



History Wars: Reconciliation through Textbooks?

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1. Memory and Textbooks



- **Shaping Historical Identity**

- History is what is memorized in society
- Close relationship between nation and collective memory since the 19th century
- History used for the legitimization of the nation
- Remembered in form of historical culture
 - Museums
 - Monuments
 - Films
 - Novels



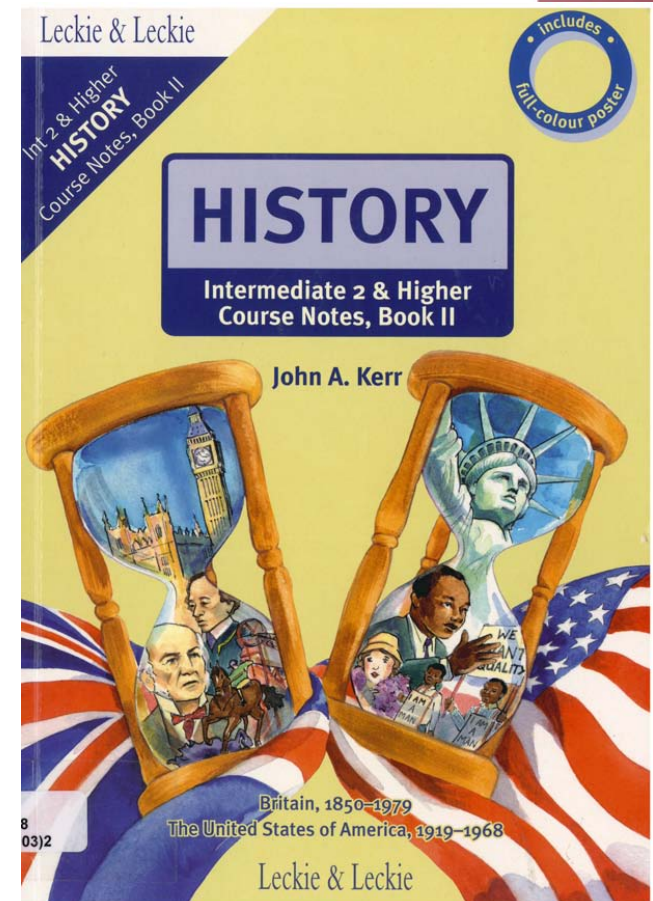
AND Textbooks:

- Textbooks prove to be a particularly relevant academic, political and educational media
- They are singular due to their condensed and canonical character

1. Memory and Textbooks

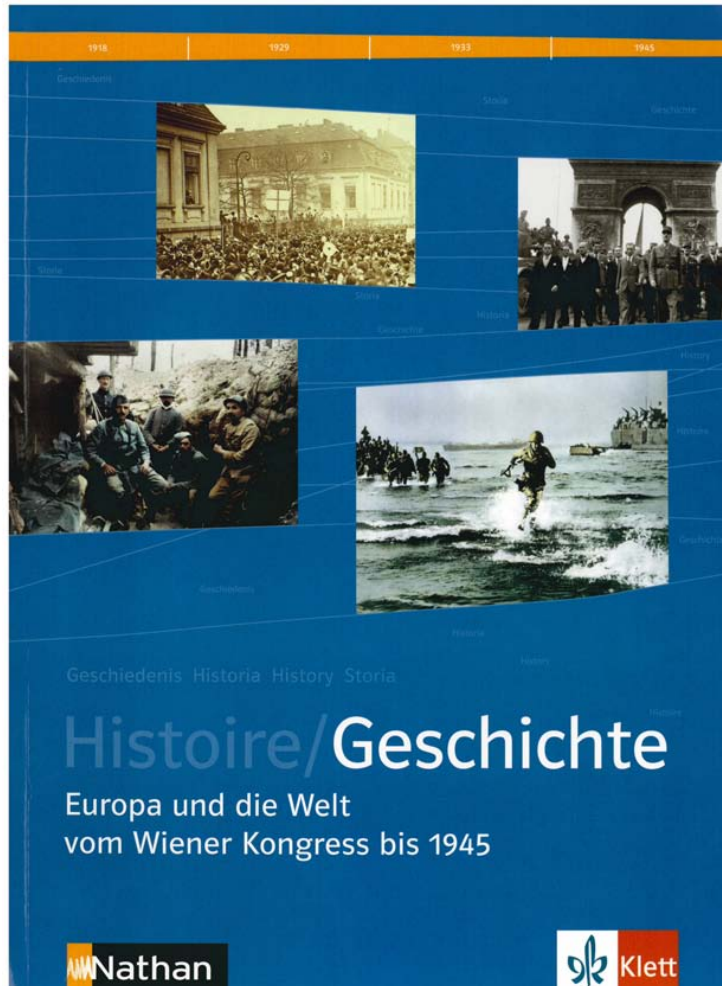


- Textbooks define not only “legitimate knowledge” and desirable competencies, but also communicate nationally and socially preferred concepts of identity.
- Textbooks are therefore also a political issue and refer to the contexts in which these political issues are manufactured, used and negotiated.
- Textbooks can initiate or illustrate ethnic, cultural, religious or political conflicts, yet at the same time can also serve as a means of conflict resolution and compromise.





2. History Wars



- History Wars are immanent part of society's attempt to come to terms with its past
- Textbooks reflect these public debates
- The relationship between History Wars and textbooks can be traced back to the late 19th century
- Always at the center: one's own nation and its relation to other nations



2. History Wars

- Reasons for History Wars at present:
 - New global experiences
 - world history vs. national narrative
 - Neo-conservative turn which appreciates national history as repository of perennial values
 - New History Textbook (Tsukuru-Kai, Japan)
 - Rise of particular memory groups who contest the authority of the state
 - Indigenous people (Australia)
 - Legalization of historical interpretation
 - France: Slave trade
 - Germany: Denial of Holocaust
 - Turkey: Genocide of the Armenian People



History wars are not about facts but meaning



Two types (both types can be interwoven)

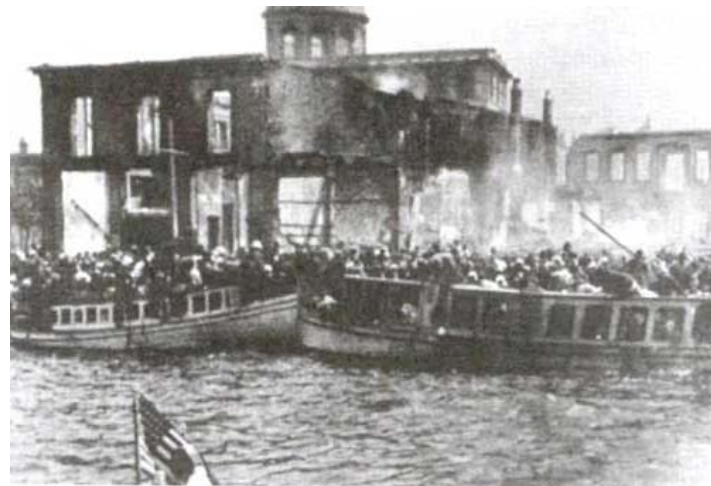


Within a given society/nation

- France (Colonialism)
- Japan (Victim - Penetrator)
- Germany (German army during WW II)

Between nations

- Greece – Turkey (Smyrna 1922)
- Germany – Poland (Expulsion of Germans after 1945)
- East Asia (Nanjing, Comfort Woman in 1930s)
- Israel – Palestine (Founding of State Israel 1948)
- Turkey – Armenia (Genocide)





3. The Beginning of Textbook Revision

- Textbook revision goes back to the beginning of the 20th century
- Aims at international understanding, conflict prevention and conflict mediation
- linked to curriculum reform and peace education



Main Actors:

- International governmental and national non-governmental organizations
- Academic historians
- Historical cyberculture



The League of Nations

- Covenant: Exclusion of education
- Reason: Resistance by the British delegates and representatives of the new countries in east and south-eastern Europe
- General viewpoint:
 - “National education lies outside and will always lie outside the competence of any official committee of the League”
- Nevertheless, child welfare and education found their way into the work of the League
- Five main areas were covered: child labor, child health, child welfare, university relations, and curriculum issues



The League of Nations

- The revision of curriculum and textbooks belonged to one of the most sensitive spheres of international cooperation
 - provoked political rivalry
 - traditionally seen as an integral part of national sovereignty
- Idea of introducing a uniform international history textbook was mainly developed by pacifist teachers and representatives of the New Education Movement



The League of Nations

- 1923: Sub-Committee on the International Text-Book of History established by the International Committee on International Cooperation (Robert Milikan)
- 1925: "Resolution Casares"
 - Put the responsibility of textbook revision in the hands of the National Committees for Intellectual Cooperation
 - Adherence to the resolution was voluntary
 - Was only implemented three times by 1930



The League of Nations

- 1926: Sub-Committee of Experts for the Instruction of Children and Youth in the Aims of the League of Nations (Gilbert Murray)
 - Propagated the ideas of the League in schools
 - Conducted an international survey on schoolbooks for history, geography, and civil instruction in 1930
 - Organized a conference on the teaching of history in The Hague in 1932
- Cooperation with other organizations
 - Sub-Committee of the Teaching of History founded by the International Committee of Historical Sciences
 - Regional organizations such as the Föreningen Norden
 - Various teachers associations
 - International Congress of Moral Education
 - Carnegie Endowment for Peace



The League of Nations

- Problems:
 - Political differences
 - Resistance from professional historians who feared a biased, nonscientific approach to history
 - Conflicts between pragmatists and pacifist radicals
 - The overly cautious politics of the League
- Results:
 - Various bilateral and regional agreements on the evaluation and rewriting of textbooks, especially in Latin America
 - Adoption of an international declaration on history instruction in 1937 (could not be realized before the outbreak of World War II)



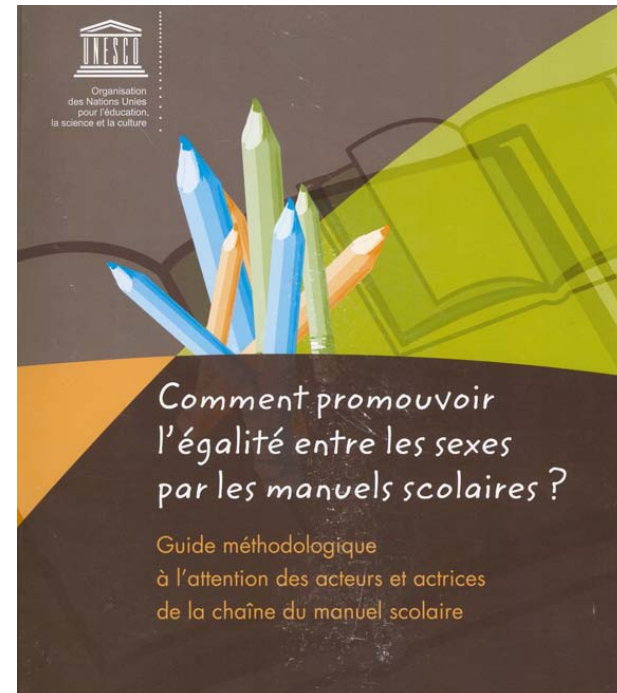
4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives since 1945

UNESCO:



- Founding of UNESCO as main organization dealing with textbook revision
- 1947: Program for the Revision of Textbooks and Teaching Material

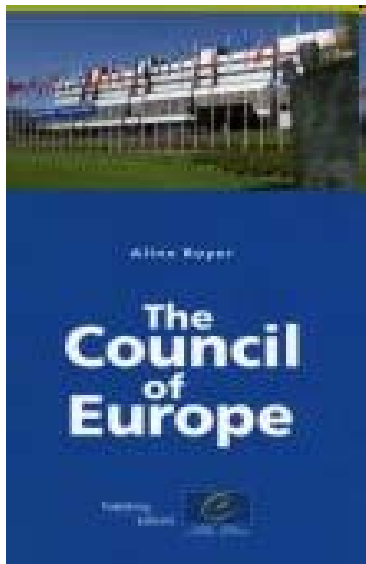
- 1949 „Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials“, which contained a sample contract for international treaties
- regular meetings on curriculum issues
- 1957: Start of the 20-volume edition of the „History of the Cultural and Scientific Development of Mankind“, a textbook for high school and college students
- Today: Middle East and North Africa





4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives

Council of Europe:



- 12 conferences on history textbooks and instruction between 1953 and 1983
- Evaluation of about 1,000 history textbooks from 17 countries
- 1964: Glossar of historical terms for Europe
- Since the late 1960s: Incorporation of European history into the national narratives
- Major focus since then: Problem of European history and identity
- Mediation and Revision in South Eastern Europe



4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives

Bilateral Activities:

- since 1952: Bi-annual meetings of German and French history teachers → German French Textbook Commission (coordinated by Georg Eckert Institute)
- Aim: Reconciliation
- France and Germany as part of European history
- 2006/8: Vol. 1 and 2 of German-French history textbook

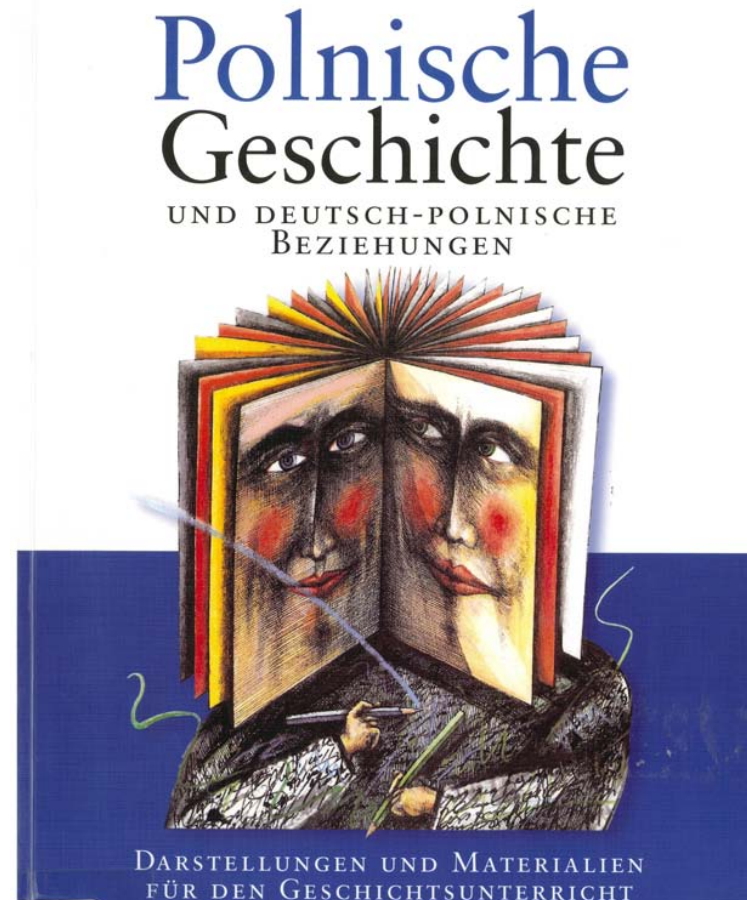
Since 1972:

German-Polish Textbook
Commission



German-Polish Textbook Commission

- “Recommendations on History and Geography Textbooks” in 1976
- Highly contested in Germany
 - conservative reaction
 - Border
 - Expulsion/forced migration
 - East Germany
 - Socialdemocratic reaction
 - Exclusion of controversial topics (German-Soviet treaty, massacre of Katyn)





4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives

Outside Europe:

The Middle East and
North Africa Region

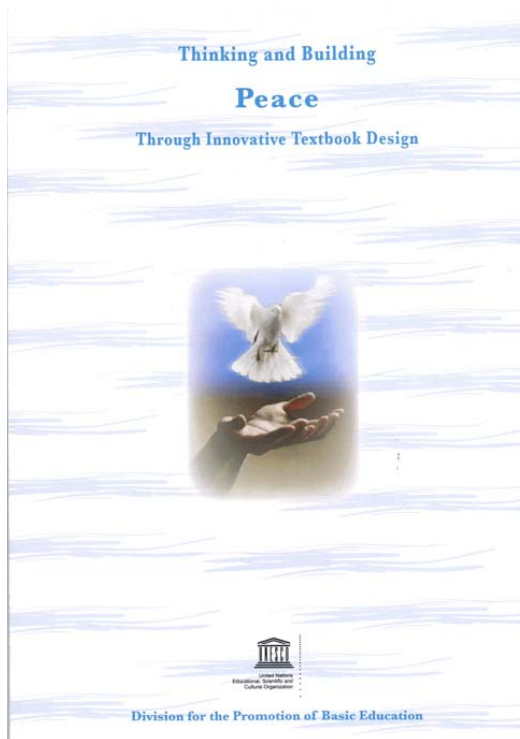
Theory:

UNESCO and ISESCO (since
2007)

→ Development of *Guidelines
and Criteria for the
Development, Evaluation and
Revision of Textbooks and
other Educational Materials in
International Education*

Practice:

Israeli-Palestinian Textbook





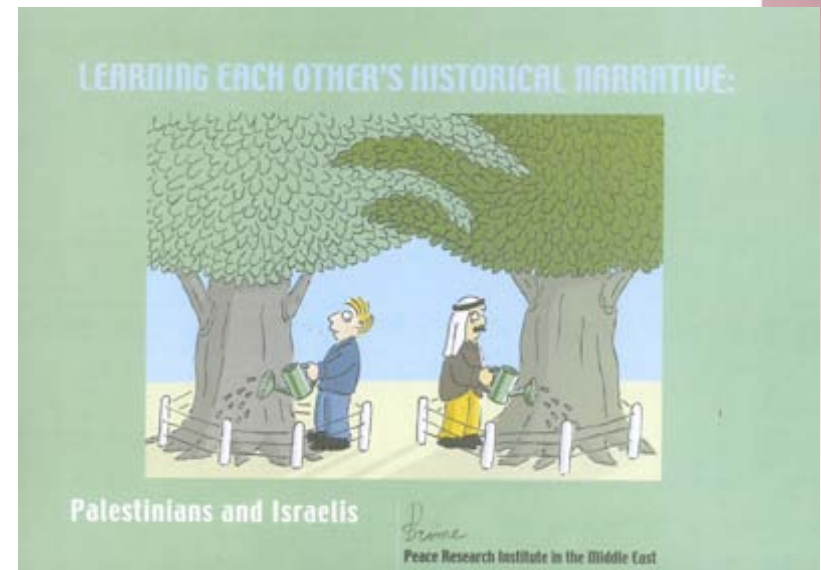
4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives

- **Institutions:** Peace Research Institute in the Middle East in cooperation with the GEI since 2002
- **Aim:** a binational textbook on the history of the Middle East conflict.

Concept:

-to produce a textbook in which both narratives are separately taken into account aims to make clear, by confronting diverging interpretations of the events which partially exclude each other

- to foster self-critical thinking and mutual dialogue.





4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives

„Learning Each Other’s Historical Narrative: Palestinians and Israelis

- published in 2006 presents important phases of the conflict-ridden Israeli-Palestinian history of the 20th century from both perspectives. It is supposed to be used on both sides of the Armistice line of 1967
- This work demanded a lot of patience and the capacity to endure tensions and to re-examine one's own identity. When Palestinians and Israelis mean the same, they generally use different words, when they use the same names, they often mean different places
 - “national catastrophe” vs. “war of independence”
 - Definition of “capital of Jerusalem”

4. Multi- and Bilateral Textbook Initiatives

Textbook Revision in East Asia

Trilateral History Forum since 2001

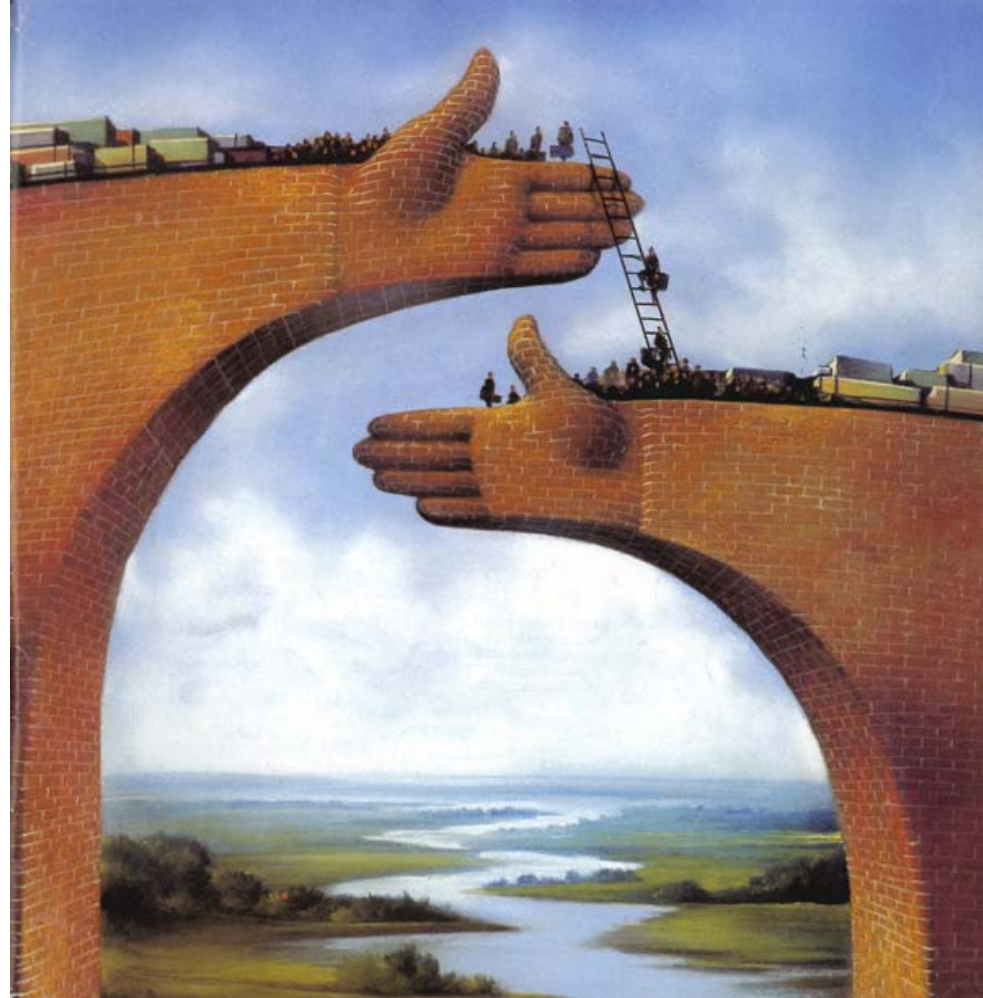
Common History Textbook





German Polish History Textbook

(since 2008)



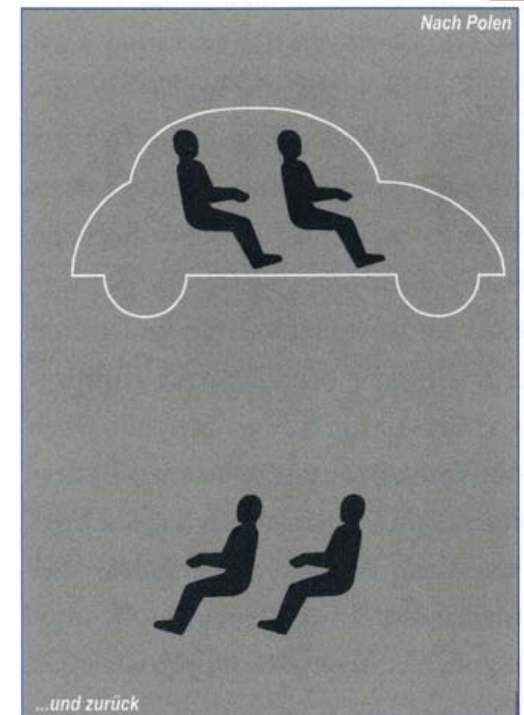


Challenges

1. The German bilateral textbooks have received **governmental support** and funding.
2. Joint textbooks have to fulfil the criteria of the **curricula** of two states, and – in the case of Germany – not only of one but of 16 (federal) states which all have different curricula and textbooks.
3. The **concept of the textbook**: How to deal with the still existing national narratives in both countries and how to link the history of both countries in a textbook?
4. Different **Teaching methods**: Competencies versus facts

Challenges

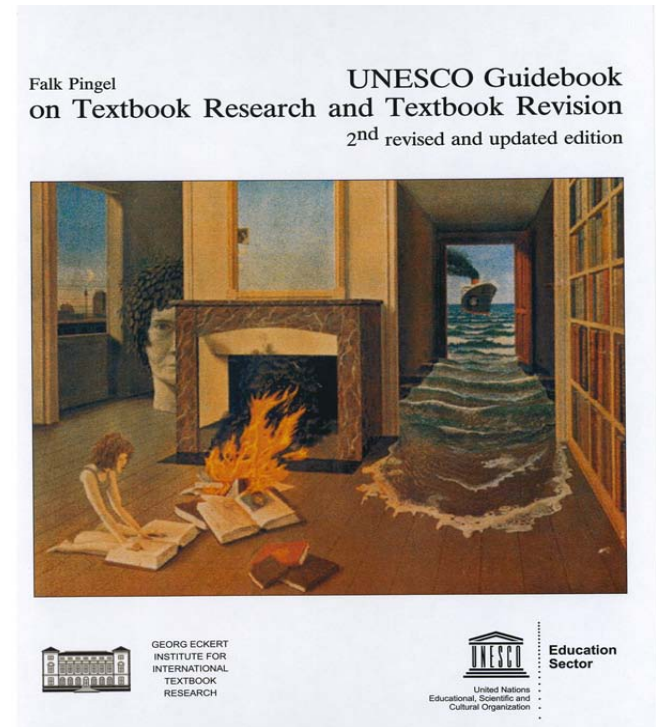
5. How to deal with the issue of **conflicting interpretation** of certain historical events? Consensus versus Multiple narratives
6. Joint Textbook projects always depend on the **political context**. Still reservations held by some Poles.
7. Even once the project is established, it is not for sure that it will be finished successfully.





5. Reconciliation through Textbooks

- Three approaches
- UNESCO guidelines as „theoretical modell“
- Bi- and multilateral textbook commissions as „practical modell“



Textbooks cannot resolve history wars but the revision of textbooks can contribute to reconciliation within societies and between nations