

Wojciech Roszkowski

**Opinion on French-German secondary school history textbook
Histoire/Geschichte. Europa und die Welt vom Wiener Kongress bis 1945
(vol.I) and *Histoire/Geschichte. Europa und die Welt seit 1945* (vol. II)**

1. General comments

French-German secondary school history textbook *Histoire/Geschichte. Europa und die Welt vom Wiener Kongress bis 1945* (vol. I) and *Histoire/Geschichte. Europa und die Welt seit 1945* (vol. II) written by 17 historians, 7 of them from France and 10 from Germany, was published in 2008 by publishing houses Nathan and Klett. Volume I of the textbook was edited by Daniela Henri, Guillaume Le Quintrec and Peter Geiss. Volume II was edited by Guillaume Le Quintrec and Peter Geiss. Volume I has 387 pages and the second one has 336 pages large format pages. There are CDs with texts enclosed to both volumes.

At first glance both volumes of the textbook give a good impression because of the interesting publishing form. With regard to the publishing technique these textbooks are modern. The basic text is placed on individual pages, separated from additional source texts, illustrations and questions. Both textbooks are lavishly illustrated and many of the pictures are truly interesting. Still, a closer analysis of the textbook proves that **this publication is a failure.**

Generally speaking, the title of this textbook is **inadequate to its content.** Had the authors given the textbooks a plain title *History for Secondary Schools* we could argue that the material concerning France and Germany could constitute about a half of its content, but the authors' ambition was to describe the European and world history from the Congress of Vienna (in 1815) to our times. This makes the proportions established by the authors **misleading.** In the first volume, concerning years 1815-1945, the material about France and Germany constitutes about 63% of the content and in the second volume - 47%. At the end of each volume the authors briefly describe essential figures of the periods discussed in the given volume. In the first volume 32 from 55 figures described are Germans or Frenchmen (58%), in the second volume the proportion is of 15 to 48, so Frenchmen and Germans constitute 31% of the central figures of the textbook. Composition of this historical pantheon is particularly interesting. In the first volume we can find the main figures of the left-wing party as well as Hubertine Auclert, Jules Ferry and Louise Otto-Peters, but we will not find Abraham Lincoln, Franz Joseph and Queen Victoria. In the second volume the authors favoured Yasser Arafat, Che Guevara and Walter Ulbricht, but they did not describe Mother Theresa, Albert Schweitzer or Dalai Lama. This selection signifies the ideological and geographical inclination of the textbook.

The division of material between the volumes is questionable. The first volume describes 130 years of complicated history of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, including two world wars, whereas the second volume concerns only about 60 years and describes the history of the Cold War and the world after the collapse of the Soviet communism. It is possible that because of this easier breath the second volume of the textbook is a little better than the first one. This is however no excuse for the scandalous deficiencies of the first volume.

Proportions concerning the basic text and additional materials are similarly flawed. The authors in this case give the fifty-fifty proportions which makes

information insufficient and the material to various considerations too excessive. Modern textbooks should certainly prepare students for independent thinking, but to do that the textbook should be sufficiently informative. The discussed textbook however **provokes the student to create opinions based on unsatisfactory factual knowledge.**

There are numerous maps in the textbook. However, a lot of information that should have been included in the main text is placed on them, and this is not enough for the student to notice and comprehend the facts. It is also vague why some of the main text fragments are defined as “chapters” and others as “dossier”. These dossiers should be probably understood as *case studies* which are special cases worth analyzing, but because they are similar to the chapters, they seem to be as important as the main text. What is more, this disrupts the proportions adopted in the textbook.

2. Detailed comments. Volume I

At the beginning of the first part, in brief presentation of key events of the first half of the 19th century, on chronological timeline (page 10) the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 is missing. In the elaboration on the Congress of Vienna (page 12) the role of Klemens von Metternich is stressed, however Tsar Alexander I, who played a crucial role in the revolution, is omitted. The principle of legitimism needs some further explanation, for it does not imply merely a simple recreation of rights of the pre-Napoleonic European ruling families. Had it been only about that what would have happened with the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth?

While discussing Revolutions of 1848 (page 22) the authors mention that the nations of Austria-Hungary asserted their right of self-determination, but once again they do not mention the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 suppressed with the help of the Russian army. The authors described the figure of Ludwik Mierosławski, but the figures of Sandor Petőfi and Lajos Kossuth are missing.

In general chronology of events in years 1850-1871 (page 30) the Crimean War and agrarian reforms in Russia, as well as reforms in Austria and creation of Austria-Hungary (*Ausgleich* of 1867), not to mention Polish January Uprising, are missing. These events were not even mentioned in the main text either. In the textbook the student will not find any information about the Russian culture of the 19th century (Chekhov and Dostoyevsky!), about problems of North and South states, the American Civil War and abolition of slavery. The student will not find out anything about Abraham Lincoln. **Lack of information about the history of Austria-Hungary, Russia and the United States of America in the 19th century proves a shocking negligence.**

Chapter 3 of the first part of the second volume is dedicated to the development of democracy in Germany and France. However, a chapter describing development of liberal democracy in Great Britain is missing. **The student using the textbook will not know about the Chartists, British party system, will not find out about Benjamin Disraeli or the history of British labour unions.** This is outrageous.

French Third Republic (page 48) is described one-sidedly as a triumph of progress over reaction and nationalism supported by the Church and the army. The student will have no chance of knowing about the anticlericalism of the Third Republic, and the Dreyfus Affair (pages 50-51) totally covers abuse committed because of the separation of the Church and State.

For instance, elimination of 10 000 religious schools and orders during the rules of PM Émile Combes was not mentioned. There is a whole fragment on French schools („dossier”, pages 56-57), but authors omitted that fact there as well. Discussing the *Kulturkampf* in Germany (page 52) the authors should have stressed that it concerned Polish Catholics in the eastern parts of the German Empire inhabited by Poles.

From time to time the authors give the students methodological guidelines how to study history, e.g. methods of illustrations and text analysis. Theoretically, this is an important part of the textbook, however in practice this makes the student think that reaching the truth is harder than it really is. For instance, on page 60 we can find methods of “scientific analysis of historical interpretation”. Among the given criteria of analysis there were: familiarizing with the discipline of the given author (social history, political history, history of idea) and with the author's publications. This approach may not make the student come any closer to recognizing how far from reality the historian's interpretation is. The textbook does not even indicate the significance of simple logic or diagnosis of the author's ideological approach and credibility through verifying the sources the author used.

The authors do not even try to conceal hostile attitude towards the Catholic Church. Even though they pay attention to successive popes, on page 68 the authors inform the students that “conservative Catholicism in Germany combined itself with particularism of a part of Catholic inhabitants and aspiration for national autonomy of populous Polish minority (the Greater Poland)”. Should those aspirations, as well as Catholicism, be treated as a problem to be solved and not as an objective phenomenon?

The lecture on creation of new nations and nationalism (page 70) is described in the section about history of Germany at the end of the 19th century and not as a separate topic indicating universality of this phenomenon. It made the critical approach easier for the authors. We can see here one of the main problems of contemporary historiography and history teaching. The process of creation of new nations should be separated as a phenomenon objective from “constructivism”, that is the actions of ideologists or politicians who through promoting the national idea wanted to influence the social reality and as a result they often reached nationalism. **In the interpretation given by the authors of the textbook there is no option of separating** the natural and valuable attachment to one's own national community, called **patriotism, from nationalism** with chauvinistic tinge meaning harmful actions being taken in the name of one's own nation at the cost of other nations. The strategy based on suppressing young generation's national feelings may not necessarily result in anything positive.

That is why, when the authors of the textbook in the conclusion of the first part of this volume (page 76) list the dates that they consider crucial for “the century of the nations” (1814-1914) and they put there the Dreyfus Affair, “the separation of Church and State” in France (1905) and creation of “the strongest social-democratic fraction in Reichstag” (1912), but they omit the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, freehold granted to Russian peasants (1861) or the revolution of 1905 in the Russian Empire, it is doubtful that the students would really understand what it means.

The second part of this volume concerns the development of industrial society in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. In the chronology of that period (page 80), the crisis of the 80s of the 19th century is described as “the great crisis” whereas it should be, as it is usually accepted, the crisis in the years 1929-1933. Chapter 5, opening this part of the textbook, should have been placed before the

chapter discussing political history because it would make it easier to describe development of civic societies and democracy in the 19th century, even though the arrangement of the content does not indicate that it was the authors' intention. The layout of this chapter makes it seem as if economic history was only an addition to political history and not its important part.

While discussing industrial revolution in England (it can be at last found on pages 84 and 85, even though the information is far too insufficient) **the authors cannot really explain how this revolution could take place at that time and why exactly it took place in England.** The authors would do with some basic knowledge on economy. One sentence: "availability of the workforce, development of industrial capital and growing spending power along with competitiveness of the industrial products fuelled the introduction of technical innovations in country's mass production" would be enough

Finally, on page 90 we find the United States as the country leading in industrialization. It is a shame that earlier the student has not been able to find out any information about this country! However on page 92 the student right away finds section about the crisis of 1929-1933 in the USA. This section also describes "the great crisis", the problem is that the textbook discusses here the German crisis in the 70-ties of the 19th century. Apart from that, **the whole fragment on page 92 describes a lot of various phenomena, such as the German crisis, inflation and hyperinflation after the World War I** (even though in the textbook that war has not even broken out yet). **Since even the authors were not able to organize those facts, it would be even harder for the student not to confuse them.** This part of the textbook is utterly disastrous. The authors clearly wanted to show the social results of the crisis of 1929-1933 instead of trying to make the student comprehend its causes. If this is to substantiate Nazism, then the reasoning is partially correct, but the crisis in the US was just as severe and it did not create Nazism.

Chapter 6 discusses the development of nations in the years 1815-1939. The World War I and the interwar period have not even been described and the student is already informed about the social development of the mentioned period. We can find here the US, but only as an example of the mass immigration (pages 106-107), and Russia described in a few words about the freehold granted to the peasants (page 108). Is it enough to explain the crisis after the Crimean War and profound changes taking place in this country in the second half of the 19th century? I deeply doubt it. In the summary of the profound and quick social changes at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the authors should have indicated that some of people's existential anxieties are the same. On pages 114-115 we have a representation of social life in the art. I think that two or three pictures would be enough and the remaining space should have been used to supplement the lecture. **Illustrations cannot replace description and analysis**, for the pictographic method has its limits. Images can inspire emotions but they carry less verified content than the word.

The authors' "political correctness" can be seen in the fragment about the change of the feminine role in the society (pages 122-123). It is a very important phenomenon and it is wise of the authors to write about it, however, the change of the position of the woman in the mass societies had negative results, too. These results concerned both the societies and women themselves. Contemporary youth cannot be raised in the atmosphere of unlimited opportunities and rights, for they will surely see that this artificial freedom without limits demands a great amount of sacrifice. It mostly concerns the girls, who will understand how hard it is to combine

their career and their family life and how high the psychological price for excessive expectations can be.

The fragment concerning religious life (pages 124-125) in the 19th century is strikingly one-sided. The authors seem to miss the aggressive atheism in total. Speaking about the development of monastic life they seem to try and cover up the situation of the monasteries in France. They favourably mention Max Weber's theory about "the protestant spirit of capitalism", but they cuttingly indicate the critical attitude of the Catholic Church towards the social changes caused by capitalism. Is it that the Church's critic of the abuse of the capitalism in the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical which they mention was not right? **We can unequivocally infer from the text that secularization is inevitable and irreversible because the textbook does not show examples of other ways** (e.g. the US, Italy or Poland).

Chapter 7 of the third part of the textbook is devoted to art and is in my opinion a triumph of form over content. What is more, this chapter is illustrated only with reproductions of German and French artists. Was there in "Europe and the world", which this textbook is supposed to discuss, no fine art at all? Where are Goya, Turner, Mucha or Munch then? Dedicating a whole "dossier" to Pablo Picasso (pages 142-143) is a bit of exaggeration though. Even though the following fragments about mass culture should be seen as well done, in the summary on page 154 among the important dates in this discipline, events from Germany and France are once again dominant.

The fourth part of this volume is dedicated to the global expansion of the European superpowers and colonialism. In the chronological overview of the most important dates on page 158 the authors wrote that in the years 1912-1913 there was "the Balkan war". In fact there were two of them. Distinguishing between them is necessary because the coalitions taking part in them changed. Among the important events the Boer War in South Africa is missing.

In chapter 9 of this part (page 162) the authors mention the United States and Japan as the up-and-coming superpowers outside Europe. However in the case of Japan the internal reforms and the opening of the Meiji era were discussed. When it comes to the United States only territorial expansion, Monroe Doctrine and economic imperialism are mentioned. Even though this part of the textbook concerns years 1860-1939, **once again the American Civil War and abolition of slavery were omitted**. It should also have been stressed that even though the US carried the economic expansion, this country did not possess any colonies. It seems clear that the authors are trying to marginalize their students' knowledge about the United States.

There are some inaccuracies in the "dossier" about China (pages 164-165). The authors do not mention the Japanese-Russian war of 1904-1905, and in the description of the Boxer Rebellion the fact that the rebellion was anti-Christian in its nature is omitted. Writing that the rebellion resulted in the death of 231 foreigners and thousands of Chinese citizens the authors suggest that this conflict was only between foreigners and the Chinese citizens. The truth is that among the killed Chinese people there were Christians murdered because of their faith and their number includes 18 000 of Chinese Catholics and many protestants. Omitting this fact is equal to manipulation. On page 166 the Japanese-Russian war is mentioned, but there are no facts concerning its results and its effects on Russia. We can also find here an expression about "the exacerbating competition among the imperialistic superpowers" taken straight from the Marxist dictionary.

On the basis of the lecture on page 168 **it is deeply doubtful that the student will be able to comprehend the issue of the Balkan wars.** On the same page the authors mention “the Balkan war” and “two Balkan wars”, while the maps illustrating the problem do not explain who and why was engaged in the conflict, even though they admit that “the Balkan cauldron” was the origin of the World War I.

The fourth part of the textbook is crowned with the map presenting the world in 1939 (page 182). There is a piece of incorrect information concerning Alaska which requires putting right. Alaska was not annexed by the United States, but purchased from Russia. At the end of this part we can also find a list of the most important dates. As in the previous parts of the textbook, we can see here some of the dates covered by the fourth part, but not all of them are mentioned on the list. We can doubt here whether this list is necessary, since it takes much space while providing no new pieces of information.

The fifth part concerns the World War I. In the initial chronology of the years 1914-1918 the Western Front seems to dominate. There is hardly any information about the Eastern and the South Fronts. The student can learn about them from the maps on pages 190-191, but even there we can find some serious deficiencies. Instead of the name “Dardanelles Campaign” the authors should have used the name “the battle of Gallipoli”, tragic especially for the Anglo-Saxons (the Australians!). On the map on page 191 the authors should have at least put the plan of the organization of the Central and Eastern Europe according to the notion of *Mitteleuropa* from the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The omission of the revolutions in Vienna and Budapest in **1918 is a striking oversight.**

The note about the genocide of the Armenians by the Turkish regime in 1915 (page 200 and 201) should be appreciated, but this is almost the only piece of information about what was happening in Eastern and Southern Europe before 1917. **However, omission of the piece of information about the United States joining the war in April of 1917 on page 206 is surprising.** This fact is mentioned in the chronology on page 188, but the student may not notice it and at this point the sentence about “the Germans wanting to achieve their goals before the arrival of the Americans in the spring of 1917” does not explain anything.

Chapter 12 of the fifth part again begins with the chronology of events. This chronology contains a fundamental misrepresentation. **“The Polish-Russian” war (precisely speaking: Polish-Bolshevik war) did not break out in April of 1920, but in December of 1918 when, after having dissolved the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (not mentioned in the textbook at all), the Bolsheviks went West** to spread revolution into Europe. First clashes between the Red Army and Polish soldiers took place at the beginning of December of 1918. This misrepresentation is very serious because it changes the sense of the war, for when we assume that the war broke out in April of 1920 (Polish offensive in Ukraine) it gives the false impression that it was Poland that started the war. The truth is that it was the other way around. Moreover, on page 220 we can find a confusing piece of information that the Polish-Bolshevik war “broke out” in 1919. It is really hard to guess where this date comes from.

The table on page 213 showing the amount of the casualties during the World War I concerns only the countries that existed before the war. This way the authors avoided showing that these collateral damages determined the difficulty of the start for the states created or recreated after the war, e.g. Poland, Czechoslovakia or Baltic countries. While speaking about the Bolshevik political police on page 214,

Cheka would be worth mentioning (this name appears later). In “dossier” on page 216 only Baltic countries, Ukraine and Belarus are listed as the areas occupied by the Germans. The reason why Poland is omitted is unknown. The authors should have mentioned here the Red Army's western offensive in November of 1918. We can find some information about Polish offensive in Ukraine which gives the impression that it was Poland that started the war with the Bolshevik Russia. Moreover, the textbook makes it clear that **the Peace of Riga gave Poland the area inhabited by Ukrainians and Byelorussians. The text suggests that these lands were inhabited by ethnically homogeneous population, whereas on the whole area of the Eastern Borderlands the Poles constituted about 40% of the population and the cities were dominated by Jews.** The editors of this volume have left a lot of empty space here. Why did they not use this space to give some further information about the situation in the eastern lands of the Second Polish Republic at the end of and after the war and why did they leave some oblique statements distorting reality? The source material concerning the Polish-Bolshevik war (page 217) is taken from Babel. Is it really a better source than an impartial British Lord d'Abernon?

On pages 218-225 the direct results of the World War I are discussed. The student though will have a problem comprehending scattered information about the demise of Austria-Hungary and will not find out about the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. On page 222 the authors mention that Poland acquired “a considerable part of West Prussia and the District of Poznań” but they do not mention that those lands were inhabited mostly by Poles. I am also afraid that the reproduction of a German propaganda poster from the plebiscite period and showing potentially dreadful fate of the Germans in Poland (page 223) may be taken at a face value by young Frenchmen and Germans, all the more so because right next to this reproduction we can see a source text complaining about the “woe to the defeated” rule that was accepted in Versailles. On page 224 we can read that “reborn Poland was granted Galicia, lands inhabited by Ukrainians and Byelorussians and belonging to Russia (Peace of Riga in 1921) and a considerable part of District of Poznań and West Prussia”. This text suggests that Poland was granted lands which it was not entitled to because those lands were not inhabited by Poles!

A considerable chapter dedicated to the World War I in the memories of Europeans (pages 226-229) is based on the material concerning Germans, Frenchmen and the British. Would it not have been good for the European unity to quote someone from Eastern Europe as well? In the conclusion on the war period (page 230) information about the western offensive of the Red Army is again missing, whereas in the glossary there is a term of “genocide”, surely in the context of the crime committed on the Armenians by the Turks, but this term was introduced only after the World War II. I am afraid this was supposed to relativize later Soviet and German genocides.

Introducing the student to the interwar period is very poor (chapter 13 of the sixth part). **In the brief chronology (page 234) the treaties of Rapallo (1922), Locarno (1925) and Berlin (1926) along with Kellogg-Briand Pact (1927) are omitted.** The illustrations on page 235 suggest that the fascists manipulated the crowds, whereas the actions of the socialists were justified. And where are the manipulations of the extreme left-wing mentioned? **The question of the move away from democracy in Europe has been described in a scandalous way.** The map on page 237 equals political systems of Spain, Portugal, III Reich, Poland, Hungary or Baltic countries and the illustrations suggest that the May Coup in Poland and Józef Piłsudski were

the most characteristic examples of violence committed on democracy in the interwar Europe. **The textbook does not describe the most basic differences between authoritarian and totalitarian systems.** Also while analyzing the totalitarianism (pages 290-291) these differences are omitted, even though without that fascism and Nazism are relativized! On page 240 the creation of the Popular Front in France is warmly commented on without mentioning that it was the first time when a party propagating revolution and totalitarianism and supported by the USSR co-ruled in a democratic country.

While discussing the crisis of Weimar Republic the authors omit the Dawes Plan and describing Italian fascism (page 250) they ignore the socialist and syndicalist origins of Benito Mussolini's faction. In the chronology of the events leading to the Spanish Civil War (page 252) there is no mention of the republicans murdering priests and nuns. Among the source texts describing the ideological chaos of the European elites (page 253) there should be also placed the communist professions of faith by Picasso or Eluard. **The generalizing conclusion on "fascism" (pages 254-255) is disastrous and gives the student the impression that there was no difference among the ideology and practice of German nazists, Italian fascists and the representatives of European authoritarianism.** It signifies the method typical for the extreme left wing following the example of the Soviet (and now Russian) ideology in which "fascism" was a uniform enemy.

While discussing German Nazism it should be emphasised that before the communist Members of Parliament were arrested they had been deprived of their parliamentary seats (page 262). The text on page 264 gives the impression that the churches in Germany supported the regime. The authors do not discuss the initial economic success of the Nazi regime that could somehow explain its mass support in the 30s. This matter is discussed later but it does not show any connection between those facts. On page 266 it would be worth mentioning that the Nazi support for euthanasia was a result of the eugenic ideology at that time popular also among the socialists (Sweden!).

Chapter 15 of the sixth part concerns the Soviet communism. Even though the fragment is extensive, it does contain some inaccuracies. The authors should have mentioned apart from the Kronstadt rebellion also the Tambov revolt in 1921 for it contributed to the change from the war communism to NEP. It is not clear why the authors give the information about the prisoners and the murdered at a scale of a year or short periods of time. The important knowledge about the scale of the Soviet terror is that the population of the Gulag in the 30s constituted about 10% of population in the USSR. **There is also no mention about the aggressive Soviet atheism and the persecution of priests and believers.** The map on page 286 describing the regions of the USSR and the countries subdued by the USSR from where the deportations were carried out is not precise and has no explanations. The student may not understand why eastern Poland and Baltic countries are treated here equally to Caucasus.

In chapter 16 of the seventh part the World War II is discussed. The first fragment describes the situation leading to the war. In the list of events the authors omitted the fiasco of "the eastern Locarno" (1934) the project of which was foiled by the Germans, and the fiasco of the British-French-Soviet talks in the summer of 1939 which would have been a chance to avoid the war if Stalin had not chosen Hitler for his ally against the West. Moreover, the authors did not indicate that the German-Soviet pact of **23 August 1939 was not merely a non-aggression pact but an alliance since according to the map on page 301 it led to division of Poland.**

Without stating that, the student may not understand this fact. On page 302, while discussing the German invasion on Poland on 1 September 1939, the Soviet invasion on Poland on 17 September 1939 along with the invasion on Finland (autumn of 1939 - spring of 1940) and annexation of Baltic countries and Bessarabia by the USSR in the summer of 1940 must have been mentioned. The omission of these facts obscures the fundamental statement that in years 1939-1941 there were two alliances: on the one hand there was the German-Soviet alliance and on the other – the English-French-Polish alliance (non-effective).

Page 306 contains **a fundamental distortion of history.** The subheading states that “the USSR and the US joined the war” in 1941. It is true for the US but the USSR joined the war on the German side in 1939. If those facts (the invasion on Poland and the Baltic countries) are omitted the student will not find out anything about the war actions taken in 1939 and 1940 by the Red Army in cooperation with Germans. The authors claim that Poland surrendered in 1939 after “few weeks” whereas France fought from 10 May to 22 June 1940 (page 306). It is a verbal manipulation because Poland had surrendered only a week before France did. Moreover, the same piece of information is repeated on page 342.

The table on page 313 illustrates the casualties of the World War II. In the column showing the number of European Jews murdered there is no information whether this number is included in the general number of casualties. The number of Polish casualties (5.7 million) is somewhat striking. This number does not include the Soviet casualties but it does include Polish Jews. It seems surprising that this number is so considerable for the text does not say too much about them even in the places where mentioning them would be suitable (page 334). **The division of the text into subchapters makes it easier for the Soviet terror during the World War II (e.g. Katyn massacre) to disappear from sight. The authors also claim that in Yalta there was no division of the world into zones of influence. If that is the truth then what was the origin of this division?** The student will not find that out. As to the matter of Poland, we can find on page 314 a mention concerning the Lublin Committee under the communist influence posing a competition to the Polish expatriate government. The student however will find out what happened with the Committee only in the second volume on page 48 and it is doubtful that he or she will be able to link those facts.

The whole chapter 17 is devoted to describing “Europe under the German rule”. In the chronology of this topic (page 320) the information about the creation of *Generalplan Ost* is clearly missing. “Dossier” on page 324-325 concerns “destruction war against the communists”. It is somewhat disturbing that the authors concentrate on the communists as the aim of the Nazi Germany, passing over the suffering and the casualties of the nations striving to free themselves from Nazism and communism. A shocking picture of a woman being hung by a German soldier according to the textbook arouses compassion among the people supporting the Red Army. In the meantime the authors seem to forget about eradication of the pro-independence forces, e.g. the Home Army or the Slovak insurgents by the Russian partisans. While discussing the German policy concerning the occupied European countries, the plunders and requisitions committed on the local people are not mentioned. In the fragment about the resistance movement in Germany and count Stauffenberg it should be said that he was originally a keen supporter of Hitler. There is also no knowing why **in the caption under the map of Nazi camps (page 335) the authors stress that those camps were located on “the territory of Poland”.** **Is it supposed to justify the use of the term “Polish concentration camps”?** In

opposition to what the textbook claims (page 336), not all German gas chambers had been destroyed before the entrance of the Soviet Army.

It seems very odd that the chronology concerning France during the World War II (page 340) does not list the insurrection in Paris in August 1944, even though it is mentioned on page 350. The assessment of the World War II repeats the German-Soviet non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939 but it does not mention the secret additional protocol. **The Tehran Conference is omitted as well.** In the conclusion on the European idea (chapter 19) there is a “dossier” recapitulating the World War II. The text mentions “the Nazis” but without giving their nationality (page 368) and the caricature next to the text shows France “led” by force to join “the European family” under the aegis of the swastika. As the members of this family we can see Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Finland, Romania and Hungary. There is no knowing why the authors used a Nazi caricature to enhance the false impression that Nazism was not only a German phenomenon.

3. Detailed comments. Volume II

In comparison to the disastrous deficiencies of the first volume, the second one seems to give a somewhat better impression. However, here we can also find a lot of mistakes, concealments, inaccuracies and questionable ideology that cannot be waved away.

The first part concerns period directly after the World War II (1945-1949). In chapter 1 the balance of the war can again be found. Here, the authors lack precision and consistency. The textbook states that the World War II caused “from three to six times more casualties” than the World War I (page 14). According to the numerical data in the table concerning casualties on the next page Poland was the most aggrieved party. Once again the question appears why the authors give so little consideration to the war tragedy of Poland. Due to “political correctness” the authors mention that the Nazi victimized homosexuals (there were supposedly 48 of them in Auschwitz). The statement on page 14 that after the war the humankind realized that it can destroy itself sounds anachronistic. This awareness was born only in the 50s during the development of nuclear arsenals possessed by the US and the USSR. In the title of the subchapter on page 16 there should be a statement that Nazism was a German phenomenon. On the same page the authors suddenly remembered about Tehran Conference of 1943.

In the source text on page 17 we can find some quotations from speeches delivered by President Truman and minister Molotov about responsibilities of the Allies for the after-war condition of the world. **The Molotov's speech about the USSR saving Europe from “the fascist slaughter” was left without any comment, even though it was the USSR to support Hitler in 1939 and to take part in the war cataclysm. Moreover, it was Molotov himself who signed the pact of 23 August 1939. This is another distortion of history!**

In the review of the situation in the post-war France there is a piece of information about the role of the French Communist Party in the resistance movement but there is no mention that this allowed this party to shirk the responsibility for supporting Ribbentrop-Molotov pact and obstructing of French resistance in 1940. There is also no mention that the head of the FPK, Maurice Thorez, stated that in the case of war against the USSR a real communist should support the USSR against his or her own homeland.

The map on page 28 suggests that before 1939 there had been coherent centres of German population in the area of Polish Pomerania. It was not like this. While discussing memories of the war the authors invoke Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah*, containing anti-Polish motives. This film is additionally recommended on page 41 by presenting a big photograph. In chapter 2 on page 32 the question of the winners and the defeated is simplified by unsatisfactorily stressing that for many nations of Eastern Europe the end of the war brought unculpable defeat. Here the Katyn massacre is mentioned but only as a cause of demise of the myth of the USSR victory over the fascism. If the authors had earlier discussed the Soviet war terror they would not be surprised by this discovery now.

Writing about the Holocaust the authors stress that "Polish authorities" hid the fact that the biggest number of the Auschwitz casualties constituted Jews (page 34). It was like that for some time, but the fact was concealed by the communist Polish authorities and not just "Polish authorities". There is a **manipulation behind the sentence: "The Church often showed remorse for having remained silent about what had happened to Jews during the World War II"**. The fact that the Church's authorities brought themselves to make such acts does not justify the simplified statement about the mentioned silence. The question of the attitude of Pius XII towards the Holocaust is too complicated to make it that simplified. The **recommendation of the *Mauschwitz* comic is outrageous**. The authors should know that in the comic the Jews are depicted as mice, the Germans as cats but the Poles are depicted as pigs. Does not this bother the authors? Here and on pages 42-44, we can see that "the culture of memory" in the post-war Germany is all in all selective. We can often hear about the gestures of repentance for the crimes committed on Jews and Russians, but Poles are listed somewhere at the back of the line and sometimes even presented in unfavourable light.

Chapter 3 of this part concerns the beginnings of Cold War. Describing the eastern party the authors mention on page 46 dependence of the satellites on the USSR but they do not say anything about the essence of the system based on terror and propaganda. The two illustrations on the next page give the impression that the party using more Cold War propaganda was the US. Here, the unanimous allied cooperation on the Soviet poster is opposed to an American poster showing the threat of communism. Don't the authors understand that the pictorial culture evokes feelings instead of providing information?

In the subchapter about the division of Germany (page 54) the influence of the US, Great Britain and France on creation of the democratic system in the Western Germany is omitted. In the conclusion on the first part (page 58) significant dates are listed but they do not include the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. Here we can find some novelty, namely descriptions of political figures with their pictures including Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, but since those figures are described at the end of this volume it seems a waste of space.

The second part concerns Europe in the divided world in years 1949-1989. On the list of the important events (pages 62-63) the authors should have mentioned the creation of "Solidarność" ("Solidarity"). In accordance to the authors' ideology they could not help but mention the wave of intolerance in the US (Maccarthism) and the range of the Soviet espionage in the US (page 68). On page 71 an anticommunist film made in Hollywood is quoted, whereas it was among the actors and directors working in Hollywood where open supporters of communism and the USSR could be found. Moreover, Maccarthism is repeated on page 70 but when reading about the

propaganda war the student will not learn anything about the real everyday life in the communist countries.

In the subchapter about “the new international frictions” during years 1975-1985 the authors mention Pope John Paul II but only in the context of his “attempts to restore the worldwide influence of the Church” (page 74). **There is no review of the phenomenon of the Polish pope and his influence on the Third World countries and the situation in the communist countries, mostly Poland.** The authors do not mention the Second Vatican Council. They clearly have a problem to describe the Catholic Church objectively, not to mention other churches because none of them is discussed. Does the separation of Church and State mean separating the students from any knowledge about religion? The importance of “Solidarity” is completely marginalized. The phenomenon of a multi-million movement that undermined the credibility of communist system and contributed to its demise is commented with one sentence about the movement being financed by the US (page 74). “Solidarity” appears also on page 134 in a short mention about the opposition in the 80s. Since there is a whole “dossier” on the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and a lot of information concerning the Prague Spring, mentioning “Solidarity” in this manner is practically a scandal. Do the authors want to minimize its significance to stress the fall of the Berlin Wall as the sole sign of the end of communism?

Against this background chapter 5 broadly discussing the decolonization and the problems of the Third World (pages 82-95) does attract one's attention. The student would expect to learn something more about European countries in chapter 6. However, in its preliminary calendar (page 96) the readers will not be able to find the election of Pope John Paul II, the creation of “Solidarity” or the introduction of martial law in Poland. There are the Hungarian Revolution and “the Polish Revolution of 1970” here but “Solidarity” is mentioned. In the paragraph about the opposition against the Soviet model (page 106) the student once again learns about the revolution in Berlin in 1953, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 (mentioned also in “dossier” on pages 108-109) and the Prague Spring of 1968 but does not learn about the “Solidarity” movement (!). “Solidarity” is not even mentioned in the chronology recapitulating this chapter (page 126). **Taking these proportions into consideration it is obvious that the authors want to belittle the role of John Paul II and “Solidarity”.** In description of the differences between the systems in the Europe divided by the Iron Curtain (socialism and capitalism, party dictatorship and pluralistic democracy, planned economy and free market – page 100) the authors remain on the level of verbal patterns without going into details and stressing the visual propaganda. This makes the student interpret them more as a word game than something really existing.

Chapter 7 of the second part concerns the European integration process in years 1945-1989. In the preliminary calendar (page 112) the authors already divide this period into two sub-periods. Years 1945-1957 signify the period when according to the authors “Europe was under the influence of America” and the period up to 1967 was “the beginning of EEC”. The following years are described as “deepening and widening”. This chronology seems very odd. Is it not known to the authors that during this whole time the safety of Europe was dependant on the American nuclear umbrella? The illustrations on page 116 (the figure under the umbrella with European flags) and page 119 (“the shield” of the European Defence Community against totalitarianism) additionally suggest that the united Europe coped with its safety by itself. The textbook implies that **the United States constituted Europe's problem**

and not its solution. This statement however is completely divorced from the post-war reality.

On page 114 we can find a really surprising map. It allegedly illustrates the European cultural inheritance. There are some Gothic monuments and the most important statues of Islamic culture on it. This map suggests that the southern part of Spain and the Balkan area including Hungary were dominated by Islam. This map does not say anything about monuments left by Ancient Greeks, Roman Italy (the Roman basilicas???) and the eastern Christianity in the area of Ukraine, Balkans and Asia Minor or about the Baroque monuments in the lands of Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. According to this map the centre of the European culture is Versailles because it is marked with a bigger, blue colour and the smaller, blue symbols mark palaces inspired by Versailles. There is one symbol like that in Poland supposedly marking Wilanów. This is supposed to be the European culture!!! **This map constitutes one of the biggest scandals of this textbook.** Is the European Community supposed to be built on the basis of this kind of bias?

The third part describes „the end of the East-West conflict”. Factually and visually the content of this part is dominated by Perestroika, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the war in former Yugoslavia. On page 140 there is only a short mention about the system transformation and its difficulties and successes in the countries of the former communist block. This is why reading the text of the speech delivered by Prime Minister Mazowiecki about Poland as a part of Europe (page 141) and seeing the caricature depicting a sack of problems dragged by the Eastern Europe countries at the door of Europe the student gets the impression that “the old Europe” has done “the new Europe” a big favour taking on a burden of its membership in the European Union. **Since the student did not learn anything about the cultural inheritance of this periphery of the European civilization, it will be obvious to him or her that this periphery has nothing to offer “the old Europe”.**

In chapter 9 the authors among others discuss the problem of Turkish membership in the European Union. They indicate the anxiety connected with the lack of acknowledgement of the Republic of Cyprus, genocide committed on Armenians and a big population of Muslims in Turkey. Still, they do not mention the Turkish occupation of the North Cyprus. This debate is made into an ideological matter through the statement that “conservative parties in Germany and France” (and what conservative parties are there in Germany and France?) offer Turkey “a privileged partnership” instead of a membership. By publishing a hollow Turkish statement about European aspirations and pictures of the members of European Parliament supporting the Turkish membership the student is explicitly biased towards this matter. Is this what schooling is all about? Other text fragments and source texts (pages 152-153) predispose the student positively towards the idea of the European federation.

Fragments on pages 160-161 and 162-163 point the part of the European Union in the world's economy and arms but they omit the fact that those numbers do not show the actual strength since there is some problem with working out the common foreign and defence policy. The cross-sectional comparison of European identity of different member countries (pages 164-165) shows that Germany and France are the most mature in this question. **However, no weaknesses of the European Union (demographic crisis, drop of competitiveness, lack of solidarity) are shown.**

In chapter 10 the authors show many dramatic international problems besetting the modern world (e.g. Islamic terrorism, famine, wars in the Third World). The deeper causes of these problems, such as spiritual crisis, egoism and greed,

unlimited consumerist ambitions and fanaticism are however not indicated. **The student remains therefore crushed by the awareness of the world's evil and led astray by a European illusion that the best method of solving problems is creation of competent institutions instead of changing the attitudes.**

The fourth part is devoted to economic and social development and cultural tendencies in the post-war world. While discussing the economic policy of President Ronald Reagan (page 190) the authors highlight his armaments plan, but omit the tax reduction. The presentation of "Thatcherism" is similarly incomplete. **The authors almost completely missed the unbelievably fast pace of growth of communist China in years 1980-2008.**

The extensive chapter concerning world's population problems deserves some attention. It shows changes in the pace of population growth in different regions of the world, ageing of societies or threats for the pension schemes. Changes in the perception of morality are pointed mostly in an uncritical way, sometimes even with some sort of recognition, e.g. when a picture of a demonstration supporting birth control pills against the Church is shown (page 121). On the same page we can find a speech delivered by Simone Veil and supporting the right for abortion. The authors omit the destructive influence of abortion on both moral sphere and demographical plane. Questions of "sexual freedom" and "pluralization of family life" are shown in a favourable light (page 208). Presence of religion in the social life is commented upon in a way typical for the spirit of "the outlook neutrality" (pages 214-215) as if religion was only a matter of some private cultural habits and not a source of deep moral motivation. **This part of the textbook can be described as a soft propaganda of moral relativism.** Similarly non-reflective and in fact "morally neutral" is chapter 13 concerning cultural phenomena after the World War II. It leaves the student with no criteria of appraisal.

The extensive fifth part of the textbook describes France and Germany after the year 1945. Here, the authors broadly discuss political systems of these countries and their political and social history. It is interesting that in the conclusion on this chapter, where the symptoms of crisis of democracy in Europe are described, the table on page 274 shows extreme right-wing parties, and not left-wing ones. Apart from that, why in this table is Germany not listed next to Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Italy (is Lega Nord an anti-democratic party?!) even though both NPD and Die Linke are radical in respect to their program. In the subchapter about the society the authors approvingly discuss consumerist society and secularity along with tolerance and multiculturalism as bases, but the problems arising from reluctance of the Muslims to integrate in France and Germany are omitted. The textbook is adorned with the glorification of French-German partnership as a model for other nations of the European Union (page 294 ff).

4. Summary

The general assessment of the textbook should contain evaluation of its proportions, information quality, additional teaching materials (sources, maps, questions) graphic layout and illustrations. **There are no perfect textbooks and their quality is assessed mostly on the basis of the mistakes made by their authors. The discussed textbook contains too many of them to give it a positive appraisal.**

In the information plane the textbook strikes by inaccurate proportions, serious lacks (Russia, the US, Austria-Hungary, economic issues) and leftist ideological tone

(uncritical attitude towards social changes, the selection of historical figures, aversion towards the US and the Church). Additional teaching materials concern mostly France and Germany and they are too demanding since the student is not able to learn too much from the main text. The balance between the main text and the “teaching background” is disturbed to the disadvantage of the main text. The graphical layout is interesting but the illustrating material is too one-sided (again France and Germany), it does not always concern the text and often predisposes the student towards a one-sided view. In both volumes there are a lot of repetitions not allowing adding the missing information.

The reading of the textbook begins with the interest in its form but ends with complete disappointment. The intention of creating common French-German memory in the young generation has become all the world to the authors. Since in the second volume European integration takes so much space then why is there no information about problems of Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Greece or Cyprus, not to mention Eastern and Central Europe countries? The knowledge from the textbook will shape the student's incorrect belief that overcoming German and French nationalisms has enabled Europe to solve its main problems and that these two countries are supposed to play a special role in Europe and their mission is to manage the affairs of the European Union and European historical memory. A student educated in such a way will be helpless not only in the European Union, but also in the surrounding world. Without knowing other European countries the student may even create frictions between them.