Connections in the History of Textbook Revision, 1947–1952

Romain Faure*

Abstract

In this article, I focus on connections between textbook revision forums between 1947 and 1952. I examine the interrelations between the textbook activities of UNESCO, the World Movement of Trade Unions, the international historian conferences in Speyer and two Franco-German co-operation projects. I thus try to understand how these interrelations impacted on the development of each of these forums and on textbook revision in general. I argue that the revision projects were not just embedded within a diplomatic and institutional framework but also in a set of relations that closely linked them, irrespective of their institutional and ideological foundations. Further, I propose to conceive of textbook revision not as an entirely fragmented mosaic of bilateral and multilateral projects, but as a more or less coherent transnational field.

Keywords: textbook revision, transnational history, international organisations, history teaching, transnational networks

The historiography of international textbook revision in Europe is in its early stages. The few studies addressing this field since the early 1960s – Schröder (1961) may be seen as the first academic work on the topic – constitute a highly diverse research landscape in which many aspects are illuminated to a certain extent and others not at all. While some scholarly essays do delve into the history of the German-Polish (e.g. Ruchniewicz, 2005; Strobel, 2005) and Franco-German (e.g. Riemenschneider, 2000a, 2000b; Bendick, 2003) textbook commissions, several international textbook talks have yet to be researched. Attempts to overview this only recent historical research reveal that it generally tends to focus on isolated projects of textbook talks. In most cases, they address the history of a certain bilateral commission or the textbook work of an individual organisation, such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe (Luntinen, 1988, 1989; Stobart, 1999). There are good and understandable reasons why historians focus on individual commissions or organisations. Each set of textbook talks is unique in many ways and can thus be compared with others only to a limited extent. It is essential that a bilateral textbook commission be embedded within a specific, widely defined diplomatic framework, and this framework usually exerts a strong influence on the commission itself. Strobel (2005) has shown, for instance, that the history of the German-Polish textbook talks can to a considerable

* University of Braunschweig, Georg-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research.
E-mail: faure@gei.de
©Author. ISSN 2000-4508, pp.21–35
degree only be explained with reference to the history of the relationship between the two countries – from the West German Ostpolitik to the so-called “expulsion” of the German population from Poland at the end of World War II. The multilateral textbook projects funded by specific organisations are also considerably influenced by the identities of these various institutions. It is hardly surprising that the Council of Europe’s projects pursue different areas of focus to those of UNESCO’s projects. While European history takes a prime position in the Council of Europe’s textbook work (e.g. Cajani, 2010), world history plays the decisive role in projects under the auspices of the United Nations. It is not only the identities of these institutions but also their internal developments that can have notable effects on their work. According to Pertti Luntinen (1988:344-345), the end of the first comprehensive UNESCO revision project came about upon the Soviet Union joining UNESCO in 1954. Reaching agreements on crucial basic principles of history textbook revision had become almost impossible with this new and powerful member state. The Soviet Union held a view of history that was barely reconcilable with the Western approach that had hitherto enjoyed a dominant position within the organisation.

While such case studies are certainly indispensable, it could also be claimed that they consistently follow a similar point of focus and thus fail to analyse the connections between the various European revision projects. In this article, I take these connections into consideration by focusing on the 1947–1952 period. In this short time period, significant parts of the course were set towards resuming and continuing international textbook work after the brutal interruption brought about by World War II. While at the beginning of 1947 only the Norden associations had resumed their textbook activities, at the end of 1952 at least 27 commissions were active or evolving (UNESCO, 1953). Taking connections into consideration requires the simultaneous analysis of the different revision forums. I therefore address the history of five projects:

1. **UNESCO** – clearly the most prominent actor in international textbook talks after World War II. This intergovernmental organisation possessed a highly diverse revision programme ranging from unilateral textbook analysis at state level through supporting bilateral projects to organising large multilateral conferences.

2. The *Département Professionnel International de l’Enseignement* (International Occupational Department for Education) of the *Fédération Syndicale Mondiale* (World Movement of Trade Unions). As a civilian institution it sought to organise multilateral dialogue and to encourage bilateral talks.

3. The so-called international historian conferences that took place at Speyer. These were organised by the French military occupation government in Germany and constituted a European forum in which experts debated such topics so as to improve history education.
4. The Franco-German textbook talks, which evolved early in the 1950s and were convened by national societies, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Lehrer (Consortium of German Teachers) and the Société des Professeurs d’Histoire Géographie (French Society of History and Geography Teachers).

5. A further Franco-German textbook commission, which evolved in the early 1950s. It was organised by the German Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (Trade Union Education and Science) and the French Fédération de l’Éducation Nationale (National Education Federation), which were both trade unions.

In the following analysis, I focus on the interrelations between these forums and investigate the extent to which their interaction influenced their development. In so doing, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of how international textbook revision was resumed after 1945. I argue that the revision projects were not just embedded within a diplomatic and institutional framework but also in a set of relations that closely linked them, irrespective of their institutional and ideological foundations. I initially address the 1947–1950 period and then the 1950–1952 period.

Resuming Textbook Revision, 1947–1950

The idea of international textbook revision dates back to the end of the 19th century. The first concrete activities took place in the interwar period, particularly under the umbrella of the League of Nations. Despite the sudden and cruel interruption of World War II, demands for textbook revision emerged very soon after 1945. Even during the war, the concept of textbook revision had not completely vanished and had been debated during the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME), the predecessor of UNESCO (Lutinen, 1988:388-339). Nevertheless, activities at the European level did not evolve until between 1947 and 1950, particularly in three separate forums: UNESCO, the World Movement of Trade Unions and the international conference of historians at Speyer.3 The prevailing concepts of textbook revision underpinning these forums were only somewhat similar. In many ways it was more a case of three ideologically dissonant centres of the newly resumed international textbook work. They seem to have largely developed independently of each other since connections between revision projects were relatively casual at the end of the 1940s, even if they were growing.

The Development of Three Ideological Centres of International Textbook Revision

UNESCO

History textbook revision was one of the primary goals of UNESCO, an organisation founded in 1946. It paid a great deal of attention to this area, especially during its first few years. The topic was debated on the occasion of its first general conference, and
several so-called “programmes” were approved and passed (UNESCO, 1949a:59-69). Yet the organisation’s commitment in matters of textbook revision cannot be reduced to these programmes, which were intentionally very broad in their coverage. Pivotal debates on textbook revision were instead entrusted to expert seminars and consulting sessions. New points of focus were often established by the organisation’s textbook work as a result. The following five features can be said to characterise UNESCO’s textbook work during the 1947–1950 period.

First, textbook revision was part of a wider area of the organisation’s work: that of education. UNESCO was one of the most important centres for the international debate on education models and procedures during the post-war era. In 1947 experts from all over the world were invited to a six-week seminar at Sèvres, near Paris, in order to discuss the relationship between education and international understanding. The recommendations of this conference contained sections relevant to history didactics and thus also history textbook revision. The aim of teaching was defined not only as knowledge acquisition but also as the *shaping of behaviour and skills*. School education, especially the “social sciences” (including history), was supposed to convey the message, for instance, that “all persons should be respected and appreciated despite differences in nationality, race, religion, economic or social status, sex or ability” and that “the peoples of the world have much in common”. As far as skills were concerned, pupils were to be taught how maps, tables and images were to be understood and employed, how varying points of view could be identified and factually and objectively assessed, even if they differed from one’s own viewpoint. As Howard Wilson, chairman of the Sèvres seminar, put it during an expert meeting on history teaching: “one of the basic purposes of history teaching [is] the development of a series of skills which [are] partly intellectual and partly skills of group life.” At this time, the question of history education and textbook improvement for UNESCO was thus associated with didactic considerations.

Second, textbook revision was therefore by no means the responsibility of historians alone. Rather, it was an *interdisciplinary project*. Education specialists from all fields were to participate. Even the first programme UNESCO created stipulated that “textbook analysis is no easy and simple matter; it must involve the closest co-operation of scholars, educators, and psychologists, who understand the implications of materials presented to pupils” (UNESCO, 1949a:60). Specialists such as historians were thus to work in collaboration with educationists and psychologists.

Third, another feature was the frame of reference expressly designated by UNESCO for history education and history textbooks. All publications emphasised that *world history* should be allocated a primary and even a dominant position in the classroom alongside national and local history. This did not have purely pedagogical reasons; this concern was clearly politically motivated, particularly in the early years of UNESCO’s work. Textbook revision, as part of the organisation’s education programme, was to serve “the development in the pupils of an attitude of mind favourable to international
understanding, which will make them conscious of the ties which unite the peoples of the world, and ready to accept the obligation which an interdependent world imposes” (UNESCO, 1949b:3). With this in mind, conceptions of world history were repeatedly subjected to debate at the various UNESCO seminars and consultation sessions. The horrors of international conflicts such as those most recently witnessed were by no means to be suppressed in favour of a softened narrative. However, history lessons were also to emphasise the value of co-operation between peoples and nations.

Fourth, UNESCO’s conception of textbook work is further reflected in the revision methodology the organisation presented in its Model Plan for The Analysis and Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding, published in 1949 (UNESCO, 1949a:69-91). The revision aspired to in this booklet was not only to benefit history but also the textbooks of all humanities subjects in school, and ideally included analysing related syllabi (UNESCO, 1949a:75). The material analysis that formed the basis of the revision recommendations was not to be a general study but rather to focus on a specific topic (such as the portrayal of international co-operation in the textbooks).

Fifth, the last conceptual aspect involved the organisation’s view of intergovernmental cultural agreements as a particularly suitable framework for textbook work (UNESCO, 1949a:118-119, 133-134). This view was probably mainly inherited from the inter-war period of textbook revision. After 1918 the Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle had gone to particular trouble to encourage such agreements. Even if this conception was expressly not intended to exclude other ideas, and was merely to be seen as a recommendation, it differed from those involving the World Movement of Trade Unions and the Speyer historians. Compared to the UNESCO programme, the latter two forums possessed far less comprehensive textbook revision ideas.

The Fédération Syndicale Mondiale

The textbook work by the Fédération Syndicale Mondiale (FSM), which up until the beginning of 1949 was conducted by its Département Professionnel International de l’Enseignement (DPIE), is most unsatisfactorily documented. Yet the few journal articles I have been able to evaluate on the subject do allow for a partial overview of the proceedings. This work originated in a journey through Germany embarked upon by a delegation of the Fédération de l’Éducation Nationale, a French trade union federation, in the summer of 1947. The result was a report on the education situation in the country. It was presented at a conference of the FSM in Brussels in August 1947 and met with a certain amount of interest. It was therefore agreed that German textbooks would be examined within the context of international co-operation. To examine German textbooks, a textbook commission was appointed, consisting of experts from Belgium, Czechoslovakia and France. The work was carried out from 1947-1948 under the leadership of Emile Hombourger, a French teacher. It must
be emphasised that the analysis addressed all school subjects. Textbooks from the subjects of history, geography and civic education were therefore taken into account alongside those for literary studies, languages, chemistry, physics, mathematics and biology. This method corresponded to a specific conception of textbook revision based merely on a general textbook examination, conducted not by renowned specialists but by teachers.

Although it was planned that the analysis of German textbooks would be the first step in the work, the reality proved different. From the outset it had been the goal of the DPIE to examine and revise textbooks from as many different countries as possible. This result was never achieved, however. At the end of the 1940s, the World Movement of Trade Unions underwent dramatic changes as a result of the division of the world into the East and West. The movement’s splitting between the Fédération Internationale Syndicale de l’Enseignement (FISE) and the Confédération Mondiale de la Profession Enseignante (CMOPE) considerably compromised its textbook activity.

The International Historian Conferences at Speyer
The four meetings of historians convened at Speyer between August 1948 and June 1950 constitute the third forum of international textbook work. They were organised by the Direction de l’éducation publique of the French military occupation in Germany and involved historians from France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Austria (Defrance, 2009). Here, a number of historical questions were discussed in detail, including the textbooks issue. The debate never reached a compromise that might have been regarded later as a kind of “Speyer doctrine for textbook revision”. No recommendations were agreed upon. The matter was highly sensitive and opinions were divided in many respects. Nevertheless, the general orientation of the discussion clearly deviated in at least one aspect from the views on textbook revision held by UNESCO and the DPIE-FSM. In Speyer, Europe and the “West” were seen as the relevant frames of reference for textbook work. During the fourth conference, the French teacher Joseph Hours even discussed the possibility of writing and editing a European history textbook. According to him, this was a perfectly desirable project (Hours, 1950). As was the case with UNESCO, this focus was not free of political motives. The new history education was to support the development of a political Europe, which was regarded as protection from the outside world (e.g. Rassow, 1950).

It is also worth stressing that the Speyer meetings de facto concerned professional historians and history teachers. Thus, unlike the UNESCO approach, which sought to include educational experts in textbook work and unlike the FSM, which insisted on the role of teachers’ associations, textbook revision was seen in Speyer as a matter solely for history specialists.

To sum up, the conceptions advocated by the UNESCO, FSM and Speyer meetings at the end of the 1940s set clearly different courses for international textbook revision,
even if these directions were by no means entirely irreconcilable. One of the reasons for those differences probably lies in the fact that the three forums appeared and developed almost independently of each other. Yet, I would now like to show that the connections between them were enhanced towards the end of the 1947–1950 period.

**Increasing Connections**

At the time international textbook activities were being resumed, conditions for communicating in Europe were poor. Exploring the possible interaction within and between different textbook revision projects, we should bear in mind that the circulation of ideas and people across national frontiers was dramatically hindered by the material consequences of the war. Setting up an international conference in 1947 was already a great achievement. For example, about the UNESCO Seminar held in Sèvres in 1947 Howard Wilson noted that:

> The Seminar shared with […] UNESCO itself […] certain handicaps imposed by material shortages and dislocations of post-war society. There were not enough typewriters or mimeographing machines; paper was scarce, transportation slow, secretarial help difficult to obtain, telephone service inadequate.8

Not surprisingly therefore, connections between the forums were still quite weak between 1947 and 1950. For example, in August 1948, when the historians assembled in Speyer decided to create an international commission to examine German textbooks, they seemed to be ignoring the work carried out by the committee of representatives of teachers’ associations under the umbrella of the DPIE-FSM (Grégoire et al., 1948:270-271). Although both groups had similar goals, no trace of consultation or co-ordination can be found.

Nevertheless, the networking of different projects seems to have increased at the very end of the 1940s. This was first and foremost due to the fact that textbook revision had become – at least for a few years – institutionally established within UNESCO. In April 1948, the organisation appointed the American Richard Perdew as its delegate for textbook revision. One of his first tasks was to build a network of revision activists so as to facilitate international textbook activities. Another important goal comprised the development of UNESCO into a clearing house for revision projects (UNESCO, 1949a:134). Perdew was assisted by a small staff, which also specifically dedicated its work to textbook revision activities and thus ensured that this work was carried out efficiently. As it appears in the *Handbook* released in 1949, the organisation knew about the commission of the DPIE-FSM and the Speyer meetings (UNESCO, 1949a:44-46). Perdew even attended the third Speyer conference and, during the fourth one, made a speech about UNESCO’s work on history teaching. Moreover, the work of the UN agency became well known as a result of the publication. Until 1950, the organisation released articles in its review as well as three booklets dealing with international textbook work (UNESCO, 1949a & 1949b; Vigander, 1950). Yet the con-
Connections were not close enough for mutual influence to become obvious. This would change in the subsequent three years.

**Networking Revision Forums, 1950–1952**

Between 1950 and 1952, European textbook revision underwent significant changes. Two of the three multilateral forums discussed above more or less disappeared. The Speyer meetings ceased after the fourth conference held in June 1950, and the textbook activities of the FSM remained durably restricted by the splitting of the global trade union movement at the end of the 1940s. On the other hand, the number of bilateral commissions in Europe was booming, a process that was largely due to UNESCO activism. Moreover, connections between revision projects increased so rapidly that most of them became closely interwoven. UNESCO continued to act as an effective clearing house, and a network of individuals involved in international textbook talks emerged. In the following, I try to illuminate this process of projects interweaving by focusing on UNESCO as well as on the two forums of Franco-German textbook co-operation.

**The Franco-German Dialogue at the Crossroads of Influences**

**The Dialogue between the AGDL and SPHGH**

As early as during the inter-war period, French and German teachers had set up co-operation in the matter of bilateral textbook improvement. This dialogue led to the establishment of common recommendations in 1935 which, however, were never published in Germany. The fact that this bilateral co-operation was resumed is closely linked to the growing networking of revision actors at the end of the 1940s. During the third Speyer meeting, Georg Eckert from the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Lehrerverbände (AGDL) met, in the presence of UNESCO representative Richard Perdew, the head of the Société des Professeurs d'Histoire-Géographie (SPHGH), Édouard Bruley, and they both decided to co-operate. Less than two months after this encounter, the SPHGH officially proposed a co-operative project to the AGDL, which the latter accepted. The first meeting was held in August 1950 in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, a German university town next to the French border. Consultations were then set up in Paris and Mainz in 1951 and in Tübingen in 1952, which were to continue until the mid-1960s. In the first three years, the collaboration took two directions. On one hand, a bilateral commission resumed negotiations on the recommendations that French and German historians had adopted during the inter-war period. In 1952, a revised text was released in both countries. On the other hand, both associations exchanged history textbooks so as to mutually analyse them. This examination was limited to the treatment in the partner’s books of the own country’s history and of Franco-German relations. From the Mainz meeting onwards, this analysis was completed by lectures given by scholars on specific historical topics. Such lectures were
Connections in the History of Textbook Revision, 1947–1952

to inspire debate between French and German historians and aimed to establish a common view of historical events. They became increasingly dominant during the subsequent consultations.

It appears from the joint recommendations that the co-operation between the AGDL and the SPHG was able to rely on a tradition of Franco-German textbook dialogue. Yet it was also closely linked to the recent discussions that had taken place both within the Speyer meetings and UNESCO. First, several members of the AGDL-SPHG textbook commission had also attended one or more of the Speyer meetings between 1948 and 1950. On the French side, this was the case for Édouard Bruley, Jacques Droz, Joseph Hours and Jean Sigmann; on the German side, for Georg Eckert and Helmut Krausnick. Moreover, the connection to Speyer was an ideological one. To a certain extent, members of the AGDL-SPHG group conceived their dialogue not solely as Franco-German but as European. For example, they decided to give a new name to the common recommendations that had first been achieved in the inter-war period. In 1935, they had been published in France as a Binding declaration of assembled French and German history teachers on textbooks’ detoxification.\(^\text{10}\) In 1952, they were released in Germany under the title Franco-German Agreement on contested questions of European history. At their Tübingen meeting in August 1952, they addressed a topic in which Franco-German and European histories were closely intertwined. Scholars were to discuss great European peace treaties from Verdun 843 to Versailles 1919. In a way, each of these treaties – Verdun and Versailles, the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, Vienna 1815 or the Congress of Berlin from 1878 – was related to the common history of both nations, but they also clearly had a European dimension. The result of the consultations was a Franco-German view on European history teaching.

UNESCO also left its mark on the Franco-German dialogue. In this case too, individual interweaving between the forums probably played an important role. In August 1950, Édouard Bruley and Georg Eckert attended both the first AGDL-SPHG meeting in Freiburg and a UNESCO seminar on textbook revision. Bruley was also a member of the commission organising the following UNESCO textbook revision seminar in Sèvres one year later. Moreover, the UN agency delegated a member of its staff, René Ochs, to most of the Franco-German meetings. Not surprisingly, UNESCO’s view of history teaching thus had an impact on the bilateral collaboration. Following the organisation’s recommendations, the bilateral commission stressed the history of international co-operation and peace movements. At the Tübingen meeting, it came as something of a surprise that a less prominent peace treaty was addressed. A discussion on the “Peace Conference of The Hague in 1899 and the early attempts of international organisations” was announced by the programme. Compared to the other conferences such as Verdun 843, Westphalia 1648, Vienna 1815, Berlin 1878 and Versailles 1918, The Hague 1899 was a much less traditional topic of historical research at the time. Its insertion in the programme should prob-
ably be interpreted as a mark of UNESCO’s influence. We can also find traces of this influence in the revised common recommendation. In 1952, the French and German historians added a short subsection that stressed international co-operation: “[...] II. It is necessary that textbooks indicate the existence in the XVIIIth century of a movement of ideas in favour of peace organisation (Leibniz, abbot of Saint-Pierre, Kant...)”11. UNESCO’s recommendations on history teaching thus clearly infused the Franco-German dialogue.

**The Dialogue between the GEW and FEN**

In reaction to the specific direction taken by the Franco-German dialogue, a second bilateral commission was set up in 1951. It was composed of delegates from both German and French teachers’ trade unions: the *Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft* (GEW) on one hand and the *Fédération de l’Éducation nationale* (FEN) on the other. As the French introduction report puts it, this commission clearly distanced itself from Speyer, UNESCO and the AGDL-SPHG consultations:

> Our initiative in favour of a comparison of German and French textbooks is very different from the studies carried out by national UNESCO-commissions at the history teaching seminars of Brussels (1950) and Sèvres (1951). It is different from the analysis of manuscripts or potential re-edition of history textbooks begun in Speyer (Palatinate) by a small group of historians and professors of diverse nationalities under the auspices of the military government of the French occupation zone. Through its methods and its spirit, it relies on the tradition of our trade-union organisations; our effort is not limited to the examination of delicate and contested questions but it addresses the analysis of textbooks in all disciplines. We think that reading books, geography or language textbooks as well as history textbooks can reveal the biased dimension of teaching. There are no unimportant details, even in a science textbook.”12

As the text clearly implies, the GEW-FEN co-operation emerged in a context in which connections between forums also played a decisive role. On both the German and the French side there were participants who knew the work of UNESCO, the Speyer meetings and the AGDL-SPHG commission very well. In this case, however, connections to these projects led to demarcation. Instead, the positive model of textbook co-operation lay in the experiences of international teachers’ associations and the FSM. At least on the French side, the network of individuals that had already been major actors in the DPIE-FSM textbook work also came into play in the GEW-FEN co-operation. In particular, Emile Hombourger, who had directed the DPIE-FSM examination committee for German textbooks, participated in the new project. The work of the new bilateral commission explicitly relied on the tradition of international textbook activities conducted by trade unions. It was carried out by school teachers and not by university professors. It considered all school subjects and did not allot a privileged place to history. In 1952 and 1953, French and German teachers analysed their partner’s textbooks in history, geography, languages and the sciences, and contacted several textbook authors and editors so as to permit a revision of the coming new editions.
UNESCO and its Experts

The short period of 1950–1952 was also very important for UNESCO’s textbook revision activities. The organisation played a decisive role in the development of international textbook dialogue by significantly contributing to the creation and/or resumption of bilateral commissions. It kept promoting the networking of different projects so that revision forums became ever more connected. As a result, it can be said that the organisation was the major actor of the boom in revision in the early 1950s. Yet, as we will see, this boom also had important repercussions for the organisation’s work.

In Brussels in 1950 and in Sèvres near Paris in 1951, UNESCO set up two multilateral conferences specifically to address history textbook revision. The Brussels seminar in particular turned out to be a great success. Over the course of six weeks, scholars, teachers and civil servants from all over the world discussed common topics related to history teaching. Many of them left the conference convinced of the potential of textbook revision (Lousse, 1952). Nine bilateral textbook commissions were set up concerning Germany, the USA, Sweden, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Austria and the Netherlands. The Scandinavian textbook work carried out by the Norden associations and the fairly new Franco-German AGDL-SPHG dialogue served as models for the constitution of new commissions. Both collaborations were presented in detail during the seminar by Haakon Vigander on one hand, and by Georg Eckert and Édouard Bruley on the other (UNESCO, 1950:14).

In both Brussels and Sèvres, the participants contributed to developments in UNESCO’s approach to revision. They stressed it was a matter for experts and not for politicians. One of the 1950 seminar’s recommendations stated: “whenever possible, private initiative should be given preference over governmental action. Member states should sanction the results obtained rather than direct the discussions and negotiations themselves”. This recommendation clearly aimed at protecting international textbook dialogue from political interference. In so doing, the seminar participants also took a critical position on UNESCO’s programme, which had hitherto allocated a significant role to governments and states.

Even more far-reaching developments concerned the disciplinary conception of textbook revision. As we have seen, UNESCO had attached great importance to educational issues related to history textbooks. Such issues were, for example, included in the programme of the Brussels seminar, which had partly been drafted by J. A. Lauwerys, a professor of comparative studies in education in London. Yet the profile of the consultants UNESCO appointed on issues related to textbook revision changed alongside the development of revision projects. The new advisors of the organisation were now people like Georg Eckert and Édouard Bruley, who were members of national history teachers’ associations and who participated in bilateral textbook dialogues (UNESCO, 1953:43-45). The role of historians in UNESCO therefore grew rapidly at the beginning of the 1950s, while that of psychologists and education specialists
decreased. This appears very clearly in a report on textbook revision the organisation published in 1952. The sticking point of revision was no longer related to didactical consideration. It had nothing to do with the shaping of behaviour and skills. As the author of the report put it, “the fundamental problem underlying the whole process of improving textbooks [is] that of bringing them up to date with the latest results of modern research” (UNESCO, 1953:41). De facto, in a short period of time, textbook revision had largely become a matter for history specialists and was not the interdisciplinary project that UNESCO had initially been promoting.

Between 1950 and 1952, connections between the forums increased rapidly, becoming closely interwoven. As it appears with people like Georg Eckert and Édouard Bruley, who were involved in numerous projects, a small community of revision activists emerged beyond institutional borders. This community largely contributed to stabilising the European textbook dialogue. In 1954, UNESCO abruptly ceased its provision of financial and organisational support for revision. Given the pivotal role the organisation had played up until this point, this decision could have seriously jeopardised the continuation of textbook revision. Yet the community of “revisors” carried its work forward. Édouard Bruley, Georg Eckert and their colleagues now served as advisors to the Council of Europe, which organised its first meeting on textbook revision in 1953 and committed itself consistently to this field until the end of the 1950s.

**Conclusion: The Transnational Field of Textbook Revision**

In this article, I have tried to explore the crossings and inter-crossings between five forums of textbook revision over a fairly short period of time. It appears that the amount of interaction between these forums particularly grew at the beginning of the 1950s, with the result that projects became closely interwoven, be it in terms of co-operation and positive influence – between UNESCO, Speyer and the AGDL-SPHG commission or between the FSM and the GEW-FEN commission – or in terms of competition, such as in the case of the Franco-German textbook dialogue. This connection-building mainly resulted from the actions of UNESCO and from the development of individual networks beyond institutions and projects. It therefore seems that conceptions of textbook revision were not strictly linked to specific institutions, but that they could move from one forum of international textbook revision to another. Consequently, it was better to not systematically oppose revision forums merely on the basis of their institutional characteristics. For example, a bilateral dialogue set up by civilian organisations might have shared a similar approach to revision work with a multilateral project supported by a military government or an international organisation.

In my view, research on connections can contribute to a better understanding of the history of international textbook revision on at least two levels. First, when focusing on a single forum of revision, it seems essential to take its environment into consideration. This environment clearly includes institutional and diplomatic elements but it also consists of the set of revision projects related to the forum in ques-
Connections in the History of Textbook Revision, 1947–1952

In the case of UNESCO, for example, one would be mistaken in believing that its textbook revision work was exclusively determined by states, even though it is an intergovernmental organisation. External experts appointed by the organisation were also major actors. Their advice was taken seriously because they were in a position to share experiences and know-how they had gained in other revision forums. As a consequence, UNESCO’s revision activities were influenced by other textbook talks.

Second, focusing on connections can lead to a change of scale in the historical analysis of textbook revision and, as a consequence, to new questions. If we no longer concentrate on one forum but on all of them, as well as on the links between them, then we will be able to conceive of textbook revision no longer as a fragmented mosaic of bilateral or multilateral projects but as a more or less coherent transnational field, resulting from co-operation, competition and transfers between revision forums. We may then ask how the very idea of textbook revision was shaped into that complex transnational field. Yet this question calls for further research.

Romain Faure studied History and Sociology in Toulouse, Paris and Berlin. He is now a research fellow at the Georg-Eckert-Institut for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig (Germany). He participates in the German-Swedish project History Beyond Borders: The International History Textbook Revision, 1919–2009 and is writing a PhD thesis on European networks of history textbook revision between 1945 and 1989.

E-mail: faure@gei.de
References

Bendick, R. (2003) Irrwege und Wege der Feindschaft: Deutsch-französische Schulbuchgespräche im 20. Jahrhundert. In K. Hochstuhl (ed.) Deutsche und Franzosen im zusammenwachsenden Europa 1945–2000. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Cajani, L. (2010) Bringing the Ottoman Empire into the European Narrative: Historians’ Debates in the Council of Europe. In G. Jonker and S. Thobani (eds.) Narrating Islam – Interpretation of the Muslim World in European Texts. London: Tauris.

Defrance, C. (2009) Die internationalen Historikertreffen von Speyer: Erste Kontaktaufnahme zwischen deutschen und französischen Historikern nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. In U. Pfeil (ed.) Die Rückkehr der deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft in die Ökumene der Historiker: Ein wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher Ansatz. München: Oldenbourg.

Deutschland – Frankreich – Europa: Die deutsch-französische Verständigung und der Geschichtsunterricht (1953). Baden-Baden: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft.

Deutschland und Frankreich im Spiegel ihrer Schulbücher (1954). Braunschweig: Limbach.

Grégoire, H., Harsin, P., Lambrechts, P. and De Laet, S. (1948) La réunion des historiens de Spire (août 1948). Alumni 17, 270-271.

Hours, J. (1950) Un livre d’histoire européenne est-il réalisable? In Grundlagen und Grundfragen europäischer Geschichte: Bericht über das IV. Internationale Historiker-Treffen in Speyer vom 29. Mai bis 2. Juni 1950. Baden-Baden: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft.

Lousse, E. (1952) Desseins, Limites et Perspectives: Les stages de l’Unesco, l’enseignement de l’histoire et l’orientation de la recherche. Brussels: Institut l’Avenir.

Luntinen, P. (1988) School History Textbook Revision by and under the Auspices of UNESCO. Internationale Schulbuchforschung 10, 337-349.

Luntinen, P. (1989) School History Textbook Revision by and under the Auspices of UNESCO. Internationale Schulbuchforschung 11, 39-48.

Rassow, P. (1950) Bemerkungen zu den deutsch-französischen Thesen von 1935. In Europa und der Nationalismus: Bericht über das III. Internationale Historiker-Treffen in Speyer vom 17. bis 20. Oktober 1950. Baden-Baden: Verlag für Kunst und Wissenschaft.

Riemenschneider, R. (2000a) Vom Erbfeind zum Partner: Schulbucharbeit mit Frankreich. In: U. A. J. Becher (ed.) Internationale Verständigung: 25 Jahre Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung in Braunschweig. Hannover: Hahn.

Riemenschneider, R. (2000b) Transnationale Konfliktbearbeitung: Das Beispiel der deutsch-französischen und der deutsch-polnischen Schulbuchgespräche im Vergleich 1935–1989. In C. Tessmer (ed.) Das Willy-Brandt-Bild in Deutschland und Polen. Berlin: Bundeskanzler-Willy-Brandt-Stiftung.

Ruchniewicz, K. (2005) Der Entstehungsprozess der gemeinsamen deutsch-polnischen Schulbuchkommission 1937/38–1972. Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 45, 237-252.

Schroder, C.-A. (1961) Die Schulbuchverbesserung durch internationale geistige Zusammenarbeit: Geschichte – Arbeitsformen – Rechtsprobleme. Braunschweig: Westermann.

Stobart, M. (1999) Fifty Years of European Co-operation on History-textbooks: The Role and Contribution of the Council of Europe. Internationale Schulbuchforschung 21, 147-161.

Strobel, T. (2005) Die gemeinsame deutsch-polnische Schulbuchkommission: Ein spezifischer Beitrag zur Ost-West Verständigung 1972–1989. Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 45, 253-268.

UNESCO (1949a) A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding. Paris: UNESCO.
UNESCO (1949b) *Some Suggestions on Teaching about the United Nations and Its Specialized Agencies*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (1950) *Better History Textbooks*. Paris: UNESCO.

UNESCO (1953) *Bilateral Consultations for the Improvement of History Textbooks*. Paris: UNESCO.

Vigander, H. (1950) *Mutual Revision of History Textbooks in the Nordic Countries*. Paris: UNESCO.

### Endnotes

1. This research is part of the research project *History Beyond Borders: The International History Textbook Revision, 1919–2009* funded by the Swedish Research Council and directed by Professor Daniel Lindmark, Umeå University, Sweden. A first draft of this paper was presented at the international workshop “Researching History Textbooks and International Textbook Revision” held at Umeå in May 2010. I would like to thank all the participants of this workshop for their interesting and helpful feedback. I also wish to thank Wendy Anne Kopisch for translating and correcting this text as well as Jessica Cohen for her suggestions and great support.

2. By “textbook revision” I solely mean *history* textbook revision in this contribution.

3. Two other forums were also important: the German-English textbook talks, which came into being in 1949, and the Scandinavian revision, carried out by the *Norden* associations.

4. *Social Studies Teaching and National Understanding*, by Leonard Kennworthy, UNESCO Archives, Sem. Sec 1/12, 27 August 1947, p. 32.

5. *Social Studies...,* UNESCO Archives, Sem. Sec 1/12, 27 August 1947, p. 33.

6. *Meeting of Experts on the Teaching of History Held at UNESCO House, from 12 to 16 December 1949*, UNESCO Archives, ED/Conf. 7, p. 13.

7. A report was published in *L’Université syndicaliste*, No. 47, 25 November 1948 und No. 48, 15 December 1948.

8. *Seminar for Education in International Understanding, Report Submitted by Howard E. Wilson, Director of the Seminar, to the Director-General of UNESCO, 15 October 1947*, UNESCO Archives, Sem./25/ED, p. 2.

9. “Les Entretiens Franco-Allemands, Mai-Octobre 1951.” In *Deutschland – Frankreich – Europa: Die deutsch-französische Verständigung und der Geschichtsunterricht*. Baden-Baden, 1953, pp. 15-34.

10. “Probleme der deutsch-französischen Geschichtsschreibung.” In *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht*, 1951/1952, pp. 44-64.

11. “Les Entretiens Franco-Allemands, Mai-Octobre 1951”, in: *Deutschland – Frankreich – Europa: Die deutsch-französische Verständigung und der Geschichtsunterricht*, Baden-Baden, 1953, p. 16.

12. *Deutschland und Frankreich im Spiegel ihrer Schulbücher*, Braunschweig, 1954, pp. 11-12.

13. *Meeting of Experts on the Improvement of Textbooks*, 23 to 26 October 1950, UNESCO Archives, ED/Conf. TB/1, p.1.