

AN INTERNATIONAL WORKPLAN FOR  
HISTORY TEACHING AND HISTORY  
DIDACTICS

Proposals for European co-operation  
on history teaching

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the following pages, the reader will find an international programme for the development of history teaching and history didactics. For the time, it is only a proposal because no individual author could possibly cover and anticipate the wishes and ideas of all of his colleagues in all countries.

This proposal must, therefore, be shown to as many experts as possible, and it must be completed, amended and improved. Finally, it should be submitted to, and accepted by, a representative international conference and, if possible, adopted by the Council of Europe and other appropriate international organisations. It would, thus, be considered as a general line of action by everyone concerned with, and interested in, history teaching and history didactics.

In one way or another, a considerable number of national and international bodies are already involved in the development of history teaching. I am thinking of the national associations of history teachers and such initiatives as the German "Historikertage" and the many conferences on history didactics which have been held in the Federal Republic, as well as:

- i. the Council of Europe;
- ii. UNESCO;
- iii. the "Comité International des Sciences Historiques", which will organise an international conference in Bucharest in 1980. The conference will include a special session on history teaching;
- iv. the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig;
- v. and, last but not least, the newly founded International Society for History Didactics.

Many things have already been done, some of them even twice, while others which are vitally important have not been done at all. There is, thus, a need for a clearinghouse, and one wonders whether the Council of Europe itself could not assume this role.

The Council of Europe's contribution could be very important because the Organisation has the historic task of furthering and improving transnational communication and co-operation. History teaching is a natural ally for the Council and its work, because enlightened history teaching could do much to overcome the ethnocentrism and the national and historic prejudices which exist in every country and in every human being.

Special attention would have to be paid to co-operation with the Georg Eckert Institute, which has been active in this field for many years.

A particularly important task of this programme would be to raise the standards of professional work in all participating countries. In history teaching and in the training of history teachers, we have already left behind us the period of pure amateurism. Many teacher training institutions are already doing valuable work in this respect, but there should be a drive for professionalisation, which is crucial for the survival of history teaching. Such a drive must be based on international co-operation, and here too the Council of Europe could play a decisive role.

This international programme should also be used as an evaluation scheme, because it will be necessary to check from time to time what we have really done and what we have not done.

The following items have only been indicated very briefly in the form of key-words. Each of them should, of course, be worked out in much greater detail. It is perhaps also necessary to say a word about the adjective "international" in this context. Initially, it would be sensible to think in terms of the member States of the Council of Europe's Council for Cultural Co-operation. The possibility should be left open to involve later on both Eastern Europe and the United States. In both cases, the Council of Europe could help with the liaison work.

2. ORGANISATIONS

2.1 The Council of Europe's School Education Division: its role, function and possibilities with reference to history teaching, teacher training and history didactics.

2.2 The International Society for History Didactics.

In the short term:

- a. extension and completion of the practical organisation;
- b. the need for regulations, a working plan, financial resources, criteria for membership.

In the longer term:

- a. extension of membership to Belgium, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Scandinavia, Spain;
- b. definition of its relations with: the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the "Comité International", the Georg Eckert Institute, national associations of history teachers and specialists.

2.3 Conferences on history didactics, either international or with international participation:

- a. planned co-operation between the relevant bodies: the Council of Europe, the International Society, the "Comité International", the Historikertage, national associations;
- b. solution of financial problems, e.g. by the foundation of an international fund;
- c. necessity of establishing an up-to-date international calendar of conferences;
- d. an inventory of international courses for history teachers;
- e. a well-considered choice of conference themes, agreed upon by the relevant organising bodies and based on the present workplan;
- f. exchange and publication of the results.

2.4 International co-operation among history teachers:

- a. the foundation of an international organ for this co-operation e.g. an international federation of national associations or an international commission;

- b. the stimulation of, and assistance with, the foundation of national associations in those countries where they do not exist already. Such help could be offered by the International Society and by the Council of Europe.

### 3. PUBLICATIONS

- 3.1 High priority for the foundation of an international journal for history didactics, e.g. the organ of the International Society with the help of the Council of Europe and in the closest collaboration with the Georg Eckert Institute.
- 3.2 Preparation of an international bibliography on history didactics.
- 3.3 Preparation of detailed, complete and up-to-date reviews of the following subjects:
  - a. legislation on and other regulations relevant to history teaching and the training of future history teachers for all types and all levels of schools;
  - b. the place and range of history teaching in different types and levels of school;
  - c. the organisation of the training of history teachers;
  - d. associations, publications and regular meetings of history teachers;
  - e. courses on history didactics for history teachers;
  - f. national documentation centres (of school books, sources and texts, films, slides and other teaching aids);
  - g. the prospects and development of history teaching and history teacher training.
- 3.4 Co-operation would be advisable among:
  - a. editorial boards of periodicals;
  - b. editors of periodicals on didactics e.g. the possibility of international publications in the field of history didactics;
  - c. specialists in didactics for joint research on important topics (aims and objectives, categories of history teaching, choice of subject-matter, etc.) and publication of the results.

- 3.5 An international history of history teaching and of history didactics is also desirable.

#### 4. THE PRODUCTION OF TEACHING RESOURCES

- 4.1 Here we identify two major difficulties:

- a. there are not enough teaching resources which are both cheap and easy to use;
- b. teachers are not always able to use audio-visual resources in the best didactical way.

- 4.2 There is, thus, a need for:

- a. an extensive, differentiated and non-commercial supply of teaching materials (collection of sources and tests, statistics, illustrations, films, slides, maps, models, etc.). The language difficulties do not seem insuperable;
- b. training courses for teachers in the use of teaching resources;
- c. discussion on the desirability and possibility of a European textbook. Discussion on this item should involve the Georg Eckert Institute.

#### 5. TEACHER TRAINING

- 5.1 The highest priority for the organisation of teacher training courses in those countries where they do not yet exist.
- 5.2 Definition of the place and significance of teacher training in the context of academic and other scientific courses.
- 5.3 The objectives of teacher training courses - what is a good history teacher and what is good history teaching?
- 5.4 The exchange of well-tested methods and means of teacher training.
- 5.5 The evaluation of results.
- 5.6 The necessity of the complete integration of the scientific historical training and the specific pedagogical training during academic and other courses.

- 5.7 The practical problem of the proper relationship between historiography, the theory of history and history didactics, as presented to students during academic and other courses.
- 5.8 The training and preparation of future teacher-trainers.
- 5.9 Methods of in-service training for teacher-trainers.

## 6. EMPIRICAL POINTS

A new didactics of history - which renders services to the science of history, history teaching and the training of history teachers, but which is itself an autonomous science - may be defined as "mediation between history and people". It must be based, to a considerable extent, on research and empirical data obtained with modern scientific methods. Among the many objects of such research are:

- a. pupils and their interest in history;
- b. the form of history teaching (contents, methods, and evaluation of results);
- c. motives in choosing history for further study;
- d. the expectations, experiences and opinions of participants in courses for teacher-trainers and for active teachers;
- e. the expectations, experiences and opinions of pupils, teachers in their early years in the classroom, and experienced teachers;
- f. an analysis of textbooks and other printed and audio-visual resources;
- g. the effectiveness of methods and resources;
- h. ways and means of assessing pupils' results;
- i. an analysis of historical material supplied by out-of-school sources (television, newspapers, museums, novels, etc.);
- j. curriculum research and curriculum development: present position and actual results;
- k. validity of tests and evaluation methods.

## 7. PRACTICAL DIDACTICS

History didactics as an educational science has the following practical tasks:

- a. the further improvement of the training of history teachers;
- b. the in-service training of history teachers;

- c. the carrying out and evaluation of empirical research;
- d. the production of teaching materials;
- e. didactic synthesis of specialised historical research, for the benefit of pupils, teachers and the general public;
- f. observation and analysis of teaching;
- g. planning of teaching and execution of planned teaching;
- h. training in teaching behaviour.

## 8. PUBLIC RELATIONS

- a. The information and education of the public authorities concerned with the organisation of history teaching and the training of history teachers;
- b. the education of public opinion, including the press, with regard to history teaching and the training of history teachers;
- c. mediation between the out-of-school agencies and the general public (including teachers and pupils).

## 9. THEORETICAL DIDACTICS

- 9.1 The most important problems of history teaching cannot be solved without theory. Therefore, history didactics as an autonomous science needs not only practical application and empirical research, but also a well-founded theory. On account of the extreme importance of this task and of the small number of people engaged in it at present, a certain degree of international co-operation and co-ordination is of primary importance. There is also a need for collaboration with historians concerned with the theory of history.
- 9.2 In this early stage of international co-operation, no definition of the whole field or of the components of a didactical theory can be given. However, I shall try to indicate the main issues involved. It seems to me that the problems of a theory of history didactics may be summarised under the following headings:
  - a. the problem of historical time;
  - b. the problem of historical experience;
  - c. the problem of historical relationships;
  - d. the problem of the objectives.

All other questions depend on these four issues, e.g. the choice of subject matter, curriculum development, the relationship with other disciplines, the relationship with society, the psychology of learning. It must be stressed that the didactics of history cannot solve its theoretical problems with its own historical and paedagogical resources. These problems can only be solved in close collaboration with philosophy, psychology, general scientific theory, etc. (See the diagramm at the end.)

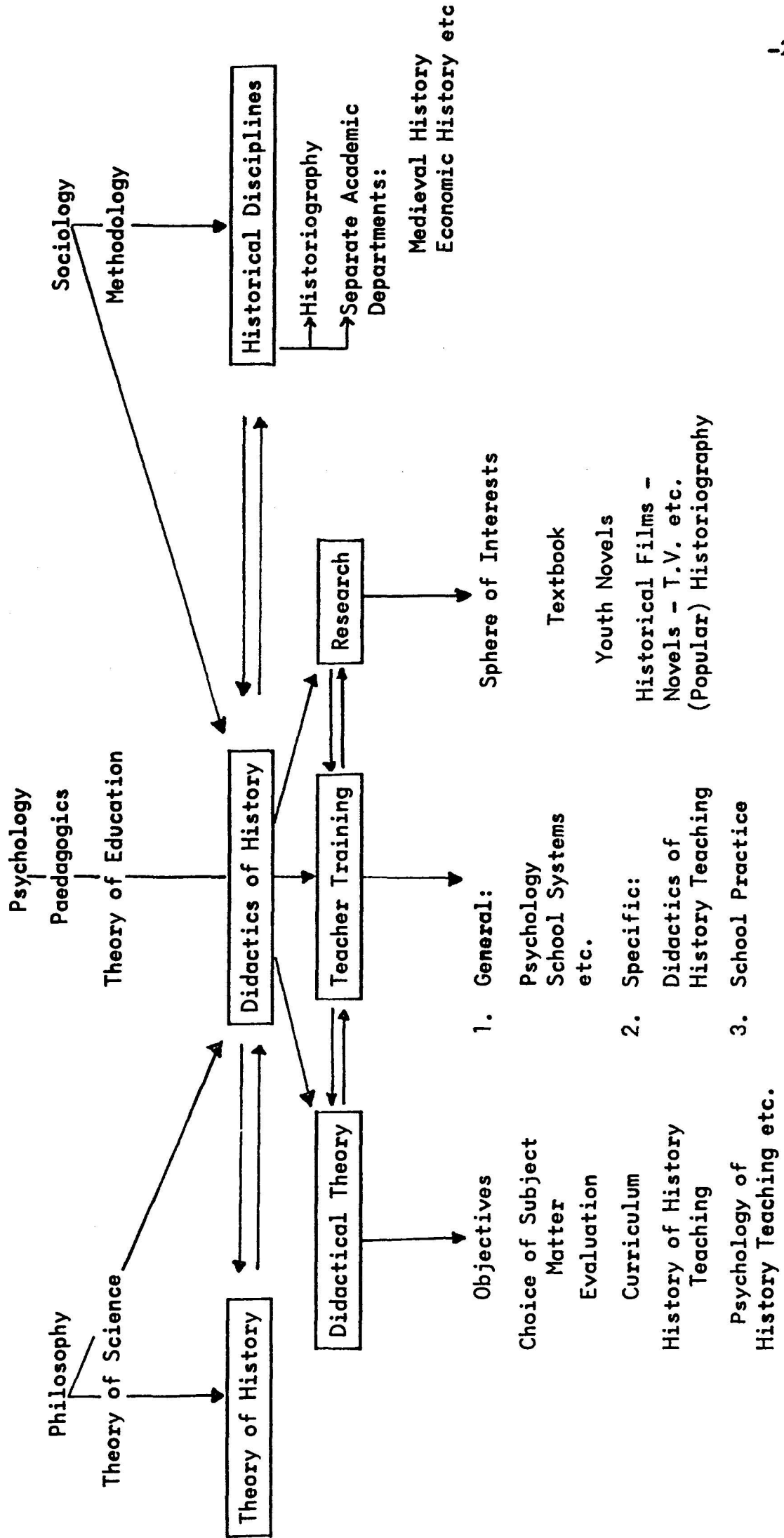
10. AN INSTITUTE FOR HISTORY DIDACTICS

A coherent programme for the development of history teaching and history didactics will not be accomplished by its own inherent force alone. To reach its goal, it needs an additional driving force, the more so because many years, even perhaps decades, will be needed for its successful implementation. Provisionally the Council of Europe, the International Society and the Georg Eckert Institute could act as driving forces, but in the long run, it seems to me that this plan must be entrusted to a specific scientific institute. The last item of this programme must, therefore, be the foundation of an international institute for history didactics. Such an institute would be the proper place for the study of the theoretical problems and the carrying out of most of the practical tasks.



History Didactics is mediation between 'History' and 'People'

HISTORIA MAGISTRA



HOW THE INTERNATIONAL WORKPLAN SAW THE LIGHT

1. The idea for an 'international workplan for the development of history teaching and history didactics' first arose during a conference for history teachers, organised by the Council of Europe, in Donaueschingen (FRG), May 1979.
2. On the request of mr. M. Stobart, Head of the School Education Division of the Council of Europe, I made a draft of such a plan, and sent it to a small number of colleagues, mrs. Hegyi in Utrecht, mr. Toebes in Nijmegen, mr. Rudeng in Oslo and mr. Fürnrohr in Gauting.
3. Having received their remarks I made a new version, which has been published in mr. E. Rudeng's Report of the 4th Council of Europe Teachers' Seminar, Donaueschingen, May 1979, by the Council for Cultural Co-operation, Strasbourg, 1980. This report has been sent to 23 governments.
4. In September 1979 mr. Fürnrohr supplied me with a small number of amendments and additions. These have been worked into the third version, which has been presented to the participants of the Tutzing Conference in March 1980, and which the reader will find in this periodical. This text is of course slightly different from that published by the Council for Cultural Co-operation.
5. The founding assembly of the 'International Society' accepted the plan as an 'official working paper'.
6. The time has now come for a thorough discussion of the plan. It is very important that, in time, the plan will become a kind of charter of and for the Society, and therefore it stands in need of a close inspection. All members are herewith invited to study it, to discuss it with their colleagues and to send their remarks, corrections and additions to P.F.M. Fontaine, Johan Ramaerstraat 9 hs, 1065 GA AMSTERDAM, Netherlands.