first commemoration held in Srebrenica-Potočari right across from the former Dutch UN base on the territory of the Republika Srpska. The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Complex was founded in October 2000 by the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch by decree as a non-profit organisation that aims to build and maintain the complex in memory of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide. Thousands of people attended the ceremony on 31 March 2003, when the first 600

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1/ Srebrenica/Ten years after.

identified Srebrenica genocide victims were buried at the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Complex. The then High Representative Paddy Ashdown issued a decision on 25 March 2003 transferring ownership of the Battery Factory, which had served as the UN Base at the time of the genocide, to the Foundation of the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery. In 2003, on 11 July 282 identified victims were buried at the site, and thousands of people attended the anniversary of Srebrenica genocide, including a high-ranking Republika Srpska official (Prime Minister Dragan Mikerević). Later that year, on 20 September 2003, the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Complex was officially opened by former US President Bill Clinton. Subsequently burials take place only once a year on 11 July, when the Srebrenica genocide anniversary is marked. The Republika Srpska's official panel investigating the Srebrenica massacre acknowledged on 14 October 2004 that Bosnian Serb forces had killed more than 7,000 Bosniaks in Srebrenica in 1995 (Bideleux & Jeffries 2006). On the 10th anniversary of the genocide, 11 July 2005, with thousands of people in attendance, 610 identified victims were buried at the Memorial, the site which symbolises the worst massacre in Europe since the end of World War II. In 2010, on the 15th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, 775 identified victims were buried at the Memorial in Potočari, representing the largest number of victims buried at once. Serbian President Boris Tadić, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner were among the dignitaries attending the event.

According to a decree of the High Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling, the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide now belongs to the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. To date, 6,241 identified victims have been buried there. At least 2,000 victims are still to be buried at the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide, and at least a thousand victims are still to be found in mass graves. A Peace March is held every year to honour those who died trying to flee from Srebrenica to Tuzla on the so-called Death March, when thousands of people walk for peace to pay their respects and remember the Srebrenica genocide victims. While the Memorial is a reminder of the genocide victims and the Death March honours those who tried to escape, all the places where victims were killed have unfortunately not been marked. These places include abandoned fields or buildings and places where cattle and agricultural tools are kept like the Kravica execution site.

Some of the sites are schools where the children attending them are unaware that people were killed there. Pilica cultural centre is the most significant place where everything is falling apart, and the entire building will collapse in a couple of years. Someday in the future, nothing will

remain in the places where victims were killed, and only the memory of the survivors will be left. It is often uncomfortable to visit these execution sites since visitors might get strange looks from the local residents, and will probably even be bothered with questions about the reasons for their visit, followed by swearing and threats. The Mothers of Srebrenica and other survivors go and visit all of these places where their loved ones were kept as prisoners and the places where they were killed every year on 13 July, being escorted by a lot of police, which is sometimes very difficult. In 2009, the European Parliament overwhelmingly adopted a resolution proclaiming 11 July a Day of Commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide throughout the European Union (EU)<sup>2</sup>. There are countries which have individually passed resolutions on the Srebrenica genocide condemning the genocide and pledging to remember the victims.

According to Sonja Biserko, president of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, and Edina Bećirević, from the Faculty of Criminology and Security Studies at the University of Sarajevo, denial of the Srebrenica genocide takes many forms in Serbia. The methods range from the brutal to the deceitful. Denial is present most strongly in the political discourse, in the media, in the sphere of law, and in the educational system (Bisersko & Bećirević 2009).

Two communities live side by side in Srebrenica after the genocide. The Muslim (Bosniak) community is comprised mainly of women who have returned to Srebrenica after the loss of their loved ones to live in their memory. This community desperately seeks justice and truth about the events of July 1995. The second, the Serb community, claims that their victims are not being recognised by the world, at the same time downplaying the genocide against their Muslim (Bosniak) neighbours. There are two separate narratives and commemorations, one in Potočari and another one in Kravica. The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide has been acknowledged and supported by the International Community, while local Serbs have been left to their own devices to commemorate the victims on their side. Children attending school in Srebrenica do not learn anything about the Bosnian war, and it is up to their parents and ethnic community to teach this history. The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide is regularly visited by many people from all over the world. Students only come from schools and universities from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and unfortunately not from the Republika

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2/ <http://srebrenica-genocide.blogspot.com/2009/01/european-parliament-adopts-srebrenica.html>

Srpska and Serbia. Only tiny groups of visitors come from the Republika Srpska and Serbia through an NGO which deals with human rights issues. The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide has been built as a permanent reminder of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide where future generations will learn the lesson that such an evil should never happen again. The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide has been in a process to convert the former Dutch UN base into a memorial in order to keep the memory alive and ensure that the Srebrenica genocide will never happen again. Memorialisation is very complicated in the case of Srebrenica, where two communities have different experiences and different remembrance sites. Therefore collective ceremonies compete in “commemorative” arenas in which two ethnic groups present their own perspective of the past. The question is how to overcome these competing arenas and find a way to reconcile and create hope for a peaceful future?



*The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide*

## Reconciliation in Srebrenica?

The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre and Cemetery for the victims of the 1995 genocide was, at the beginning, an important tool in the process of Muslims (Bosniaks) returning to Srebrenica. At the beginning of this process, there were many Serb refugees from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina living in Srebrenica in formerly Muslim (Bosniak) homes, even though they had never lived in Srebrenica before the war. Many of these people have not acknowledged the Muslims (Bosniaks) who have returned to Srebrenica because they thought that Muslims (Bosniaks) would never return after the war and that they would be able to keep the property for good.

To support the influx of Serb residents, the Republika Srpska Government encouraged the new inhabitants of formerly Bosniak homes to assume legal ownership of abandoned properties. It even issued official documentation in the names of the new Serb occupants (Nettelfield & Wagner 2014).

Later the ownership had been legally re-established through municipality officials, which was imposed by the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even now, Muslims (Bosniaks) in Srebrenica encounter a lot of difficulties in terms of their educational rights and other rights to which they are entitled as a constituent group of the Republika Srpska. Local relations between the different ethnic groups have yet to be restored and repaired in a long-lasting process. Because there were no internal structures to foster reconciliation, the international community could – and in the author's opinion should – have introduced and fostered tools of reconciliation in Srebrenica, setting the Srebrenica experience with reconciliation as a role model for the rest of the country. But the international community has unfortunately failed or never tried to start this process in Srebrenica, and its inhabitants have been left to deal with their past on their own.

The bureaucratic system is however extremely inefficient when it comes to achieving local reconciliation, and instead concentrates on universal principles and punishing the high-level officials who bear the greatest responsibility (Kontsevaia 2013). The attitude of many politicians and intellectuals as well as large sections of the population in Serbia, in order to cover up the past, has found resonance or indeed reflects the way in which Serbs in the Republika Srpska deal with the Srebrenica genocide (Tepić 2012).

The process of reconciliation in Srebrenica forms part of the reconciliation process of the entire country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is up to the political elite to decide when this process will start. Why shouldn't Sre-



brenica be the starting point? The people of Srebrenica live side by side, and there are no physical divisions among them. People work together, children go to school together and young people hang out in Srebrenica night clubs. To an outsider, it seems to be a pretty, quiet, peaceful place that is perfect to live in. For those who live in Srebrenica, however, there are invisible borders in people's minds. It is fine when Muslims (Bosniaks) and Serbs talk about sports, weather, agriculture, hunting, business and so on, but trouble begins as soon as they start to speak about the past. Therefore, people who live in Srebrenica are used to avoiding speaking about the past because everybody knows that there are two different narratives of the past. Muslims (Bosniaks) who live in Srebrenica know that many of their Serb neighbours took part in the Srebrenica genocide. This leads Muslims (Bosniaks) to remain silent when they encounter those people, who might be taxi drivers, salesmen, local politicians, labourers, carpenters, bus drivers, and so on. The reconciliation process needs to involve all the affected members of the community and, in order to do so, inter-community narratives need to be emphasised. The process is currently still permeated by ethnic differences and selective collective memories (Kontsevaia 2013). Not a single step has been taken to launch a process of reconciliation by either Bosnia and Herzegovina, or by the Republika Srpska. There were attempts to establish truth commission initiatives such as REKOM<sup>3</sup> which was initiated by the Humanitarian Law Centre from Belgrade, the Research and Documentation Centre from Sarajevo and the Documentation Centre from Zagreb. The coalition aims to ensure "a safe future without fear that crimes will happen again" (Tepić 2012). Later on, the "Expert Working Group on Transitional Justice" was established by UNDP. Both of these initiatives have failed to gain political support from ex-Yugoslavian countries, and it remains unclear whether one of these initiatives will be effective in the future.

### **What are the preconditions to start a process of reconciliation in Srebrenica between the two ethnic groups?**

This process has to be run by the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republika Srpska should be part of it. The international community should use all the means at its disposal to support and encourage this process; the Bosnian State Court should continue judicial trials of perpe-

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<sup>3/</sup> REKOM: Regional Commission for Establishing the Facts about the War Crimes in the former Yugoslavia; see: <http://www.recom.link>.

trators (not just top officials but ordinary soldiers as well) and keep doing the work that the ICTY had started. Regional initiatives for reconciliation such as REKOM should be supported by Bosnia and Herzegovina; victims have to be acknowledged and honoured; the culture of denying the genocide and other crimes has to end; there is a need for genuine dialogue between the two communities in Srebrenica; lessons have to be learnt from the genocide and other crimes; civil society can play an important role in the reconciliation process in Srebrenica, acting as a bridge between the two ethnic groups and Srebrenica authorities; local authorities and party leaders have to support this process.

If – as part of these processes – the genocide and other crimes become part of a wisely designed educational curriculum that is incorporated into a mutually established educational effort, there is a chance for a change in understanding and attitudes to be achieved among younger generations as well as adults. Students visiting the sites of the mass murders will remember the victims and themselves contribute to keeping the memory alive. All this must happen in order to ensure that such crimes never happen again.

There is a long way to go to achieve all of this in Srebrenica at this point, but if we all take a small step towards reconciliation, we might one day see a light at end of the tunnel for Srebrenica. Srebrenica desperately needs a bright future for its citizens, regardless of their faith and ethnic background. If we manage to rebuild Srebrenica and to reconcile in the place where the genocide happened, this could serve as a beacon for the rest of the country and entire world to follow.

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## Srebrenica ... women and their contribution to peace-building

*This is the story of simple women who have marked Srebrenica and returned life to the town in an emotional and amazing way. It is a story of internal conflict and the exceptional will of those who have lost their loved ones. They have built their suffering into the present and the future of Srebrenica, based on the ongoing need to deal with the past while contributing to a better future in their own environment. Women have made a significant contribution to building peace and trust between the war-divided sides comprising people who speak the same language, who share the same sky and the same space in a wounded town whose roar echoes throughout the world. The results of women's solidarity cannot be measured in numbers, but there is a spirit of silent solidarity-based support which breaks down barriers and opens the door to the past.*

## **Inspired by experience**

Living in Srebrenica used to be a privilege. Today's reality is quite different. Media exploitation and political torture have not left this small town in Bosnia and Herzegovina unscathed, even now that 20 years have passed since the atrocities that took place during the war. It is difficult to continue living in such an environment, flooded as it is by loneliness and painful memories. A day is infinitely long, and opportunities are infinitely few, but THEY have never given up and given in to despair. This is a story about women who, in spite of the suffering that marked their lives forever, find the strength to change everyday life... for the good of all. This is the experiential story of people whom I met and loved and about events that I experienced. This is the story of the partners who supported the great initiatives...

Writing about Srebrenica from Srebrenica is not easy. It's hard to get out of the skin which is formed in Srebrenica's reality and to be a silent observer of that reality. Thoughts are somehow agitated, restless, coming and going. Through this article I will try to share experiential knowledge of the process of building peace in the most sensitive place in the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Europe, from the perspective of a woman who formed her activism through NGOs, unconsciously guided by a desire for change and a for a safer environment for her children...

## **Confronting Srebrenica through phases of adjustment**

I came to Srebrenica in late 1995. Destiny, I'd say. I came not knowing much about the town, about its tumultuous distant past and the horrible fate that had struck the town during the war years of 1992-1995. Prone as I am to forming strong bonds with people, streets, walls and the environment, it is difficult for me to cope with change, and I have always experienced considerable stress at any change of permanent address. Such was the case at the end of 1995 as well.

In a new town that had gaping, open wounds, I met new people who brought their concerns, uncertainties and hopes with them, along with the desire to make their own new homes and not to live in someone else's home because they had been expelled from their old homes. During those years of 1995 and 1996, Srebrenica was inhabited by Serbs from over 50 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I had a feeling that some of the residents did not feel comfortable. This was reason enough to start dividing into "theirs and ours"... "residents and refugees"... "the people of

Sarajevo, Zenica people, Vakuf people, people from Ključ...”, always ready to be counted and to emphasise who has the exclusive right to a dignified life.

The desire for change was strong, and I was not alone in these thoughts. Like-minded individuals encouraged one another. Activities that were carried out with the “Amica” organisation from Freiburg started as early as in 1998. We began with socialising and training, and initiated ideas and plans. It was a major boost to women. We singled ourselves out from the crowd, made visions together and made plans for brighter days. At that time, the first inter-ethnic encounters began between the Serbian women who lived in Srebrenica in those years, and women from Srebrenica, who were living in Tuzla back then, and who were Bosniaks. There was a lot of mistrust between us, and little communication. I remember that we looked at each other with curiosity, at the same time wondering how we are not so different... In retrospect, it was unusual, and even cute, but back then it was a stressful confrontation, especially since many of these women bore wounds due to the loss of their closest family members. However, women have a sensibility for understanding and compassion. It did not take too much time before we became close supporters for one another. To be honest, it was my first confrontation with the truth about the Srebrenica tragedy and with these women’s losses. They had been left without husbands and brothers... the most painful thing was the knowledge that many of them had lost their children... “disappeared in the war”... they were all killed.

Joint meetings, knowledge and a desire for change encouraged us to organise and launch initiatives that would encourage women and young people to get involved in social and political life, the idea for our voice to be heard in Srebrenica and beyond. It was a challenge for everyone. I’m not sure that we had support in the community for our “reckless actions” back then; it was mostly silence that confronted us, with occasional comments that we allegedly were “a sect and traitors, because we cooperated with the other party”. There was mistrust and among people “on the other side”; some thought we were “spies”. I am not sure that we had the understanding of our families either... they sometimes said out loud that we were “volunteering where we were wasting time and nothing could come of it”. Our energy and determination overcame the obstacles that faced us; it did not take too much time to assert ourselves, and our sincere desire was recognised by donors who, in 2000, provided support for the reconstruction of areas in the Cultural Centre that had been damaged. In May of the same year, we registered the young people’s and women’s “SARA” Srebrenica Association. We were given an eerily large space which was a waste storage, without electricity and basic working conditions.



*Downtown Srebrenica, 2015*

We organised several activities for cleaning, decorating, repairing and making that office space useable, which was also the place for socialising. I remember that we found a huge old wood stove that we set near the window so the smoke could go out. We coughed, our eyes burned, sometimes we would come home with ash on our faces, but our centre worked for twelve hours a day, and it was highly active. A group of young, well-educated high school students gathered around us and took a step forward along with us by taking part in inter-ethnic camps. An organisation that had been created out of necessity, by local people, was growing bigger.

Sometime during this period of 1998 as the organisation was developing, the return of Bosniaks to Srebrenica got under way. The first post-war multi-ethnic government was formed, despite many obstacles and difficulties. After all, they were bound by other interests. They were paid and instructed by the international community. They did not have much choice. Working on a project implemented by an international organisation led to a few of us being assigned to conduct research on Bosniak politicians; what

were their plans, expectations... the level of trust and security they feel in Srebrenica. Frankly, the feeling of security was not on a high level even for us during that time ... nor was the trust in politicians, who were vocal in levelling accusations at one another.

Four other NGOs besides SARA operated in Srebrenica back then. We tried to organise our work through the NGO Forum of Srebrenica, which never operated at full capacity despite the good intentions of all those involved. However, there were initiatives that were noticed in the community. It was strong enough that we worked together and that we were made up of different ethnicities from different entities, with the same desire and intention to improve life in Srebrenica, to contribute towards building peace, and primarily to restore trust among its citizens. At the time, only older people returned to Srebrenica. The sporadic return of Bosniaks echoed through the town. It was in the news, and there was a feeling of uncertainty in the air, with the same level of fear among those who were returning to their homes and those who did not want them to return.

Shortly after our formal registration, we received a visit from a representative of DVV International, who presented the work of his organisation, as well as plans and possibilities to apply for projects in adult education. We recognised the potential for the development of our organisation and for the creation of educational programmes that would help develop employment and self-employment opportunities among our target group, which is primarily made up of women. This offer caused us to focus on researching the needs of our community, to wisely plan activities focused on education, which would have multiple effects when it came to (re-)building the community. At that point, we hardly suspected what a significant role DVV International would have in our design, growth and commitment as an organisation. It was not only about the projects; there have also been investments in partnerships and in the development of local organisations working in communities. For the first time there were investments in the development of human resources, for those who needed support to withstand challenges and obstructions and to find in themselves and in others the strength to persevere on the path to change.

I would like to go back to a number of estimates and “roles” that people simply attached to us. From “traitors” to “spies”, to “sectarian organisations”, to “bitches who are foreign mercenaries”... and who knows what else; we were marked in our own skin by the looks and sharp words of the authorities and of our fellow citizens, known and unknown to us, coming from different genders and ethnicities. It wasn’t easy, but we didn’t give up; we were moving forward, boldly and with confidence.



## Solidarity and understanding come when things are most difficult

The first meetings in Srebrenica with mothers who had lost their children were emotional. In the beginning, we exchanged glances in silence. Any attempt at conversation would remain one-sided. You could feel an indescribable discomfort, without a lot of expectations to understand why. One day, a smallish woman with a sharp look in her eyes, which were flashing with anger, cried out "What, you came here because you thought there were no Muslims here. The Chetniks didn't kill all of us. We're back and what are you going to do about it?"... She spoke severely and fast, although her voice trembled. Any attempt to do or say anything culminated in fresh attacks. Silence followed... she lowered her head and started to cry. Having gathered strength, she told us her story. They took her young sons away from her, and she never saw them again. She never went to sleep or woke up without thinking about it. She said she could not look at her father or her husband; she said that her life was not worth living because it was unjust to have them alive and not their children... the silence was interspersed with sobbing. Empathy and female solidarity developed into a friendship that is inseparable today. Today we understand each other without a word being spoken. Her expression is impersonal, crushed by grief, but then again, full of warmth and tenderness... full of anticipation. She is not hard to understand.

We found the inspiration for our work in the local context, in people who talk about their problems, the situations they are facing and that we share together. This led to the creation of a project entitled "Inter-religious dialogue as conflict prevention", supported by DVV International. Clerics from three religions (an Imam as well as Orthodox and Catholic priests) sat at the same table for the first time in 2005. "For the first time since the war began", we used to say until one of the religious leaders pointed out that it was a "historic moment, since it was the first time after 60 years...", and that religious officials did not give public statements in Yugoslavia. Then came the participants, distrustful, out of curiosity, wanting to hear, to learn, to speak... seeking an opportunity for themselves and for others. You could hear that these gatherings were something that was the beginning of a new spirit in our area; many felt a more intimate belonging to the environment. These were opportunities for meetings and discussions, to get to know one another, the same people we meet every day on the street and know very little or almost nothing about, especially when it comes to the religious teaching and practice of "the others". Together we celebrated religious holidays, Christmas and Ramadan. These events restored confidence in the strength and the sense of a community that is becoming aligned. "I have not seen a single miracle about which I could



*Magbula Divovic*

testify, but I felt a little bit changed every time, a shade more tolerant and a better person”, Fr. Peter used to say after a joint meeting. Any doubt about forgiveness and reconciliation being achieved at these events was removed. You could feel the relief through conversation that breaks the emotional complex and reduces it to a more tolerable reality with which we need to live. They told us that we were brave... and we were very proud of our fellow citizens, of the women, and of the lonely mothers from whose words you could see the concern and the struggle for a better future for some other children living in Srebrenica. Hatidža Mehmedović, the President of the “Mothers of Srebrenica” association, reminds us with a warm hug on the street of the impact that those meetings and dialogue have had in Srebrenica, and how much they reduced tensions in the July days when, on 11 July, there is a commemoration of the genocide against Bosniaks, and on 12 July the Serb suffering is commemorated. That is exactly what we contributed to. Hatidža lost all the male members of her immediate and extended family, as well as two sons. She was left alone in the world...

## No school ever taught me as much as they did...

Destinies were similar to one another; sorrow, pain and tears have no national mark. We met women who only lived so that the memory of their loved ones could live on with them. It did not matter whether they were Serbs, Bosniaks or Croats; the same identity has marked them with sadness; they are mothers on whom war has inflicted immeasurable pain. "How many years fit in one day when we look back and when we look through the results, through what we have done... How much stress and effort we suffered because we had to prove ourselves again and again. We needed to show to ourselves that we still can; we needed to show to others that we are still alive...", a woman from Potočari said softly.

They didn't surrender, they walked on, motivated by good neighbourly relations and by all of those values that those words carry in our tradition. They were searching for solutions – to help those who needed help, how to get to old and lonely people, how to make the lives of young people meaningful, how to protect natural resources and preserve the environment...

I remember that at one of the first joint meetings that were held through the project activities of the "School of knitting" (DVV International project), Magbula brought Milka to join the group. Milka was in a difficult financial situation herself and her health was poor, but she struggled to equally contribute whatever she could with her hands. It started with swapping patterns for different garments. The first joint work was made; warm sweaters that were distributed to children from socially-vulnerable families. This friendly relationship has continued; they share their troubles the way only women know how to, with courage and dignity... discreetly! It was indescribably worthwhile to share time and space with those dignified women. I wondered countless times where they found their strength, living by themselves and tainted by tragedy. I dared to ask them the question out loud: "Working together like this means a lot to me. I would say that this is an obligation on the civic level, but it also satisfies our need as humans". "We share our troubles and that makes it easier", Magbula answered. She was a woman who could have been my mother by age, but also by the warm words and the big heart that only a mother can have. After a short silence she added, very seriously: "There are many problems in the community. The opportunity has opened up to finally say it publicly. I believe that someone who has recognised us will identify priorities which we point out". In my mind I have pictures of the hospitable, warm-hearted, wise and unobtrusive heroines of our time and space. They don't receive a lot of support, but they do get results.

They are proud of themselves, but that does not stand out. They do not live here because they have to, but because they feel that every inch of this country is theirs. Grieving for their loved ones who are gone, they fight for a better future at the same time – not for themselves, but for a generation that will continue to live in this region in spite of the tragedy. No school ever taught me as much as they have. And I am infinitely grateful to them.

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## Teaching World War I: How to engage the younger generations through online resources and oral evidence

*The article reviews how the Great War is presented and taught in Bulgarian schools, and explores opportunities to attract the interest of the younger generations towards the topic of the War through innovative online resources and preserved oral evidence. It is structured in two parts. The first analyses current history textbooks in Bulgaria, focusing on the units that are devoted to World War I. Exercises using interactive approaches and various resources are presented in the second part, aiming to provoke a deeper understanding of what happened, empathy with those who took part in the War and with their families, along with developing skills, forming attitudes and acquiring and reflecting on democratic values.*

The term “war” has deep roots, different definitions and theoretical explanations. Wars accompany the historical development of civilizations; they are present in our time. Have you thought about the smell of war? Or how does peace smell? Why do wars as a place of “traumatic memory” mark a steady trend in Bulgarian history textbooks, which remains almost unchanged in the course of a series of rewritings, regardless of the individual nuances arising from the status quo of the political system?

The answer to the last question is encoded in the historical destiny of the young Bulgarian state in the dissonance between the decisions of the Congress of Berlin of 1878 and Bulgaria’s desire to achieve unity of the triad territory=nation=state (Stoycheva 1998/5). The dominance of the national question subordinates all the wars in which the state participated in the first half of the 20th Century to the idea of unity, including World War I, named in the textbooks of that period “Paneuropean”, “The Great War” (Stanev 1929: 244-384).

After the establishment of the Communist regime in Bulgaria, the War was defined in history textbooks as “predatory” and “imperialist”; a war for the redistribution of the world, of markets and raw materials; a war aiming to prevent the revolutionary upheavals of popular discontent and distraction of national liberation movements in Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Despite propaganda clichés in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist ideology, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Bulgarian history textbooks underline the “liberation” role of the Bulgarian Army “towards the seized Bulgarian lands” (Bozhinov et al. 1971: 200), and emphasis is placed on the “high fighting spirit and mass heroism” of our soldiers who “believed that they were fighting for the liberation of the rest of the Bulgarian population that was still in slavery”. The “Narrow Socialists” party was declared the sole defender of national interests.

The topic is similarly interpreted in the textbooks for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades (Burmov et al. 1976: 282-287). In direct relation with the results of the Second Balkan War (1913), described as a “catastrophe” of “the adventurous policy of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and the monarchy” (Burmov et al. 1976: 282), the authors use as an assessment of the World War characteristics such as “cruel” and “imperialist”. The idea of national unity is subordinated to the “militarist intentions” of King Ferdinand, and therefore the Bulgarian people are allegedly “involved against their will” in the world conflict, unlike the bourgeoisie, which uses the War “for gaining great riches” (Burmov et al. 1976: 293).

“The new reading” of the past that started after the collapse of the Communist system in 1989 situates the world military conflict in the first textbooks, published in 1991, in a broad geopolitical scope. In the next generation of textbooks that were introduced in Bulgarian schools in the



*Bulgarian textbooks of History and Civilization for 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades*

period 1994-1996, World War I is methodologically perceived as the “end of an era” (Pantev et al. 1994: 258-263).

The contemporary textbooks introduced after 2000 and revised in 2012 include the topic of the Great War as part of the course of Bulgarian history (6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades), as well in the course of world history (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades), which is studied from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grades.

The review of textbooks that was carried out for the purpose of the article includes 21 textbooks<sup>1</sup> used for teaching the subject “History and Civilization” in Bulgarian schools and five earlier editions<sup>2</sup>, thus making it possible to frame a current snapshot of the place of World War I in the selection and structure of the curricula.

In the national history course for 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the theme forms part of a unit of lessons focused on the participation of Bulgaria in three wars – the two Balkan wars and World War I, united under the common denominator: “wars for national unification” (Kusheva et al. 2007: 94-98).

The Great War is taught in great detail in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The textbook by the publishing house “Prosveta” reveals the context of international relations from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, thus allowing young people to under-

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1/ The textbooks by the publishing house “Slovo” are not included in the edited 2012 Ministry of Education and Science approved list, thus the total number of textbooks is currently 19. The textbooks are listed in Table 1 at the end of the article.

2/ These textbooks are added in the cited bibliography.

stand the causes of world conflict. It traces the military activities and the end of the War. In the textbooks by another publisher “Anubis”, the War is reflected through the title of the section: “The suicide of Europe”, which includes four themes: unions and discords in great politics, the World War, the catastrophe, the end of an era. The authors introduce the category of “total war”, and manage to outline the transition towards “modernity” on many levels.

The 10<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks, four in all, approach the topic of the world conflict differently. In the textbook published by “Prosveta”, the new world order is presented to the students through the Versailles system of treaties, omnisciently described as “a peace built on sand” (Markov et al. 2012: 14-19). The textbook published by “Anubis” gives special attention to World War I as “one of the phenomena of 20th Century civilization” (Mircheva et al. 2012: 15). The title of the unit itself contains the opinion of the authors – “The Great War – an unprecedented act of violence against the human being and morals”. The next topic focuses on the moral conditions of the post-war crisis and on political conflicts that leave a lasting imprint on the “front generation” and its various groups.

The 11<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks, published by “Prosveta”, “Planeta-3”, “Anubis” and “Kragozor”, separate World War I into an independent unit. The content of the educational books published by “Slovo” are the subject of the current analysis because these were the textbooks in use in many schools in the period 2000–2012.

In the selection of topics for advanced level<sup>3</sup>, the authors of the textbooks published by “Slovo” present two titles with ambiguous wording and direct correlation: “Bulgaria and the European concert of Powers” (Lazarov et al. 2007: 143-148); and “The Kingdom of Bulgaria in the labyrinths of the Versailles system” (Lazarov et al. 2007: 149-154). The birth of the new Bulgaria is placed in the context of understanding the consensus among the major European countries after the victory over Napoleon, and is successfully visualised with the key phrase “diplomatic concert”. The facts of national history are interpreted in the context of the strategic idea of the country’s international political emancipation, achieving national unity with regard to ethno-territorial aspects. Bulgaria’s participation in the Balkan wars and World War I is seen in a dialectical relation with the Balkan layer of diplomatic controversy encoded in various national doctrines of the neighbouring countries for “the rights and the role of each of them in the future structure of the peninsula” (Lazarov et al. 2007: 145). Thus, the

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3/ Here the history subject is studied 3-5-7 hours per week (depending on the profile of the school) compared to the regular classes of 2 hours per week.



hypothesis that is logically built into textbooks for compulsory education is that the peace treaties that were concluded after the Second Balkan War “crucify” Bulgaria, resulting in “lost victories”. In the introduction to the topic of the Great War, succinctly named “Crash (1915–1918)”, the conditions in the country are described as follows: “humiliated, isolated, suspected and accused of all mortal sins in the Balkans”. Logically, the last paragraph – “the Catastrophe”, continues the teleological chain set by the previous lesson units. It is developed in the school book for advanced-level classes, where the Neuilly Treaty, imposed on the country, is described as “the ark of Bulgaria”, which sets in motion “the beginning of a long, difficult and dangerous path for recovery of the full parameters of independent statehood” (Lazarov et al. 2007: 149).

The general picture of the educational content of contemporary 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade History and Civilization textbooks makes it possible to conclude that the main content is entirely orientated towards political history and the formula “*fights-and-peace treaties*”. Thus, just one of the many “faces” of the war is shown. There is either no information at all, or only bits are presented, about the ordinary man (and woman), and the regular soldier. Even though the uses of history through the prism of nations and nation-states in the Balkans in the modern and contemporary era are commented on for the first time as educational content in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade advanced textbooks by A. Kertin and M. Yovevska (Prosveta: 2007), the history of everyday life is neglected as a constituent of the authors’ discourse.

If we compare the external structure of school textbooks with the content analysis of “key issues and tasks” that are present in each unit, a certain prism is drawn through which we can decode the authors’ messages towards the young generation about World War I and the role of history as a means of civic education and historical awareness-formation.

We would like to address to the authors, and to ourselves as teacher trainers, the questions which, in our opinion, are not posed to the students:

- Can young people “see” the other face of war? The one that mirrors the destinies of the women and children who fight one another, on the “home front”, so to speak?
- What could be seen through the eyes of refugees? Of prisoners, of the “enemy” behind the firing line?
- What is “the face” of victory, defeat, catastrophe?
- What memories do the families keep who had family members participate and sometimes killed in the battles during the fighting at the front? How does family history digest the picture of the past and help us remember World War I?

These and many other issues that have not found a place on the pages of school textbooks do not aim to replace the official historical narrative, nor do they strive to exclude politics. However, they open new perspectives to politics – through the eyes of the contemporaries of the front generation – and to today’s young people. Students become active participants in the learning process in search of multiperspective and multidirectional answers when:

- We engage them in the research process of developing projects, role plays, debates or case studies;
- We link educational activities with museum pedagogy, visiting places of memory – museums, cemeteries, military monuments;
- We engage them through family history in a way that makes them “explorers” and “authors” of oral testimonies.

Such educational initiatives enrich the potential of existing textbooks. They can take place both during lessons, as well as outside school. Preferred didactic tools are worksheets<sup>4</sup> or various guidelines for independent research activity. The long-lasting experience, gained during work with history teachers within the frame of the History project<sup>5</sup> in South East Europe allows us to affirm that using the resources of oral history along with other alternative sources for the past raises an awareness of the significance of the everyday lives of our parents and forefathers, provokes us to learn more, to understand and respect ourselves and “others”. The questions and exercises suggested in the text, concerning the theme of World War I, correspond with our understanding of memory and its uses. They are orientated towards online resources and oral evidence, and aim to gradually develop skills, form attitudes and teach democratic values.

In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the theme of World War I is presented in most factual details and in a broad international context, thus the use of online resources can be very effective. In language schools or classes with foreign language profiles, the task can be extended by using sources in the respective language, and the activities might be linked with those of IT classes and/or foreign language classes.

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4/ Worksheets are the preferred teaching tool in Bulgaria at the moment. Many publishing houses are approaching creative teachers to compile such sets of worksheets.

5/ More information about the project is available at:  
<http://www.historyproject.dvv-international.org/>

## Examples:

1. *Conduct independent Internet research. Present the results in the form of a poster, presentation or art installation on the topic: To be a soldier during World War I in the army of \_\_\_\_\_ (one of the countries from the list of links below)*

- Bulgaria: <http://www.lostbulgaria.com/?cat=210>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfU-tKdmzfU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0lt2kvj0ro>
- New Zealand: <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/from-memory/from-memory>
- Canada: <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/first-world-war/interviews/025015-1700-e.html>
- Australia: <https://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2011/11/09/remember-remembering-oral-histories-of-the-first-world-war/>
- USA: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-wwi.html>

2. *You are an English history teacher who has taken part in the battle at Doyran. In 1919 you start writing your memoirs about the Great War. Present a page from your diary. Use as an additional resource the published sequence History of the war, Vol. XX from The Times in London: <https://archive.org/stream/timeshistoryofwa20londuoft#page/n4/mode/1up>*

3. *Watch carefully the following video (<http://vbox7.com/play:69d477df>), devoted to the battles at the Red wall near Bitolya (today Republic of Macedonia). Who are the participants in the military conflict? Why is it called the “Macedonian Shipka”? Do you agree with the statement that “during the war people remain people”? Find examples on the Internet to illustrate your arguments using key words for your search.*

In 6<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, in which the history of Bulgaria is studied, students’ understanding of the destiny of the individual is logically connected with local history, with places of memory, micro-history, and personal memories.

Thus, in 6<sup>th</sup> grade students can construct a short written text based on a photograph, or study the map of their village, town or city to find streets or other public buildings that are named after “heroes” of the war, based on a list prepared by the teacher.

In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, the set of sources should direct young people’s attention towards various aspects of war – examples of heroism, pride, defeat

## LOST BULGARIA

5704 photographs of Bulgarian history

Search...

how to search | Advanced search »

### ЗА ВЪЗСТАНОВЯВАНЕТО НА МЕМОРИАЛА НА I и VI пехотен полк от I Софийска дивизия

English ▼

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Търсене в тази категория

Across parts of 3/6 Br igado: speech after public prayer on 27 November 1917, the Southern Front

▼ 1910-1920 , Album of Colonel Asparuh Kolarov , First World War (1914-1918) , military , infantry



Across parts of 3/6 brigade of the Southern Front: Prayer on 27 November 1917

▼ 1910-1920 , Album of Colonel Asparuh Kolarov , First World War (1914-1918) , military , infantry



Screenshot of Website "Lost Bulgaria" – Photo archive of History of Bulgaria, 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century

or hardship. Thus, the conflict is reflected through various perspectives and through the student's value system.

### Examples:

1. *Imagine that you are a soldier in the 9th infantry regiment of Pleven, commanded by Major General Vladimir Vazov, which is involved in the fighting at Doyran. Explore the proposed documents. Construct a short written text in the format of a diary page, a letter to your loved one or your mother to tell about your participation in the fighting which took place in April and May 1917. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGi5x5V4Z1w>*
2. *Make an index card of soldiers' monuments in your home region. Explore the history of the monuments. What is the life story of these people? What is the fate of their families?*  
As a final product of this task, students can publish a blog with stories, devoted to the Great War.

The use of such resources of regional history determines the variety and uniqueness in the implementation of student research and collecting activities. For example, in regions with a multi-ethnic demographic composition, the lists of the soldiers' monuments include names of people with different ethnic backgrounds. This is an opportunity to implement a multi-perspective, multicultural approach, while commenting on the artefacts on different levels: national, Balkan and European. Thus, young people have the possibility for self-reflection on their values, worldviews and position, being provoked to explore other levels of interpretation besides the national aspects of war.

The communication can be further broadened with various "traces" of the past that complement official World War I documents in textbooks – Internet and other resources related to local history, photographs from family albums, local folklore and oral testimonies, "coding" the memory of the individual, etc. These enable students to open up their own ways of understanding the contradictions between the old and new myths, facilitated by assessments and "rewriting" of the past in the textbooks. This kind of reflection on their own stereotypes is a guarantee for their formation as critically thinking – and potentially acting – citizens, critical of the manipulations of history.

## Appendix:

Table 1: History textbooks in use in Bulgaria for the period 2012-2015

Grade	Textbooks <sup>6</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Gavrilova, R. et al. (2007): History and Civilization for 6 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE <sup>7</sup> , Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia Kosev, K. et al. (2007): History and Civilization for 6 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE, Sofia: Anubis Kusheva, K. et al. (2007): History and Civilization for 6 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE, Sofia: AzBuki-Prosveta
9 <sup>th</sup> grade	Vachkov, D. et al. (2012): History and Civilization. 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE, Sofia: Anubis Vachkov, D. et al. (2012): History and Civilization. 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. AL <sup>8</sup> , Sofia: Anubis Gavrilov, B. et al. (2012): History and Civilization. 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE, Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia Kertin, A. (2012): History and Civilization. 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. AL, Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia
10 <sup>th</sup> grade	Grozev, K. et al. (2012): History and Civilization for 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE and AL. Sofia: Daniela Ubenova-Daniela Bilanska Kalinova, E. et al (2012): History and Civilization for 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE and AL. Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia, Markov, G. et al. (2001–2007, 2012): History and Civilization for 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE and SE. Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia Mircheva, H. & G.Nikolova (2012): History and Civilization. 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE, Sofia: Anubis Mircheva, H. & G.Nikolova (2012): History and Civilization. 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. AL, Sofia: Anubis
11 <sup>th</sup> grade	Andreev, Y. et al. (2012): History and Civilization for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE and AL, Sofia: Kragozor Gyuzelev, V. et al. (2012): History and Civilization for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade of high school. CE, Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia Delev, P. (2012): History of Bulgaria from ancient times to contemporary time – for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade. CE, Sofia: Planeta-3 Mutafchieva, V. et al. (2012): History and Civilization for compulsory education. 11 <sup>th</sup> grade. Sofia: Anubis Mutafchieva, V. et al. (2012): History and Civilization for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade of high school. AK. Sofia: Anubis Nikolov, A. et al. (2012): History and Civilization for 11 <sup>th</sup> grade of high school. AL, Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia
12 <sup>th</sup> grade	Kerin, A. & M.Yovevska (2003): History and Civilization for 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, AL, Sofia: Prosveta

Overview compiled by Violeta Stoycheva (2015)

<sup>6/</sup> This is the list of textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria for the period 2012-2015. They are all in Bulgarian.

<sup>7/</sup> Compulsory education.

<sup>8/</sup> Advanced level.

## References

*Bozhinov, V. et al. (1971):* History of Bulgaria. Textbook for 7<sup>th</sup> grade of high schools. Sofia: Narodna prosveta (in Bulgarian).

*Burmov, A. (1976):* History of Bulgaria for 10-11<sup>th</sup> grade of the primary labour-politechnic schools. Sofia: Narodna prosveta (in Bulgarian).

*Vachkov, D. et al. (2012):* History and Civilization. 9<sup>th</sup> grade. CE. Sofia: Anubis (in Bulgarian).

*Kerin, A.; M.Yovevska (2003):* History and Civilization for 12<sup>th</sup> grade, AL. Sofia: Prosveta (in Bulgarian).

*Kuseva, K. et al. (2012):* History and Civilizations for 6<sup>th</sup> grade. CE. Sofia: AzBuki-Prosveta (in Bulgarian).

*Lazarov, I. et al. (2001–2007):* History and Civilization. Textbook for 11<sup>th</sup> grade. CE. V. Tarnovo: Slovo (in Bulgarian).

*Lazarov, I. et al. (2001–2007):* History and Civilization. Textbook for 11<sup>th</sup> grade. AL. V. Tarnovo: Slovo (in Bulgarian).

*Markov, G. et al. (2012):* History and Civilization for 10<sup>th</sup> grade. CE and AL. Sofia: Prosveta-Sofia (in Bulgarian).

*Mircheva, H.; G. Nikolova (2012):* History and Civilization. 10<sup>th</sup> grade. CE. Sofia: Anubis.

*Pantev, A.; B. Gavrilov (1994):* History for 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Prosveta: Sofia (in Bulgarian).

*Stanev, N. (1927):* History of New Bulgaria 1878–1941. Sofia (in Bulgarian).

*Stanev, N. (1932):* World and Bulgarian history for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade for pupils in junior high schools. Sofia (in Bulgarian).

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## Creating a bridge across time: The book of plans, hopes and dreams

*The Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams, subtitled Letters from the Bridge of Time, is an Anglo-German project which invited ordinary people to write one letter to a person who really existed in 1914, and another letter to an imagined reader in 2114. The letter to the future had to address a particular plan, hope or dream of the writer. This was to allow it to stand in memoriam, as it were, to those whose lives were so altered by global conflict that their own aspirations were lost. It also invited people alive now to make personal connections with the ordinary folk who are often lost in the great events of the world and, by association, encouraged them to see the validity of their own ideas. The reward for fifty-two successful entrants was to have their work published in commemorative books which mirror the Rolls of Honour found in many churches in the UK. A travel prize was also offered to fund a trip for two German writers to visit the UK and vice versa.*





## Background

*The Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams* had a homely evolution. It is the product of a mixed marriage, between Michael and Rebecca Bilkau, a German linguist and an English writer: us. To say that it came out of our wish to make sense of our cultural inheritance would be disinterestedly accurate, but it would be a misleading theorisation of this small, independently generated and run project. We were both born in the aftermath of the Second World War and discovered in the first years of a late marriage that we unwittingly brought prejudices as well as optimism into the union.

This mini meeting of nations led us to consider the problems facing Europe on a much larger scale. Romance doesn't always win the day when faced with the difficulties of a warring past. But it does spawn a great and urgent will to find a common humanity, perhaps as great in proximity as the drive behind the most searching peace studies. It also underlines the absolute specificity of lives that can so easily be subsumed to generalities, even – or perhaps especially – in war. It all started one day when we looked out across the sea, once a theatre of war, and wondered what the world would have been like had the terrible conflict of 1914-18 never happened. What paintings, cures, poems, machines, symphonies were the unrealised plans, hopes and dreams of those who were affected. And what of the people now, faced with their own global and personal struggles for survival: Are they recording their own visions for the future? It might be high time...

## Funding

At first we hoped to make the project happen on our own. But then, as we started to work out how much its various component parts would cost, we realised that we needed outside help.

We were complete novices when it came to applying for funding. Fortunately, however, we had done a creative project for the Kulturstiftung in Braunschweig, so we asked our contact there for advice. She was patient and kind. We learned that we needed an accurate budget before we could go any further, and called together a meeting of potential funders for us.

For those who have had to become used to applying for finance, this point might seem too obvious to make. We were possibly too cautious. We tried to research every cent of possible expenditure, right down to building in leeway for the possible increase in aviation fuel between the time of assembling the figures, and eighteen months later, when we would need to pay for the winners to visit each others' countries.

We did not know when we went to the meeting that the Cathedral in Braunschweig was looking for a World War I memorial project to share with its partner cathedral in Blackburn, England. The *Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams* fulfilled this brief in a way which their representative found very useful. We left the meeting after about twenty minutes with the all the money we thought we needed.

## Partnership and sponsorship

The funding brought with it partnerships with the Kulturstiftung, the Cathedral, and a charitable foundation. They provided wisdom and support as well as money. This remained true even though one major supporter retired from their post during the project: The successor was also enthusiastic. We did however have to ensure that the *Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams* continued to maintain its unbiased profile. In an age where some people are wary of any kind of religious body, this meant stating explicitly that we were a non-denominational concern, whilst at the same time gratefully and proudly displaying our funders' logos.

We learned too that the success or failure of the venture was down to careful and accurate communication. This was particularly true with long-distance collaborators. In future, we would visit far-flung supporters more often than we did: E-mails are fast, but sitting in the same room with a notebook and layout pad is more embracing, and promotes co-ownership.

Luckily, we were able to make some visits, though, and establish some good contacts. A consequence of this is the citation of the project as an example of best practice of co-operation between the Church and the general public in the UK.

For financial reasons, the project remained limited to entrants from the UK and Germany. On all the publicity, similar projects in other countries were welcomed, with the promise of support from the founders.

## Publicity and awareness building

The design company Matzke and Heinzig came on board very early, donating half their work for free in advance, and providing some vital match funding. Working with them, we were able to have a website up and running about ten months before the deadline for entries. On the way, though, we had some bridges to cross ourselves. First was to find neutrality in the images we used: Our target participants were, after all, the descendants of peoples who were once at war. This meant an acute awareness of every aspect of the visuals. For example, we were delighted with the banner which ran across the top of the web pages, and were about to give it the go ahead when we noticed that the shape of the silhouetted soldiers' helmets was recognisably from one side only. A gender balance was also necessary. The diligence was catching. Again close to pressing the go button, one of the team advised us that he had recently driven past a poster advertising an exhibition concerning the family of the Kaiser. The imperial colours were pretty well echoed by those we'd chosen. We were delighted to have the chance to change them, just in time.

We did not achieve a racial balance in the pictures. The necessity surprised the Braunschweig-based partners – the German fighters in World War One were all white. On the UK side, of course, there were soldiers from all quarters of the then Empire. We were ultimately impeded from finding an appropriate picture by time, money and sensibility. The easily accessible photographs were implicitly or overtly racist; a rapid search in the limited time frame then available provided us with no options other than those which carried an expensive copyright. We very sadly had to abandon the search, and decided against manufacturing images. This is still the cause of some distress, and we regret that we did not make more provision for this at the outset of the project. In any future work we would make a visual demonstration of the ethics of inclusion and diversity a priority from the beginning.

While we were pleased with the website, we were also becoming aware that we faced one problem in Germany and another in the UK. In the former there was relatively little public awareness of the anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, whilst there was saturation coverage in the UK, and some associated fatigue.

We started to look for other ways to raise awareness. Time and time again, we were told that we were the desirable media story: "Anglo-German couple wonders what the world would be like if there had been no War...". This was testing: Though both of us are used to public performance in a professional capacity, we were reluctant to make our own history public property. In the end, we devised a standard article which

we altered slightly depending on the requirements of particular publications. We also kept the focus local, that is, the area where we now live, and the area in North West England where we met. When invited, we also took part in broadcasts on local radio stations. It is perhaps significant that a reasonable percentage of submissions to the project originated in those places.

The articles themselves, in England, encouraged some people to contact us through the website or through mutual acquaintances. One offered to run a workshop to help people in Lancaster in England work together to discover ways to express their own plans, hopes and dreams creatively. This had a minor domino effect, and one of the runners-up for the travel prize came through the workshop. We also gave details of the competition to various creative writing websites. In Germany, the publicity



Screenshot of Project Facebook Page

helped us to talk to local schools. We gave lectures in several, and some also contacted their partner schools in England and Wales to encourage participation.

Finally, we created a Facebook page. 'Boosting'<sup>1</sup> it was not originally part of the plan. A one-day experimental use of the facility generated sufficient posts<sup>2</sup> for us to decide to continue the operation for about a week. The number of people reached topped twenty thousand during that time. Though this did not win us anything like an equal number of entries, it is probable that the entries received from Australia, India, Iran and Nigeria came through this route. More remarkable is the fact that the entrants wrote beforehand to check whether they could send contributions in, despite knowing that they were not eligible for the travel prize, as we could not fund travel from their homelands.

It is difficult to say how we would alter the publicity management if we were to run such a project again. This is because of its time specificity. Had we anticipated the sheer density of WW1 commemoration projects in the UK in 2014, we might have considered waiting until 2018, but that's doubtful.

## The outcome

By the deadline, we had more than enough entries to the project and jurors in both countries ready to make their decisions. In due time, these were announced by mail, on the Facebook site and on the website.

The reward for fifty-two successful entrants was to have their work published in commemorative books which mirror the Rolls of Honour found in many churches in the UK. A travel prize was also offered to fund a trip for two German writers<sup>3</sup> to visit the UK and vice versa.

At the time of writing this contribution, two commemorative copies of *The Book Of Plans, Hopes and Dreams* have been printed and bound in leather, each with a commemorative illustration donated by a young Transylvanian<sup>4</sup> artist. Concurrently, a team of translators is at work to provide full translations of all the texts for a companion booklet.

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1/ 'Boosting' is a euphemism for paying for a Facebook page to be promoted through its own community.

2/ We did not keep a record of how many, and as far as we can see only written comments are recorded in the Facebook archive, not the full activity report.

3/ One travel prize was awarded to a writer in each of the entry categories (over-nineteen and nineteen and under) in both participating countries.

4/ Her own description of her nationality



*English Prizewinner Bethany Pearson in Braunschweig (left), and German Prizewinner Tabea Henn in Blackburn*

The commemorative volume was presented to the Bishop of Blackburn as part of the 2015 Easter Day Service. The presentation was made by the German travel prize-winners, accompanied by some of the writers of the English entries. One week later, in an evening service in Braunschweig Cathedral, the process was echoed by the English winners and the German entrants. In both cases, the celebrants incorporated the theme of memory and reconciliation, and passages from the book, in their address to the public. Later, 200 facsimile copies were printed and distributed to the entrants and sponsors.

## Conclusion

The project, which has lasted about two years, has, we feel, been a success on two different counts.

First, it has achieved our aim to encourage people to reach across time to their forebears and their successors. We know from the way that it

has been promoted through the traditional and virtual media that its effect is more far-reaching than we can quantify: People whom we do not know have spoken to us about it after recognising us from the publicity, and told us how the idea moved them and caused them to reflect. It also indicates that given the right project, ordinary people can find the support, advice and funding they need to make an idea fly.

Second, it has proved the importance of inviting people to have and share their own visions of the future. This not least because almost everyone to whom we spoke about their experience told us that this was the harder part of the project. We know that, very sadly, it kept some people back from entering their work; others entered two pieces addressed to the past rather than try to address the future. Simply, the concern to get and keep a job, to keep up with the day-to-day demands of a society which is concerned with material growth and competition, tend to stifle the chance to think and dream. We can't quantify this. We haven't taken notes of every conversation we have had, so this could be said to be anecdotal – but we find the anecdotes to be convincing.

We're also now convinced that the dividend from celebrating 'ordinary' dreams is the encouragement of a belief that 'ordinary' people can and should voice their own aspirations. A chance which no draft to war should deny in the future.

*The Book of Plans, Hopes and Dreams* is our own plan, hope and dream.

It's taken a long time. We're pooped.

We'd do it again.

# From learning to listen to speaking to one another: Experience from a Turkish-Armenian reconciliation project<sup>1</sup>

*The relationship between Armenia and Turkey bears a heavy burden as a result of the Armenian genocide. The massacres and deportations began at the end of the 19th Century, and escalated in the years between 1915-1922. One-and-a-half million Armenians met with a violent death during this time. DVV International has been engaging in activities since the end of 2008 with the aim of helping the two sides of this conflict to come closer. Under the project title “Speaking To One Another”, amongst other things summer camps were held with young adults, joint book projects and exhibitions and activities seeking to come to terms with history (including oral history) were organised in both countries, as well as in Germany. The article shows how successful DVV International and its partners have been in bringing the project participants to reconsider their attitudes and points of view and raising their awareness for a more profound dialogue with people from the other group.*

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1/ This article appeared in German in: Journal für politische Bildung, Vol. 1/2014, Schwerpunkt Historische Kompetenz and is published here with minor changes and updates.



## Background

The relationship between Armenia and Turkey bears a heavy burden as a result of the Armenian genocide. The massacres and deportations started at the end of the 19th Century and escalated in the years from 1915-1922. One-and-a-half million Armenians met with a violent death during this time. Almost one hundred years have now passed, but the genocide has not yet been dealt with in historiographic and political terms. Whilst some countries have had the events officially recognised as genocide by their parliaments, Turkey still owes an acknowledgement and an apology. Germany, which bears its share of the guilt given that it provided material and ideational aid to the young Turkish nation, has still not officially acknowledged the genocide. The German Bundestag did take up the topic in 2005 with the motion entitled “Memory and remembrance of the deportations and massacres committed against Armenians in 1915 – Germany must contribute towards reconciliation between Turks and Armenians” (*Erinnerung und Gedenken an die Vertreibungen und Massaker an den Armeniern 1915 – Deutschland muss zur Versöhnung zwischen Türken und Armeniern beitragen*)<sup>2</sup>, illustrating the aspects of the historical events and acknowledging the guilt of the perpetrators, but fell short of using the term “genocide”. On 24 April 2015, on the occasion of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, another debate took place in the plenary session of the German Bundestag. During the one-hour debate the historical events were described as genocide by representatives of all parliamentary groups. However, the party representatives in the Bundestag failed to agree on a common document, and instructed the Committee on Foreign Affairs to prepare a draft document to be agreed later by all parliamentary groups of the Bundestag.

There are three presumed reasons why Germany is very cautious with regard to this issue:

1. The relationship with Turkey is not to be placed under strain, also given the fact that there is a large ethnic Turkish minority in Germany.
2. Some influential politicians consider that acknowledging the Armenian genocide might place the uniqueness of the Holocaust into perspective. The relationship with Israel is not to be placed at risk.
3. Germany’s involvement in the genocide, which historians have documented, could lead to demands for reparations.

Turkey fears an official acknowledgement for the following reasons:

1. As has been said above for Germany, Turkey too fears a wave of court cases for reparations. Given that large parts of what today is Turkey were ethnically cleansed during the genocide, Turkey also has well-founded concerns as to possible territorial claims.
2. The myth that has been the official line in Turkey so far, namely that this was not genocide but “war-related collateral damage” that unfortunately happens in all wars would be questioned by such an acknowledgement. The fear is that this could lead to turmoil in Turkish society. The Turkish Kemalist identity might be questioned and start to falter, and the multiethnic construct that is Turkey might break apart.
3. Attempts to bring Turkey and Armenia closer, as took place for instance five years ago with the negotiations on the “Swiss Protocols”, repeatedly fail because of the “brother country” Azerbaijan, which exerts considerable pressure on the Turkish Government in this regard. Azerbaijan has an unresolved conflict with Armenia regarding the future of Berg-Karabach.

In order to complete the framework of our project, it should be further mentioned that Turkish society has moved and changed in the past five years. This at least concerns the young elites in the cities. The Gezi Park protests, which received good media coverage everywhere – including in Germany – are the most obvious indication of this. A young, well-educated elite tending towards the political left is no longer willing to accept the authoritarian leadership style of the Erdoğan Government. It is going onto the streets and demonstrating. However, Erdoğan too has taken certain steps which it would not have been possible to expect of him years ago. In addition to the rapprochement mentioned above (“Swiss Protocols”), Erdoğan has officially apologised for the massacre in Dersim and commenced a dialogue (whether or not it is tenable) with the Kurdish leader Öcalan.

On the Armenian side, it is necessary to distinguish between a large Diaspora living abroad and the population living in Armenia itself. The Diaspora makes a major contribution to Armenia’s finances – both individually and structurally. Furthermore, it has a considerable influence on Armenians’ political activity when it comes to the acknowledgement of the genocide and the political position taken up vis-à-vis Turkey. The Diaspora tends less towards compromise on this question. Armenia itself is a country which is largely isolated, economically on the verge of bankruptcy, dependent on Russia and with little scope to take foreign policy action of its own. The closed border with Turkey is above all an economic obstacle for the country. The recent developments in 2013 have illustrated once more how easy it is to blackmail Armenia. With regard to the signing of an Association Agreement with the EU, Armenia reluctantly gave in to pres-

sure from Moscow, and has now signed the accession document to the Russian-dominated Eurasian Union.

It is important for the project to point to the different bloc affiliations of the two conflict parties: Armenia was a part of the USSR until 1991; Turkey became a member of NATO as early as 1952. The two cultures therefore also have completely different traditions of science and scholarship, which led to constant discussions, particularly at the beginning of the joint project.

## **On the project schedule**

The target groups were: Young people from Armenia and Turkey, experts, colleagues from other non-governmental organisations, project staff from Turkey, Armenia and Germany, visitors to exhibitions, readers of the publications, contemporary witnesses (people whose stories were used in the publications and exhibitions), everyone who had seen the project film “Beginnings”, broad sections of the population, Turks living abroad and the Armenian Diaspora. Methods and instruments used during the project:

- discussions,
- study trips,
- multiplier further training,
- further training for students on topics such as oral history, project design and implementation of projects, local history,
- publication of contemporary witness stories,
- projects planned and implemented by students,
- academic conference on the theory and practice of Turkish-Armenian reconciliation,
- visits to commemorative sites in Germany and Armenia,
- work on local history with various approaches (photography, performance...).

With regard to the stages of the work: Before we commenced with the implementation of the project, we organised in October 2008 a workshop with in each case four experts and representatives of non-governmental organisations from both countries. It was important for us to understand the situation better and to collect ideas for the project work. The group worked out a broad range of project ideas, starting by studying prejudices which are typical of the two countries, through to a joint history book. It was naturally important for us to identify ideas which could be used for adult and youth education. This led to the creation of two project ideas



*Armenian respondent reading her story in the project publication*

which contained elements of adult education, reconciliation, peaceful conflict resolution, historical work, strengthening civil society, active citizenship and democratisation. After the workshop, the ideas were modified to draw up an application for funding from the German Federal Foreign Office (AA) that was comprised of two main components.

*Phase I:* 1. Summer camp for young adults and young people from Armenia and Turkey. 2. “Remembering together: Moments of joint understanding of history for Turks and Armenians” (oral history component). These two measures were interlinked. The summer camp was used to prepare the young people for the second component, namely working with contemporary witnesses. It took place in October 2009 in the small Northern Armenian town of Dilijan. The programme, which bore the motto “What actually is oral history?”, contained the following programmatic points amongst others:

- History in history books, discussed using examples from the Balkans and from the Southern Caucasus.

- Theories of oral history (working with witnesses).
- Practical exercises on oral history. The participants held their own supervised interviews with contemporary witnesses in Dilijan and the surrounding area.

As well as the workshops, further activities were also organised in order to build trust between the participants. The timing of the summer camp was perfect, given that negotiations were taking place at the same time between the Governments of Turkey and Armenia and two protocols were signed on the establishment and development of diplomatic relations. After the summer camp, the experts started together with the students to implement the project's second oral history component. The interviewees were selected and interviews held in both countries. The results were published in the book entitled "Speaking to One Another: Personal Memories of the Past in Armenia and Turkey"<sup>2</sup>. It presents the stories told by simple people from Armenia and Turkey. The attempt to compile a joint book however failed this time around, so that the book comprises a Turkish and an Armenian part.

*Phase II: Learning to listen.* Phase II also consisted of two components, namely an oral history and a cultural component. The following tasks were to be carried out within the oral history component:

- summer camp,
- implementation of small innovative projects by students,
- study trip to Germany,
- international specialist talks on: "Prospects for Reconciliation: Theory and Practice".

The second summer camp took place in the town of Antakya. We had discovered in Phase I that the students wished to play a more involved role, and that they were indeed capable of doing so, which is why we focussed on the topic of project planning and implementation. The participants learned how to develop their own project ideas and to plan projects, as well as drawing up and implementing applications. At the end of the summer camp, three groups of students developed three different project ideas. There was an Armenian group, a Turkish group and a mixed group. After the summer camp, all three groups implemented their project ideas;

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<sup>2/</sup> [http://www.speakingtooneanother.com/assets/uploaded/Speaking\\_to\\_One\\_Another.pdf-2010.12.13.pdf](http://www.speakingtooneanother.com/assets/uploaded/Speaking_to_One_Another.pdf-2010.12.13.pdf)

two films entitled “Nor&Eski” and “Let’s Talk, I’m Your Neighbour”<sup>3</sup>, as well as a publication entitled “Armenian Voices of Istanbul”<sup>4</sup> were presented at the final workshop.

We were frequently asked during the project, and are still asked now, why the Germans were carrying out such a project, and why the Federal Foreign Office was funding it. As well as the political reasons which may have motivated the Foreign Office to support this project, it was important for us above all to use the German experience of dealing with the past. The study trip’s schedule therefore included various places of commemoration in Berlin and in the surrounding area which offer interesting examples of dealing with the past. Amongst other places, there were visits to the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen near Oranienburg, the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and places of commemoration in Berlin’s Bavarian Quarter.

Furthermore, interesting meetings and discussions were held with German parliamentarians and senior representatives of the Federal Foreign Office. One example of the reconciliation work with young people was presented by the Franco-German Youth Office. The most interesting part of the programme was the visit to the Federal Foreign Office’s political archive, where documents are stored on various historical events, including on the Armenian genocide. Accompanying the study trip, various reflection sessions took place, during which it was possible for the participants to exchange views on their experiences and opinions.

A further event was the international expert discussions on “The outlook for reconciliation: theory and practice”. The international expert discussions aimed to bring together academics and practitioners in order to present the experience of various projects and citizens’ initiatives in Turkey and Armenia and to discuss the current theoretical challenges of reconciliation. A publication entitled “Prospects for Reconciliation: Theory and Practice – Proceedings of the International Workshop”<sup>5</sup> sums up the results.

The cultural component of the second phase consisted of a travelling exhibition created from documentations and interviews. Two curators developed the concept of the exhibition together with the entire team, and especially with the two experts. The exhibitions were presented to a large public in seven places in Armenia and Turkey.

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3/ <http://www.speakingtooneanother.com/index.php?page=studentproject>

4/ [http://www.speakingtooneanother.org/assets/uploaded/Armenian\\_Voices\\_of\\_Istanbul\\_Eng.pdf-2011.07.13.pdf](http://www.speakingtooneanother.org/assets/uploaded/Armenian_Voices_of_Istanbul_Eng.pdf-2011.07.13.pdf)

5/ <http://www.speakingtooneanother.org/assets/uploaded/ProspectsforRecon.EN.pdf-2011.07.13.pdf>



*Display of the travelling exhibition in Yerevan, 2011*

*Phase III: Speaking to one another.* The titles of the project phases also reflect the development of the project. The project had developed by that time from learning to listen to speaking to one another. The third phase of the project also consisted of two components, Component I: History in authentic locations and Component II: Travelling exhibition entitled “Speaking to One Another”. The idea for the first component originated in the 70s, and can be traced back to the Swede Sven Lindqvist and his principle of “Dig where you stand”. The idea is to analyse the history of a limited area, a neighbourhood, a street, an environment. Many history workshops have been organised along these lines in Germany, primarily seeking to deal with the local past in urban areas; this has related first and foremost to dealing with the period from 1933 to 45.

We took up this idea in the project for the Turkish-Armenian context in two places which were steeped in the history of the conflict, namely the town of Moush in Turkey, as the starting point for the expulsion of the Armenian citizens, and the town of Gyumri and its surrounding settlements as the new home of these expellees. The project development included the intensive inclusion of young people. In the first phase, the students



*Study Visit to Berlin, 2011*

supported the experts in holding interviews. In the “Learning to Listen” phase, they already developed their own project ideas and implemented them in small projects. In the third phase, the students took on the most important tasks themselves. In order to do justice to the challenge of doing high-quality work and ultimately of producing a high-quality product, and furthermore of dealing appropriately with the conflict-laden topic, it was necessary to provide the participating students with intensive guidance. To this end, we introduced the “instrument” of tutors who provided guidance for the groups of students. In order to prepare the tutors for their challenging task, a special training course in mediation was held for them in Berlin.

The towns of Moush in Turkey and Gyumri in Armenia were selected in order to implement the history workshops. The two history workshops were “followed” by a team of documentary film-makers who produced a documentary on the project entitled “Beginnings”. The documentary has already taken part in a large number of film festivals, including in Canada,



Germany, France and Iran, and has become an international success. The book “Moush, sweet Moush: Mapping Memories from Armenia and Turkey” was written as a result of the historical workshops<sup>6</sup>.

On the travelling exhibition component: In order to involve the representatives of the Diaspora in the dialogue process, the exhibitions which had previously been shown in Turkey and in Armenia were also offered in those countries in which there are large Turkish and Armenian communities. Five places were selected: Tbilisi and Batumi (both in Georgia), as well as Nicosia (Cyprus), Berlin and Paris. The concept of the exhibition was adapted in line with the individual foreign audience. Apart from contemporary witness statements, the results of the first two phases of the project were also integrated into the exhibition concept here. Visitors to the exhibitions were called upon to answer the following three questions:

- What is the significance of memory for a society?
- Who actually “makes” history?
- Is reconciliation possible?

The answers can be found in an exhibition catalogue<sup>7</sup> which has the three questions as its title.

## Résumé

The project seeks to change people, their thinking and perceptions via education. We frequently forget that life is complex and that there are many factors which cannot be calculated or influenced in any way. Working on a history project can help participants to open themselves up to the diversity of perspectives, but cannot deliver any patent solutions, only providing impulses as to how to look at the processes in their overall complexity and multiperspectivity. It is not possible to generate any quick fixes with the memory work, but it is possible to create an awareness of problems that are encountered today and their historical roots. Memory work can only achieve results in society if it involves in the long term all the different societal groups and players: intellectuals, civil society stakeholders, policy-makers, civil servants, business people and the entire spectrum of society.

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<sup>6/</sup> [http://dvv-international.de/files/moush\\_\\_sweet\\_moush\\_web.pdf](http://dvv-international.de/files/moush__sweet_moush_web.pdf)

<sup>7/</sup> [http://dvv-international.de/files/stoa\\_book\\_q+a\\_pdf.pdf](http://dvv-international.de/files/stoa_book_q+a_pdf.pdf)

The Speaking to One Another project is an example of how history impacts the present. Although virtually no one who experienced these events one hundred years ago and survived is alive today, the genocide that was committed against the Armenians continues to (increasingly) influence the life of Armenians and Turks and affect political relations between the states in the region and beyond. We are naturally not so naive as to believe that the project was able to reduce mistrust between societies in Armenia and Turkey across the board; but what we certainly believe is that a small contribution has been made towards achieving this objective. The project participants have certainly reconsidered their attitudes and perspectives, and awareness has been created for a dialogue with people from the respectively other group. They have learned first of all to listen, and then to speak to one another, which is a considerable achievement given the current conflict-laden situation. The hope remains that the political level will also continue the dialogue one day – perhaps supported by a critical civil society in both countries. This would also be an effect of this project and of comparable other ones as well.

The project was implemented by the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International), and was financed by the Federal Foreign Office. All the publications mentioned in the article can be obtained free of charge via DVV International Bonn. Please send your enquiry to [nazaretyan@dvv-international.de](mailto:nazaretyan@dvv-international.de). Further information at: [www.speakingtooneanother.com](http://www.speakingtooneanother.com).

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