



**TEXTUAL AND VISUAL ANALYSES OF  
THE LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL  
HISTORY TEXTBOOKS**

**Comparative Analysis of  
the Old and the New  
History Textbooks**



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“The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations or its Member States, UNDP or USAID.”

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*“The Turkish Cypriot community over the passing centuries created its own history. Hence, we should write and teach the history that is being created by the Turkish Cypriot community to new generations.”*

**Introduction of the Revision Commission on the new history programme and the new textbooks**

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## **Working Towards a Common History**

**by the POST Education for Peace Team**

POST Research Institute (POST RI) is an NGO set up by a group of people whose aim is to work for the cultural, social and environmental improvement of Cyprus. POST RI's vision is to make a difference through social and cultural activities with its dynamic, effective and productive group both at national and international levels. The mission of POST RI is to prepare projects that can be utilised by people who are involved or interested in social and cultural matters. It executes, manages and coordinates a variety of projects.

POST RI believes that peace can only be sustained through education. This is based on research that has shown that education plays a crucial role in establishing long-term peace and reconciliation after an ethnic conflict occurs. We believe that contributing to Peace should be our primary goal because the social, cultural and environmental improvement of Cyprus can only be achieved when the society that we live in is harmonious.

To this end, POST RI has conducted projects on "Education for Peace" since 2004. POST RI's first project (E4P I) focused on the analysis of the fifth (final) grade primary school books. Extracurricular activities were conducted in order to pinpoint the elements that generate nationalism, hatred and prejudice against the 'other'. The study was published in a book format and was widely distributed to interested parties such as academics, teachers, social NGOs, researchers, local authorities, unions etc. No similar study or collaboration between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots has been published until now. The project resulted in the reformation of the educational material used in Turkish Cypriot schools, which led to the promotion of mutual respect and conciliation by removing certain elements that produce nationalism.

Similarly, in the second project (E4P II), the team analysed the revised history textbooks used in lower secondary schools, in relation to text and visual materials and noted the differences between the old and newly revised textbooks. The team organised a series of workshops in various areas in the Turkish Cypriot Community to meet the history teachers teaching in different schools and exchange views regarding the use of the new books and teaching methodologies. The team also prepared questionnaires for the workshops: one for teachers, one for parents and

one for students, in order to gain a broader understanding of the real case in practice. During June 2007, the final report will be published and delivered to the interested parties; articles will be written to the daily newspapers to share the findings of the project with the general public and workshops will be organised in various places to discuss the study and the team's findings with a wider audience.

Reform of the education system in terms of revision of the textbooks and the curriculum is certainly necessary otherwise the current method of education will continue poisoning children's minds by promoting hostility. The reform of education also includes changes in curriculum, teaching methods and management structures. In addition to the elimination of ethno-centric and racist elements in the textbooks and school practices, the reform strategy should aim for a modern, high standard of education that is free of political opinion, and to bring the education system in line with European standards. Textbooks in national subjects such as history, social science and literature should contain material that is acceptable to all (in the case of Cyprus acceptability by both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities).

The development of a dialogue between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot teachers, educators, local NGOs and competent authorities, for the reformation of school education has been initiated through the project Education for Peace, which will hopefully see the next generation of citizens and leaders enter into a multicultural and multinational society. Both communities' history should be jointly prepared and common history should be taught. A bilateral, transparent understanding of history should be replaced with a common way of explaining this subject matter. In conclusion, there is a need for an urgent education reform in Cyprus in order to achieve peace and reconciliation, and the project "Education for Peace" certainly plays a vital role in assisting in this reform in the whole of Cyprus, with the long-term aim of a harmonious Island. For this reason the POST RI team wishes to continue its work by undertaking "Education for Peace III", with the aim of making a comparative analysis of the secondary school history books and providing training to history teachers across the divide.

## Foreword

by Niyazi Kizilyurek

In fact, history is dealing rather with the future, not with the past. To explain what we mean by this further, let us say that the terms “past” and “history” is not the same thing. History is produced from the past, but it is a narrative for the future. That is why, we never say “the past won’t forgive you” but always utter “history won’t forgive you.” This sentence clearly shows us that history is about the future; from the past for the future. Therefore, it is not a coincidence (as in other societies) that the Turkish Cypriot community has changed its history books in circumstances in which she imagined a different future for herself.

Nevertheless, what we mentioned above does not mean that one can change the events that happened in the past haphazardly. What already happened cannot be changed. However, a historical narrative that is produced from the past can always be produced in a different way. This is because history is not the past itself, but the “meaning” that we produce from the past. Thus, it is important to take into account the time and context of an event. In other words, one must consider the events in the right context and evaluate them in the “historical time.”

Let us explain what has been discussed above with an example: Archbishop Kiprianos and many religious functionaries were murdered by the Ottoman Governor Kucuk Mehmet in Cyprus in 1821. This is a fact. History books that were written in a nationalistic manner used to talk about this event as either “barbarian Turks murdered innocent Greeks” or “unthankful Greeks rebelled against the just Ottoman administration and hence had to be punished for that.” These narratives neither considered the “historical period, nor evaluated the events in the right context. For this reason, the meanings that these narratives produced in the minds of the people, will not proceed further than the notion of “barbarian Turks” or “ungrateful Greeks”. Nonetheless, it is possible to produce a different meaning without rejecting the facts. If we think of the events in the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then, we can come to the conclusion that: “right after the French Revolution, people discovered some concepts such as national sovereignty and nationalism”. This new idea resulted in the idea of rebelling against the empires and feudal states. After the French Revolution, each

society was attempting to establish its own nation-state, based on the notion of nationalist ideology. Within this framework, the Greek nation rebelled against the Ottoman Empire in 1821 and the independence struggle began. Similarly (as all other empires), the Ottoman Empire wanted to protect itself against nationalist movements, and for this reason, tried to suppress the incident (the independence struggle). Because the Governor feared that the Greek nationalist movement was capable of reaching out to Cyprus, he murdered the Archbishop Kiprianos and other religious functionaries.”

There is neither the notion of “barbarian Turks” nor “ungrateful Greeks” in the narrative above. This is because it considers the events in a different context. In this narrative there are “actors” who on the one hand struggle for national sovereignty and on the other hand for the protection of an empire. If one does not consider the events within the context of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, then one can talk of “barbarian Turks because they are Turks” and similarly, of “the ungrateful Greeks because they are Greeks.” If we do not consider the historical events within their own historical period, then inevitably, one can assume that the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots of today are responsible for the incidents of the past.

It is very important that we eliminate the biases and enmity in history books but not the enmity that happened in the past. (This is because history is not the facts themselves, but the meaning created from facts). In doing so, one should not forget that the main objective is not simply to establish a communication which is liberated from biases, but also to develop a community of the democratic and open minded citizens.

In Cyprus, there are two kinds of misunderstanding concerning the issue of history books. The first misunderstanding is that when the contents of the history books change, nationalistic ideas and biases will disappear. However, this is not as easy as it seems. Changing the history books will have a limited effect if biases and nationalistic ideas are widespread amongst society. Even changing the contents of the history books is not enough to reach this limited success. The significant issue (along with the revision of the textbooks), is the training of educators and assisting them in being able to use the materials in the new textbooks in new forms of teaching. This is because history books, along with history teachers and teaching techniques, construct the foundation of history education within a mutual interaction. In fact in some instances, changing the contents of the history books may be less important, than improving teaching techniques.

Another mistaken interpretation is the belief that by changing history books, an attack on the national identity and national consciousness will take place. This notion is very common within both the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Moreover, this incorrect notion is also widespread in Greece and Turkey. The main reason behind this perception is the damage that widespread nationalistic writings have created (on society) in the past.

Generally speaking, nationalist narrative of history is very much like a Hollywood film. According to this, there are “goodies” and “baddies” in history –and Yiannis Papadakis adds “uglies” to this – and the goodies are “us”, whereas the baddies are “them”, and the uglies are considered as the “foreign conspirators.” Nationalist history writing is based on the notion of “we-right” and “them-wrong.” According to all narratives that are based on this idea, everyone’s nation is either “victorious” or “conceited” and never does anything wrong. This story-like historical narrative, not only makes it difficult to develop a critical way of thinking amongst citizens, but also creates an awry kind of national identity. This is because an identity that is based on the idea of defining itself systematically against the “other” cannot be in peace with itself. At most, it creates a kind of citizen who only boasts with the “greatness” of his/her nation but at the same time believes that his/her nation is always in danger.

The history books that have previously been taught in Turkish Cypriot schools were based on this idea. As this analysis shows, the history books that were taught for many years (and were written by a single author), were written with the idea of “we the Turks are right and just” and “the Greeks are unjust.” The author considered the whole Greek Cypriot community as a homogenous entity and used the term “Greek” as the third singular person to describe the whole community. Moreover, he attempted to legitimise the division of Cyprus by presenting the Greeks as the “other.” Yet, it is significant to cease the dichotomy of right and wrong. It is also important to help the memory exchange through the history books. If we consider the importance of the history books in construction of the collective memory in any country, it becomes evident that Cyprus more than any other country needs to undergo through a process of exchange of memory. Only by doing this, can we free ourselves from dichotomies such as “right and wrong”, “just and unjust”.

The revised history textbooks that were prepared to be taught in Turkish Cypriot schools are very different to the old books in many ways. As the analysis points out, the revised history books do not see the Greek Cypriots

as the “other” but try to understand them within the “historical time.” For example, the rise of nationalism in the Greek Cypriot community is seen from a world-historical perspective and it is seen within the context of the rising nationalist movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the Greek Cypriot community is not seen as homogenous and considerable attention has been paid to underline the differences within the community. For example the differences and conflicts between AKEL and the Church of Cyprus are well presented.

Another important element of the revised textbooks is the inclusion of social history and events life. This is a very significant improvement. History that talks only about military and political history, inevitably only exposes conflicts and tensions. Whereas social history, reveals the social space that the communities are living in, in Cyprus (in daily life). This in turn, helps to promote the idea of empathy between the two communities. Promotion of the religious bayrams and common strikes show us a different dimension in the history of the two communities whereas ethno-centric approaches present history only in terms of conflicts.

It is also important to mention the visual materials that are used in the revised textbooks. Pictures and caricatures have integrity with the text, and this helps students to be more interested in the books.

However, this does not mean that there are no issues to discuss in the revised textbooks. For example, we see that the history books have changed in the Turkish Cypriot community, but no significant training for teachers has been given. The workshops that we conducted with teachers helped us to identify this as an important issue.

Another significant point is the fact that Turkish Cypriot educational decision-makers prepared the new history books. At this point, it is believed that more pluralistic and ‘civil’ solutions, instead of current centralistic preparation methods should be undertaken. For example, the writing of more than one history book should be encouraged, and a bid for a contract should be proposed.

In order to promote this pluralistic way of thinking, the history books should provide more than one interpretation of the same event. In doing so, many common events could be interpreted in different ways. For example, Christians talk about the “fall” of Istanbul, whereas Muslim Turks talk about the “conquest.” Nowadays in Cyprus, concepts such as Invasion/Peace Operation or Turkish Rebel/Bloody Christmas are being used to describe the same events. Including some of the interpretations of the Greek Cypriot

historians in the Turkish Cypriot history books may help both to establish pluralism, but also to encourage a common history textbook in the future.

Another issue surrounding the revision of history textbooks is the fact that sometimes revising the history books in a “good” way, could involve the rejection of some facts in order to prevent enmity. It is not a correct way to hide what happened in the past in order to be “Politically Correct” or “pointing the finger” to the “outsiders”, as is the case with some conspiracy theories. It is true that some teachers have this tendency. This makes the teachers training even more urgent.

It is also a fact that the new history books are rather books of “history of the Turkish Cypriots” and not as titled “history of Cyprus”. We find here is a serious gap not to have included any information on the other Cypriot communities beyond Turkish and Greek Cypriots. This is something which should be considered and corrected as soon as possible.

In closing, I would like to point that history books in general reflect the academic history research record of a country. It is a well-known fact that history research could influence the preparation of textbooks in both positive and negative ways. Considering the limited size of scientific research in the Turkish Cypriot community, the history textbooks that were written should be seen as a great success. The new textbooks were written using contemporary methods in an efficient way. This success is even greater considering the limited institutionalised history research within the Turkish Cypriot community.

*“Far from creating independent thinkers, schools have always, throughout history, played an important role in system of control and coercion. And once you are educated, you have already been socialized in ways that support the power structure, which, in turn, rewards you immensely.”*

**Noam Chomsky**

## **Introduction**

It is a well-known phenomenon that the education system does not always promote independent thought and critical thinking. Students are not encouraged to search out the truth for themselves, but are instead indoctrinated according to government policies. History teaching can be the most important part of this indoctrination and is used as a tool for propaganda in order to impose the ‘official’ view of the state. Distortion, negative judgements, misinformation, fixing the problems, the omission of facts and the use of information for their (the state) own goals, are some of the methods that are often seen in history books.<sup>1</sup>

A prime example of the above can be seen in the old history textbooks used in lower secondary schools in northern Cyprus. The books which were written by Dr. Vehbi Zeki Serter, subjectively describe the history of Cyprus by legitimising the “national goal” of the Turkish Cypriot community and denying the legitimacy of the “other”. According to Vehbi Zeki Serter’s books, (which was the only history textbooks used in Turkish Cypriot schools for many years), ‘Cyprus was never Greek and Greek Cypriots are in fact not Greek but the remaining of different nations who passed through Cyprus throughout history’.<sup>2</sup>

Serter claims that Cyprus is a geographical extension of Anatolia and emphasizes the importance of Cyprus for Turkey. This, as a matter of fact, is a good indicator to view the intention behind that ‘fact’.<sup>3</sup> The notion of Cyprus being Turkish and always remaining as such is a fundamental ideology that runs consistently throughout the old history textbooks (which were part of the curricula of lower secondary schools until 2005). Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup> *Symposium on Facing the Methods of Misuses of History*, Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 28-30 June 1999, pp. 37-57.

<sup>2</sup> Cited from Kızılyürek, Niyazi. “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks”. *International Textbook Research*. 21(4), 1999, p. 394.

<sup>3</sup> Serter, Vehbi Zeki. *Kıbrıs Tarihi* (The History of Cyprus). Nicosia: n.p. 1999, p. 7.

the division of the island in 1974 is described as a victory for the Turkish army (in Cyprus).

“During the operations [of the Turkish army] towards East and West, the Greek and Greek-Cypriot forces knelt in front of Mehmetcik’s [a word for sympathetic, smooth and a humanist description of Turkish soldiers] sharp sword, diffused, and collapsed. These were coward Levant herds, what Grivas and Makarios called the grandchildren of Greeks and considered invincible, who could kill only defenceless Turks. Hadn’t the grandfathers of the same nation been thrown into the sea, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1922 in Izmir? History is repeating itself. This time, the Turkish Armed Forces were defeating the Hellenic imperialism in Turkish Cyprus.”<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, the author does not hesitate to warn the Greek Cypriots of the potential use of force: “I tell the Greeks, who are threatening world peace, that because of Cyprus someone will be bleeding. However, this will not be the Turks but the Greek nation, which once spoiled the fields of Izmir with their blood.”<sup>5</sup>

In Serter’s second volume, the book continuously refers to the ‘spoiled Greeks’ who killed the Turks in order to achieve Enosis. Moreover, he describes the Turks as ‘Turkish heroes’, who bravely resisted Enosis. The writer says the following:

Greeks are dreamers and liars because the Greek throughout the history is asking for something. He demands Dollars from America, and Pounds from England. He demands money, he demands territory. For example, from his neighbour Albania, he wants the Epiros, from Bulgaria, demands Macedonia. In the past, he wanted from Turkey the whole western Asia Minor. Now, he demands Cyprus. If he tomorrow wants Egypt because of some Greek element in Egypt, do not get surprised [...]. In order to defend our rights and freedoms, we will resist to you. And, for this aim, if we don’t find a piece of stick or stone, we will take in hand the bones of our 80.000 martyrs who died for this land, and resisted to you.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 135. Also, cited from Kızılyürek, Niyazi. “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks”. *International Textbook Research*. 21(4), 1999, p. 392.

<sup>5</sup> Serter, Vehbi Zeki. *Kıbrıs Türk Mücadele Tarihi* (The History of Turkish Cypriot Struggle), Nicosia: n.p., 1981, p. 63.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp. 80-81.

Such statements are examples of a method of history teaching which is far from contemporary. In fact the old history textbooks can be viewed as a mere reflection of nationalistic policies which are based on an ethnocentric perception of history. Moreover, the books have been written in a manner to justify and legitimise the nationalist policy of partition, by instrumentalising the past. As stated in *Milliyetçilik Kıskaçında Kıbrıs*, “Turkish nationalists began to re-establish a ‘past’ rather than establishing a ‘future’ for the Turkish Cypriot Community. [Therefore], they tried to create a non-nostalgic ‘past’ and the ‘future’ was presented in a way of servicing the ‘past’ through the Unknown Soldier Monuments, Martyrs Week, the Museum of Barbarism, remembrance campaigns, God Bless Motherland Days and the education system (through schoolbooks that do not have contemporary education vision).<sup>7</sup>

A significant political change occurred in late 1990s, in which the Turkish Cypriot Community witnessed the rise of ‘Cyprus-centred’ thinking which in turn allowed for the reconstruction of certain social and cultural elements. (For a detailed account of this change, please see Chapter I). “The year of 1999 can be considered as a turning point for the Turkish Cypriot Community.”<sup>8</sup> Many members of the Turkish Cypriot community turned their face to the European Union and expressed a strong desire (and support) for the accession of the island in to the EU. In fact, a u turn of political and nationalistic thinking took place. The Turkish Cypriot community began to reject Turkish nationalism and its proposal of a permanent divided Cyprus, in search of a ‘peaceful European Cyprus’. 41 different non-governmental organisations and opposition parties formed ‘This Country is Ours Platform’, in order to increase the grassroots movements in search of a solution to the “Cyprus problem”. According to the movement, a lasting peace could only be achieved through a federal solution and EU membership. This movement gained impetus through the UN solution Plan which was presented to the leaders of northern and southern Cyprus in November 2002, by the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. “The Plan is a ‘lengthy, complex, and comprehensive’ proposal ... which was presented as the latest international attempt to reach a settlement on the island. The major aim of the Plan was to find a solution for the settlement of

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<sup>7</sup> Kızılyürek, Niyazi. *Milliyetçilik Kıskaçında Kıbrıs*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002, p. 293.

<sup>8</sup> Kızılyürek, Niyazi. *Doğmamış bir Devletin Tarihi: Birleşik Kıbrıs Cumhuriyeti*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 266.

the ongoing Cyprus question and to allow a Unitary State of Cyprus to become members of the European Union.”<sup>9</sup>

This idea was particularly supported by the left-wing political parties and NGOs. Following the proposal of the Annan Plan, the Platforms’ representatives increased to 91 and they then went on to develop a “Common Vision”. The notion of a “Common Vision” equated to ‘Peace in Cyprus and ‘yes’ to the EU’ and was supported by the majority of various groups in the community. A cross section of society such as businessmen, trade unionists, teachers, working/middle class came together to fight for a common cause, namely a solution to the ongoing “Cyprus Problem”. Although these groups each held their own ideology, they developed a common aim in order to bring peace to Cyprus. Cyprus now began to be perceived as the homeland of all (including Greek Cypriots) the population living on the island, a fact which radically challenged the ruling ideas of the nationalist elite at the time.

Talking in a conference in Ankara, Rauf Denktaş, former Turkish Cypriot Community leader, was asked to reply to the following question “wouldn’t be better for the Turkish Cypriot Community to struggle with Greek Cypriots for a Federal Republic of Cyprus?”

My ancestors come from Anatolia. From top to toe I am a Turk and my origins come from Central Asia. I am a Turk with all my culture, language, history and identity. I have a state and a motherland. All the words such as Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, and Common Nation are nonsense. They have their Greece and we have our Turkey. So, why do we need to live under one republic? Some circles tend to say that there are Cypriots, some Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. They tend to say stories about a common culture. However, there is neither Turkish Cypriot nor Greek Cypriot nor Cypriot. You should never ask us whether we are Cypriot or not. This may cause misunderstanding. You know why? Because there is one and only Cypriot thing in Cyprus and that is the Cypriot donkey.<sup>10</sup>

As one can see in the words of Denktaş, the once prevailing idea of the ruling elite negated all local cultural elements of the Turkish Cypriots and promoted an abstract sense of nation. The growing oppositional movement

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<sup>9</sup> Beyidođlu, Mehveř. *South Tyrol and Cyprus: Autonomy and/or Integration?* Unpublished MES thesis, University of Graz, 2005, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> - Cited from Kızılyürek, Niyazi. *Milliyetçilik Kışkacında Kıbrıs*. p. 293.

in the Turkish Cypriot community began to challenge the ruling ideas, such as Turkism and Turkish nationalism and instead advocated the cultural uniqueness of the Turkish Cypriot community. This emphasis on difference was in fact an effort to differentiate the Turkish Cypriot community from the Turkish nation, which in turn led to a political change during the election of 2003. A new government formed by Mehmet Ali Talat in 2003, immediately began to reconsider the history textbooks and the educational policy in general. According to Dr. Hasan Alicik, (head of the Turkish Cypriot Educational Planning and Programme Development), it was the Turkish Cypriot government who decided to review the education system and to make changes to the curriculum taught in all the Turkish Cypriot schools. The newly elected government agreed that the old history textbooks impose chauvinism and nationalistic perceptions. Dr. Alicik also gave an example by saying that Serter's books describe the EU as a 'rotten apple' and a 'poisoned carrot'. "This was not an idea which was in line with 65% of the Turkish Cypriot community which said yes to the EU. Therefore they (the government) decided to change the methodology used. Dr. Alicik described the new methodology of the textbooks as 'student-centred' because it aims to motivate students by involving them in the education process."<sup>11</sup>

Once the Turkish Cypriot authorities made the decision to modify the history books, the authorities responsible for education invited teachers and academicians to come together to completely re-write the textbooks used by the first three grades of lower secondary school students. Thus, a group of volunteer teachers began working on a new style of history textbook. All three books were completed before the new semester began in 2005.

It should be noted that the Primary and Secondary School Teachers Trade Union (KTÖS and KTOEÖS) played a crucial role in 'This Country is Ours Platform'. They were the pioneers of change towards "Cyprus-Centred" form thinking and this naturally influenced the process of change, and consequently the contents of the textbooks.

In order to fully understand the differences between the old and the new textbooks, it is important to undertake a qualitative comparison: Is there a shift from an ethnocentric approach to a humanist approach?; what is the image of the 'other'?; is the image of Greek Cypriots always negative?; are there any other enemies (apart from the Greek Cypriots) named and

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<sup>11</sup> Personal Interview with Dr. Hasan Alicik, 6 September 2006, Nicosia.

described in the textbooks?; what kind of visual materials are used and what messages do they omit?

According to research conducted amongst 1,413 lower secondary schools pupils: 92% of pupils expressed positive views on the revised books. Furthermore, during an interview, Dr. Alicik, stated that the pupil's families' also displayed a positive response to the modified books.

In general, the new history textbooks are far from the ethnocentric approaches used in the old textbooks. Instead, the new books evaluate historical issues from a humanistic perspective. Moreover, there is no obvious indication of a national enemy or the "other" in the new books. One of the most fundamental characteristics of the new books is the emphasis on social history and its role in general history. Reference to social events during various historical periods help the reader to make sense of his/her common social space and identify with the Greek Cypriot community. Caricatures and pictures are also given great precedence and enrich the books further. Such visual imagery helps to further engage the reader into the subject matter and hold their attention. In fact the caricatures and pictures are so well placed that they are become an integral part of the books. Another important aspect of the books is the use of Turkish Cypriot dialect. Until recently, Turkish Cypriot dialect was often viewed as a 'local cultural characteristic' and has been strongly snubbed by various dominant Turkish nationalistic groups. However, the authors of the new textbooks have attempted to introduce (although limited) Turkish Cypriot dialect and in doing so promote a sense of pride in the 'Cypriotness of the Turkish Cypriot community'. Furthermore, the authors of the new textbooks were keen to refer to Greek Cypriot writers and as such recognising the importance of their work.

During the process of educational reform, The Turkish Cypriot Educational Planning and Programme Department set up 147 commissions comprising of teachers and academicians which were involved in the revision of the history textbooks and teaching materials. In total 350,000 books will be published in the northern part of Cyprus. Previously, all the textbooks were printed in Turkey. This is a positive advancement for numerous reasons. Firstly, it allows the Turkish Cypriot community to have greater control and responsibility over the teaching of their history. Furthermore, it enhanced the economy of the northern part of Cyprus as new businesses were set up and thus jobs were created. Entrepreneurs began to open new printing houses and installed new technology. Additionally, graphic designers, academicians and writers were recruited to undertake this heavy task.

Although the majority of the Turkish Cypriot community welcomed the change in the educational curriculum and the new history textbooks were widely appreciated, the matter did stir up controversial discussions among nationalist circles. Rauf Denktash publicly denounced the new textbooks and criticized the authors of the books. Denktash's main complaint was that the new textbooks would weaken the national consciousness of the new generation. In reference to the Greek Cypriot education system, Rauf Denktash proposed that the Turkish Cypriot education system should also be based on a nationalistic understanding. He expressed concern that because of a possible governmental change in the Turkish Cypriot community, the new textbooks will most probably end up in the dustbin.

## **I) Dynamics of Change**

The revision of the history textbooks in the northern part of Cyprus was not free from the political debate in early 2000s. In order to fully comprehend the revision of the books and the consequent responses, it is important to understand the political atmosphere of the period. At the time, the majority of Turkish Cypriots began to react against Denktash's policy of a no solution to the "Cyprus problem", and actively become involved in mass movements to bring peace to Cyprus. Organizations such as 'This Country is Ours Platform' and the 'Common Vision', challenged the old regime and demanded an immediate solution to the Cyprus conflict. The role of the teachers unions (KTÖS: Turkish Cypriot Teachers' Union; and, KTOEÖS: Turkish Cypriot Secondary School Teachers' Union) in this process was of great importance. The dynamic involvement of the teachers unions in the aspiration for a unified Cyprus is vital when considering the background of events that led to the revision of the history textbooks in the northern part of the Island.

### **I a) Growing Reactions towards Denktash and Mobilisation against the Status Quo**

In 2000, Rauf Denktash sent a letter to Glafkos Klerides inviting him to begin negotiations regarding the "Cyprus problem", (defined as proximity talks). However, during the fifth round of negotiations, Denktash leaves the table, which instigated strong reactions among the Turkish Cypriot community. Subsequently, the banking and finance sector faced a huge crisis, which resulted in the collapse of many private banks in 2000. The resulting economic crisis was the final straw, and negative reactions against the Turkish Cypriot administration gained momentum. A widespread belief developed among a cross section of Turkish Cypriot society: that economic dependency on Turkey was having a negative impact on the local economy. Moreover, Turkey and Turkish bureaucrats were strongly criticized by various civil society activists during the period of 2000 to 2004.

Representatives of KTÖS and KTOEÖS, who were angry with the policies of the Bülent Ecevit and Devlet Bahçeli government in Turkey, publicly stated on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2001 "Ankara we do not want your money or support, nor the advice of your bureaucrats. We refuse to be enslaved". 'Peace and solution' emerged as a popular slogan against the Turkish controlled governance structure in the northern part of the island. Following

the arrest of Afrika newspaper's editor, Şener Levent, Mustafa Akıncı (former chief of the Communal Liberation Party-TKP) expressed in an interview with The Guardian newspaper that "Cyprus is an open air prison".<sup>12</sup> Akıncı conveyed the desire for Turkey to leave Cyprus and talked about "real sovereignty".

Up until this point, civil society activists had held an important role in establishing ad hoc umbrella associations in order to gain support against the so called "status quo" government in the north. Furthermore, these associations outwardly supported a solution to the Cyprus conflict. The Turkish Cypriot Chamber of Commerce initiated the formation of "The Common Vision of Turkish Cypriot Civil Society". The Common Vision brought to the forefront the urgent need of solving the Cyprus problem before the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU. However, before the creation of the Common Vision, the "This Country is Ours Platform" had already gained the support of various civil society organizations and political parties, against an economic package scheduled by Ankara and approved by the previous local government. The economic package introduced a number of severe measures in 2000.

(...) "This Country is Ours" called for self-governance of the Turkish Cypriots and demilitarization, as well as a negotiated settlement to the Cyprus problem. The Platform leaders were loyal to the idea that Cypriot communities could share the same political entity on the basis 'inter-communal peace' which has been the historical objective of Turkish Cypriot leftist movement.<sup>13</sup>

Soon after the Plan published in November 2002, the aforementioned associations and the Platform prompted many Turkish Cypriots to take to the streets and demonstrate in favour of the Annan Plan. Nevertheless, "This Country is Ours" came forward as the "more influential mobilizing Platform". Due to the characteristics of civil society in northern Cyprus, professional syndicates and unions hold a prominent position and possess great influence. Essentially, "among the more than fifty organizations in the 'This Country is Ours' movement, the teachers' unions (KTÖS and

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<sup>12</sup> *Guardian*, "Northern Cypriots turn against Turkey", September 25, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Vural, Yücel. "Kıbrıs Sorunu ve Kıbrıs Türk Solu" (Cyprus problem and the Turkish Cypriot left). *Birikim*, March 2003, pp. 39-43, Cited in CIVICUS. *Civil Society Index Report for Cyprus: An Assessment of Civil society in Cyprus, A Map for the Future*, 2005, p. 114.

KTOEÖS) and civil servants' union (KTAMS) played a crucial role in intensifying and maintaining civil society actions because of their strong organizational structures."<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, during the mass demonstrations in support of the Annan Plan, thousands of people called for the resignation of the so called status quo government and particularly the nationalist leader Rauf Denktash, who was the chief negotiator and Turkish Cypriot representative in the Cyprus talks. Numerous leaflets and brochures which highlighted the main points of the Annan Plan and its advantages were printed and widely disseminated. Many pro-solution intellectuals attended TV and radio programmes and journalists wrote intensively about the positive aspects of the Plan for the Turkish Cypriots. Following these events, the border in Nicosia which had separated the two communities for more than 30 years, was opened.

### **I b) Change of the Status Quo Administration**

Ultimately, the right wing nationalist government (once seen as the status quo government), lost the subsequent 2003 and 2005 general elections. The old government was replaced with the left wing political party, the Republican Turkish Party (CTP). CTP increased its popularity and subsequently won the last election, by gaining 45% of the total votes. This dramatic shift was partly due to the influence of the peace movement on local politics and the situation of the "Cyprus problem" at that time.

Rauf Denktash, the communal leader of Turkish Cypriots since the early 1970s, was increasingly challenged by his various opponents in different political circles. The appearance of the Annan Plan saw the dawn of a new era and reversed political configuration in the north. Denktash was unable to use his previous legitimacy and failed to convince the masses for a "no" vote, as trust for Denktash declined. According to research, which "asked how much Turkish Cypriots trust the Turkish Cypriot leader (Rauf Denktash) as far as the Cyprus negotiations are concerned, 39.2% said they had 'complete trust,' 13.2% said they had 'little trust' and 35.5% said they had 'no trust at all.' Those who said they did not have enough trust totalled 9.1%. 3.1% said, I do not know/no reply."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> CIVICUS. *Civil Society Index Report for Cyprus*. p. 115.

<sup>15</sup> FBIS Translated Text Document ID: GMP20030124000106 Version Number: 1 Source-Date: 01/23/2003.

### **I c) Role of the Teachers Union over the Revision of the Textbooks Process**

During the Annan Plan negotiations, the teachers' unions played an important role as promoters of non-violent mass demonstrations. A significant number of youngsters were mobilized to participate in demonstrations supporting the Annan Plan. This was aided by the striking of teachers during these demonstrations. Anti-Annan Plan and right wing circles used the media to strongly criticize the participation of students at these demonstrations. *Volkan* newspaper attacked the teachers unions and described them as "militant teachers organizations" and "syndicate *ağa's*"<sup>16</sup>. *Volkan* newspaper in the front pages of 14-15 January 2003 issues condemned the government for not stopping the abuse of students by the "militant teachers" and their syndicates, and students' exploitation in favour of the CTP policies.

Once the CTP government came to power, one of its major tasks was to undertake the revision of history textbooks. The process began with the revision/re-writing of the secondary school history textbooks. Preceding this, the revision of 5<sup>th</sup> grade social sciences book followed.

However, the modification of the education system and teaching materials is not a new phenomenon. Discussions regarding this issue have been taking place within the Turkish Cypriot community since 1970s. The official line was based on "maintaining a nationalistic perspective in secondary school education and encouraging and extolling ethnocentrism. However, civil society has been supportive of a more universalistic education system according to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."<sup>17</sup>

Concern on how we teach history, how we make linkages between past and present, and how we connect past and present in history teaching, deepened in the northern part of the island during the peace process. This concern enabled the new administration to make substantial changes to the traditional history textbooks. With the start of the new semester in September 2004, the new history textbooks started to be used in all secondary schools.

In accordance with the conclusions of the Civil Society Impact Study on Secondary Education, the teachers' unions have played an active role in promoting a new curriculum. The new government responded by preparing

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<sup>16</sup> For more information, see *Volkan* newspaper. Front page, 14 Ocak (January) 2003.

<sup>17</sup> - CIVICUS. *Civil Society Index Report for Cyprus*, p. 159.

revised history textbooks with an altogether deeper understanding than the previous ones. The Turkish Cypriot Primary and Secondary School Teachers' Trade Unions (KTÖS and KTÖEÖS) gave their own account of this change.

There had been an ideological confrontation between the then 'government' and the teachers' trade unions about the content of curriculum. While the former had usually been supportive of a curriculum stressing the 'historical enmity' between Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, the latter stressed the necessity of universal principles such as friendship, anti-chauvinism and mutual understanding as the basic values on which school curriculum should be based. The teachers' trade unions and their leading members published strong anti-chauvinist polemics but could not exert any meaningful impact on the education policy till the December 2003 elections through which the CTP came to power. In September 2004 history textbooks were replaced by new ones which were ostensibly more empathetic than the predecessor.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> - Ibid, p. 159.

## II) The Renewed History Books and the New Discursive Strategy

*What is it that must precede the conveying of history? Must there not be the declaration of a double passion, an eros for the past an ardour for the others in whose name there is a felt urgency to speak? ... Nietzsche may have been right in proclaiming that remembering the past is a sick passion; yet without necrophilia of the historian who gives herself over to overcoming the past's passing into oblivion, there would be only the finality of death.*

Edith Wyschogrod- **An Ethics of Remembering**

As is evident from the previous sections of the report, the issue of revising the history textbooks (in particular) and re-designing the curricula is a complicated process. The formation of a new government, the general dynamics of change, and the search for a solution to the Cyprus conflict are all interrelated matters in the decision making and writing process of the new textbooks.

With this in mind and having surveyed the revised textbooks, it is apparent that there are huge differences between the old and new textbooks. This section, will deal with this differences in relation to the discursive strategy. Is there any difference between the old and the new textbooks? If so, how and why has the discursive strategy changed? What is the relationship between the “newly formed” administration and the ‘change’ in history textbooks and the general curricula? In order to fully appreciate the new textbooks and highlight the differences between the old and new books, it is imperative that the old textbooks are also examined.

As Niyazi Kızılyurek states, the old textbook, written by Vehbi Zeki Serter begins with the emphasis that “...Cyprus is a geographical extension of Anatolia...”<sup>19</sup> As Vehbi Zeki Serter claims,

Cyprus controls the Southern ports of Turkey. In case of a Russian threat, the Turkish army can be attacked from different fronts and can ask for help only from the Southern ports of Turkey. Cyprus for Turkey is for the point of history, also very important. Our ancestors conquered Cyprus in 1571 for the cost of 80000 martyrs' lives. The Turks ruled Cyprus until 1878, for three centuries, and treated the native population in a very good manner. They brought freedom and justice to the island. The Turks have developed Cyprus and built so many monuments, which gave Cyprus the Turkish

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<sup>19</sup> Kızılyürek, Niyazi. “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks”, *International Textbook Research / Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, Vol. 21(4), 1999, p. 390.

Character. *In short, one can say that Cyprus is historically, geographically, strategically, and economically tied to Anatolia and a part of Asia Minor.*<sup>20</sup>

Kizilyurek (1999) goes on to point out that, the last sentence of the paragraph is a good example of the discursive strategy of the old textbook, written by Vehbi Zeki Serter. In Kizilyurek's (1999) words,

The "discursive strategy" of the author is evident through the emphasis on the "80.000 martyrs", in Turkish "şehit" – deriving from Jihad, holy war in Arabic – which attaches a "holy meaning" to the fact of the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus by using the political language of Islam.<sup>21</sup>

However, contrary to the old textbook which emphasised 'Cyprus' ties to Anatolia', the new Cyprus History textbook (vol. 1), begins by providing the reader with some general information about Cyprus and how Cyprus took its name –'Kıbrıs' (in Turkish). Following this, the geographical location of Cyprus is discussed, after which information regarding the prehistoric period through to the arrival of the Venetians in Cyprus are the main points of the book.

The old textbook did not provide students with any space to think, analyse, and interpret events from different perspective. However, the new books are strikingly different. (Meltem Onurkan highlights these differences using the following example.) The new textbook asks questions –such as 'having conquered Cyprus three times, why did the Egyptians not have much effect on the civilisation of the island?' Onurkan stresses that such questions–encourage students to think, analyse, and understand different points of view.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, the new textbooks present the names of places using both the Greek and Turkish name, which indirectly acknowledges that Greek Cypriots/Greeks are also living on the island and share in Cypriot culture.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 390.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 391.

<sup>22</sup> This can be a "new wave" in history education. As, one of the members of the Cyprus History book commission, Meltem Onurkan Samani claims that with the decision of Planning and Programme Department, a new history education method is promoted in the writing of the new history books, which based on contemporary ideas, encourage students to think critically, open to interpretation and analysis, and multiperspectival way of thinking. (Meltem Onurkan Samani, personal interview, 29/8/06 in Lefka).

However, in the old textbook, this was not the case. Examples of the place names stated are as follows (from the first volume of the *Cyprus History* book): p. 13 – Akrotiri (Ağrotur), Aetokremnos (Kartal Yuvası), Akdeniz Köyü, Dragontovounari (Ejderha Tepesi); p. 14 – Tatlısu-Çiftlikdüzü (Akanthou); p. 18 – Petra tou Limnidi (Limnidi Kayalığı), and p. 21 – Cape Andreas Kastros (Zafer Burnu).

The aforementioned examples are also important in highlighting: “the new discursive strategy” of the revised history books.

### **II a) New Discursive Strategy and its Relation with Critical Pedagogy**

Another important detail regarding the new discursive strategy of the revised textbooks lies in the fact that, “It is also important to encourage teachers and students to evaluate the textbooks that they are using and discover better ways to learn about the world’s problems.”<sup>23</sup> The new *Cyprus History* textbooks actually encourage a different way of thinking to the mainstream pedagogical approach: Paulo Freire’s “transmission” or “banking” model<sup>24</sup>, in which the teacher “knows everything” and the students “know nothing”. According to mainstream pedagogy, the ‘teacher speaks and the students listen’.<sup>25</sup> There are many instances in the new textbooks in which students are encouraged to think, analyse the given information and discuss the subject matter further. This is aided by the careful use of caricatures. The caricature draws the reader’s attention in a manner that is not “dull”. Instead, the message is clear and simple: people can have fun whilst studying history.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, students are encouraged (with their teachers) to think and visualise past situations. For example, in the first volume of the history book, the book talks about the first settlements in Cyprus and the caricature asks “how the first settlers of the

<sup>23</sup> Quoted from Pingel, Falk. *Ders Kitaplarını Araştırma ve Düzeltme Rehberi UNESCO* [UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision]. Trans. Nurettin Elhüseyni. İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003, p. 14 (my translation). The “International Conference on Combating Stereotypes and Prejudice in History Textbooks of South-East Europe” Conference at George Eckert Institute in 1988.

<sup>24</sup> Bailie, Mashoed. “Critical Communication Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Life”. *Democratizing Communication: Comparative Perspectives on Information and Power*. NJ: Hampton Press, 1997, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> This phrase is a changed version of “the West speaks and the rest listens”. Morley, David & Robins, Kevin. *Spaces of Identity*. London & New York: Routledge, 1995.

<sup>26</sup> This idea also mentioned indirectly by Meltem Onurkan Samani, personal interview, 29/8/06 in Lefke.

island came to Cyprus and what types of ships they used?<sup>27</sup> Questions such as these are important because they provide an actual space (both metaphorically and literally) for students to learn. By encouraging student participation, pupils are more able to enjoy the history lesson and subject matter.

Critical pedagogy in education is very significant, as Mashoed Bailie asserts in “Critical Communication Pedagogy: Teaching and Learning for Democratic Life”,

Critical education, then, embraces a concept of education that challenges students to take their responsibility as moral citizens seriously: to participate in the development conditions and critiques that promote social transformation while uncovering, resisting, and challenging, the supposed “naturalness” or “neutrality” of the way things are. Education for democracy must provide the conditions for critical reflection, social critique and the possibility for change.<sup>28</sup>

Although Bailie discusses education in general, a history book that not only “teaches” so called “only” facts but also encourages students to think and question the given information in a very significant progression. Questioning the given information not only “happens” by asking questions in the book, but also in the way teachers teach history. Contrary to the “transmission” or “banking” model, as Paulo Freire claims, (or the hypodermic needle approach in communication models) critical education pedagogy is important because “what is at issue is the process, the content, and the context within which students struggle, and the development of a curriculum that includes the voices and the visions of multiple communities of persons.”<sup>29</sup> With the new textbooks, students will be able to see that “they” are not the only people that talk about the “truth” but there are also other people, who are living on the same island, who have other “truths.” Furthermore, by emphasising the importance of social history, the new history textbooks does not demonise the “other” but

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<sup>27</sup> *Kıbrıs Tarihi, 1. Kitap: Ortaokullar İçin Tarih Kitabı*. [Cyprus History, Volume 1: History Book for the Secondary Schools]. Nicosia: KKTC Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığı, 2005, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Bailie, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> Bailie, p. 39.

“normalises” it.<sup>30</sup> By using the term “normalise”, it is being suggested that the new textbooks see the “other” as people like “us”, who have the same needs, such as food, shelter, clothing and a place/land to live.

## II b) New Textbooks in Terms of Colour and Bibliography

The new textbooks also differ from the old books in terms of their visual presentation, especially in the use of colour. The old textbooks were printed in black and white, the paper quality was poor and the books contained very few pictures. The pictures that were used mainly focused on the contemporary (interethnic violence) period. In contrast, the new textbooks use many bright colours and the paper (and the print) is of good quality. Cyprus (as a geographical place) stands in the centre of the front cover of all three textbooks. Furthermore, in terms of discursive strategy, the new history book has been divided into three volumes, whereas previously one book was used by all students in the first three years of lower secondary school. The first volume is concerned with general information about the island of Cyprus, the Prehistoric period, Cyprus during the Egyptians rule, Hittites, Greek colonies, Persians, Alexander the Great, Roman Empire, and Cyprus during the Middle Ages (Lusignans & Venetians). The second volume of the book focuses on the Ottoman Period, and the third volume primarily concentrates on the contemporary history of Cyprus (from the British Administration till now).<sup>31</sup>

Last but not least, there is a vast difference between the old books' approach and the new ones, in terms of references. The new textbooks' draw on more up to date references, and interestingly, the writers of the new textbooks were not apprehensive in using Greek and/or Greek Cypriot writers. In contrast, Vehbi Zeki Serter's book did not contain many references from different authors. Instead, Vehbi Zeki used only one Greek Cypriot writer as a reference. Additionally, the new textbooks contain a greater number of references than the old one.

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<sup>30</sup> For example, *Cyprus History Volume III* talks about the Cypriots (both Turkish and Greek Cypriots) who served as soldiers during the Second World War in British period.

<sup>31</sup> The old textbook has been divided into three main sections: a) Introduction, Prehistoric Periods, and Cyprus in the Middle Ages (till Venetians period), b) Venetian and Turkish dominance in Cyprus, c) The struggle of the existence of the Turkish Cypriots (from British Administration till now). Even a comparison between the parts of the old textbook and the new ones clearly shows the difference in terms of discursive strategy.

In brief, one can say that the main difference between the old and the new textbooks lies in the very idea of seeing Cyprus as a mainland versus 'Cyprus as a geographical extension of Anatolia'.<sup>32</sup> The new textbooks talk in terms of the former, whilst the old book attempted to prove the latter. Furthermore, the old books use of bland and poor printing quality, subscribes to mainstream pedagogy, as no discussion points appear throughout the chapters (until the end of the units). However, the new textbooks regard the student as an individual, and encourage him/her to think and understand events from the past. Moreover, the new textbooks place a greater emphasis on social history, rather than solely providing the reader with information about who conquered Cyprus. Although the discursive strategy of the new textbooks reveals that the new books contain many positive changes, it can be claimed that more work needs to be done. As Michalinos Zembylas and Hakan Karahasan (2006) claim, ...we want to suggest that in addition to revising textbooks or writing common textbooks for both communities in Cyprus, it is equally important to develop pedagogies that promote *reconciliation* and *peace*. We view reconciliation and peace not as states but as ongoing processes of respecting *difference* and seeking alternatives to hatred.<sup>33</sup>

Consequently, the change in discursive strategy in the north will only be of use if efforts like this take into account the pedagogical aspects of education. However, in order to do this we urgently need to have a common pedagogy that promotes reconciliation and peace.<sup>34</sup> Only by doing this, will the new curricula in Cyprus be able to achieve its main goal.

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<sup>32</sup> Kızılyürek, "National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks". p. 390.

<sup>33</sup> Karahasan, Hakan & Zembylas, Michalinos. "The Politics of Memory and Forgetting in History Textbooks: Towards a Pedagogy of Reconciliation and Peace in Divided Cyprus." Alistair Ross (ed). *Citizenship Education, Europe and the World: Proceedings of the Eighth Conference of the Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network, Riga 2006*. London: CiCe Publications, 2006, p. 706.

<sup>34</sup> Karahasan, Hakan & Zembylas, Michalinos. "The Politics of Memory and Forgetting in History Textbooks". p. 706.

### III) Textual Evaluation of the Cyprus History Textbooks

#### III a) Cyprus History Book, Volume I<sup>35</sup>

As previously mentioned, (contrary to the old history books) the new textbooks do not project the 'other' as an enemy, or cultivate mutual distrust between the two main communities living in Cyprus. (POST 2004). The most significant development in terms of the new textbooks lies in the discursive strategy of the books. The old textbooks primary aim was to prove that 'Cyprus is part of Anatolia' (Kizilyurek 1999) and that "we-Turkish Cypriots" are the grandchildren of the Ottomans, who conquered Cyprus in 1571.

This section of the report is an analysis of the *Cyprus History Textbook Volume 1*. It will become apparent in the pending paragraphs that the new textbook is a positive initiative in terms of print quality, page design, and narrative.

The main subject headings of the Cyprus history textbook, volume I are as follows: a) The island of Cyprus, b) Prehistoric periods, c) Cyprus in historical periods (information is given about the Egyptians, the Hittites, Greek colonies, the Assyrians, the Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Roman Empire), d) Cyprus in the Middle Ages (covers the periods of the Byzantine Empire, Isaac Commeneus, British Kingdom, Lusignan Kingdom, and Venetians).

An outline of Cyprus is located in the centre of the front cover and is shown without borders. This in itself displays a vast difference in terms of discursive strategy, compared to the previous textbook. Furthermore, the exclusion of borders on the diagram can be interpreted as an attempt by the authors, to show students that Cyprus is an island (as a whole). By presenting Cyprus as a whole entity (rather than divided), the old discourse is fundamentally challenged. Furthermore, the background colour of the front and back cover is purple, which is neither the colour of the Greek or the Republic of Cyprus nor Turkish Republic or the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus flag. The title of the book and subject matter (*Kıbrıs Tarihi*) is situated in the middle of the front page.

The back cover of the book continues with the ideology that 'Cyprus is our homeland' (rather than being part of Anatolia), by inscribing 'Kıbrıs Tarihi' in

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<sup>35</sup> *Kıbrıs Tarihi, 1. Kitap: Ortaokullar İçin Tarih Kitabı*. KKTC Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığı. Nicosia: 2005.

the background several times. In the centre of the back cover, a Carretta turtle can be seen, which is greatly connected to Cyprus. Again by doing this, the emphasis of 'Cyprus as our mainland' is stressed.

As mentioned above, contrary to the old book, the new textbook stresses the fact that Cyprus is an island from the very start. One can see that the old discourse is replaced with 'Cyprus is our mainland.' This is further emphasised on page 7: "Cyprus has arisen from the bottom of the sea, and because of this, the island of Cyprus has no connection with any continent". Whilst explaining the history of Cyprus before and after various historic periods, the book provides general information about Cyprus during that particular era and a variety of visual materials are used to reinforce the text. This in itself is a new concept, in terms of history textbooks in the northern part of Cyprus.

Another significant difference in terms of the narrative (again related with the main theme of 'Cyprus is our mainland') is in relation to the Cypriot language. The old textbook did not attempt to acknowledge the existence of a Cypriot language, despite it being one of the oldest languages in the world. However, the revised textbook refers to and gives examples of this language.

As previously stated in "the renewed history books and the new discursive strategy" section, the use of caricatures in the new textbook are also important in terms of pedagogy and narrative strategy.<sup>36</sup> The caricatures in the new books are often used as tool for posing questions to students, which encourages them to evaluate, think, and criticise the given information. It also prompts the teacher to prepare himself/herself for the lesson; otherwise s/he may experience difficulties, as the book does not subscribe to mainstream pedagogy. Instead, it encourages students to think freely (given the boundaries of course), criticise and/or evaluate the given information. It also drives teachers to improve themselves and their teaching methods.

Moreover, there are many points in the book that prompt the students to discuss the subject matter further, by using their imagination and analytically thinking about the given information. For example, 'having conquered Cyprus three times, why did the Egyptians not have much effect on the civilisation of the island?' (p. 37), "Let's discuss why Cyprus has

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<sup>36</sup> For more information about the "new discursive strategy and pedagogy" in history textbooks, see "The Renewed History Books and the New Discursive Strategy" parts.

been named 'the green island' throughout history?" (p. 41), "Let's talk about the Trojan Wars" (p. 40), "Let's discuss the terms empire and province" (p. 45).

In addition to prompting further discussion, the caricatures also provide important information about the given subject. Whilst the book talks about the Hittites, one of the characters asks a wise man "Does Hittite civilisation come from Anatolia?" and he answers "Yes, they are also called Etiler – Etiler" (p. 38). Another example of such questions and answers are as follows: "What is the race of Mycenae?" Answer, "It is said that they belong to the Indo-European, East Asia group" (p. 39). Additionally the caricatures often summarise a particular whole event in a brief and visual way, making it easy for the student to remember the most crucial points of a subject area.

Upon examination of the first volume of the new history textbook, chapter 1 begins with a general account of the history of Cyprus and explains how Cyprus got its name. The following pages briefly discuss the geography of Cyprus. One of the most interesting sentences in the textbook can be found at the very beginning of the book: 'having conquered Cyprus three times, why did the Egyptians not have much effect on the civilisation of the island?' (p. 7). This sentence cannot be separated from the main philosophy of the book, which is previously explained in the "new discursive strategy" section. The final part of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter ends by providing information about the climate and vegetation of Cyprus.

The second chapter of the book deals with the prehistoric period of Cyprus. It begins by explaining how Cyprus became an island and the island's geologic structure. Once again, "the new discursive strategy" of the book is quite visible: what is being said on page 7 is repeated in a different way on page 10. In other words, contrary to the "old discursive strategy" (found in Serter's books), which were based on the notion of togetherness with Anatolia, here, the idea of 'Cyprus as our homeland' is re-emphasised.

As stated previously, another significant element of the new textbook is related with the practice of 'naming'. Places are named in a bi-lingual way (Greek and Turkish), which promotes the notion of bi-linguality and multiculturalism. Although the book does mention how the first settlers to Cyprus came from Anatolia, it does not promote the idea that "...Cyprus is historically, geographically, strategically, and economically tied to Anatolia

*and a part of Asia Minor.*<sup>37</sup> Instead, the book presents this as a normal detail. At the end of chapter 2, the first languages and scripts used in Cyprus are explained.

Chapter 3 discusses the Egyptians, the Hittites, the Greek colonies, the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Persians, Alexander the Great, and the Roman Empire in Cyprus. While the book examines these civilisations, the reader is continuously encouraged to think and analyse the information presented to them. However, in the old textbook, students were only invited to answer questions after the end of each chapter.

The final chapter of volume 1 begins with the Byzantine Empire in Cyprus and provides a general background as to how the Roman Empire was divided into two. Later, the book goes on to talk about the Orthodox Church in Cyprus and various Arab attacks. The following pages briefly explain the Isaac Commeneus in Cyprus, the British Empire, the Lusignans, and the Venetians in Cyprus. The book concludes with the Venetians.

The “new discursive strategy” is excellently highlighted at the end of the first volume. On page 73, a diagram illustrates “Who ruled Cyprus from 15 AD till the end of ancient times”. The diagram commences from 1450 AD and progresses onwards. As the diagram moves from one era to the next, the civilisation which ruled Cyprus during that period is stated. Hence, the Ottomans rule is presented as simply one of many civilisations that ruled Cyprus. In other words, the normalisation of the Ottomans rule in Cyprus signifies the fact that the new textbook does not ‘try to prove that’ “...*Cyprus is historically, geographically, strategically, and economically tied to Anatolia and a part of Asia Minor*”<sup>38</sup> as did the old book. Instead, the Ottomans rule is simply seen as an empire which once came to Cyprus and ruled the Island, as did other civilisations previously.

In conclusion, on examination of the first volume of the *Cyprus History* textbook, it can be seen that the new book is better in terms of print quality, colour and page design. Pedagogically speaking, the new textbook does not follow the mainstream ‘teacher knows everything’ idea (Baillie 1997). Instead, there are many points in the book that students are encouraged to discuss amongst themselves, evaluate, and combine the taught subject with their ‘past’ information. The use of caricatures and other visual

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<sup>37</sup> Kızılyürek, Niyazi. “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks”. p. 390.

<sup>38</sup> Kızılyürek, Niyazi. “National Memory and Turkish-Cypriot Textbooks”. p. 390.

materials (i.e. pictures) assist in the learning process and allow for the students to gain a better understanding of the subject matter.

### III b) Cyprus History Book, Volume II<sup>39</sup>

The second volume of the Cyprus history textbook consists of five chapters. Chapter One covers the Ottoman Empire in Cyprus and begins by explaining the motive behind the Ottomans arrival in Cyprus. Unlike the previous textbook, the reasons are presented in an objective way (pages 2-4). The book claims that the 'major reason' for the conquest of Cyprus (by the Ottomans), was a direct result of the pleading of the Orthodox Bishops to be saved from Venetian cruelty. This unit also mentions the dispute between the Grand Vezier Sokollu Mehmet Paşa and Vezier Lala Mustafa Paşa concerning the advantages of a conquest in Cyprus (p. 5).

Throughout pages 6 to 12, the necessary groundwork required by the Ottomans for the conquest of Cyprus is explained: The different ports from where the invasion was launched are illustrated using old maps and pictures and the settlement of the Ottomans is also explained in pages 13 and 14. A great majority of the Ottoman settlers were forced to leave their country and the notion of deportation as a method of settlement is discussed more comprehensively than in the previous textbooks. The expulsion of Turkish criminals to Cyprus in subsequent years is also examined.

Chapter two describes the Administration and Social Life in Ottoman Cyprus, paying particular attention to the administrative divisions during various historical periods. Locus attacks, hunger and starvation are examples given to describe the hardships of Cypriots at that time (p. 18). The legal system that was adopted by the Ottomans is presented as fair due to the equal numbers of Muslim and non-Muslims representatives in the Sheria courts (p. 20). Furthermore, the Land and Tax Order is explained in pages 22 to 23 and the Öşür/Muslim tax and cizye/non-Muslim tax are illustrated with the use of caricatures (p. 23). The dialogue poses the question; 'why does a Christian pay a different tax to a Muslim?' This is a good example of the books attempt to highlight the discrepancies during the Ottoman era. This unit also reveals the corruption of the Ottoman officials in relation to tax collection, thus encouraging students to have a

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<sup>39</sup> *Kıbrıs Tarihi, 2. Kitap: Ortaokullar İçin Tarih Kitabı*. KKTC Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığı. Nicosia: 2005.

critical mind. In contrast, the previous textbooks were one-sided, referring only to the positive aspects of the Ottoman administration.

Educational and religious institutions and the functions of the Vakıfs are explained in the following section (pp. 24-29). Furthermore, Christian institutions and their religious representatives are also examined. The next section describes the common uprisings and rebellions by Turkish and Greek Cypriots, against the Ottoman rule (p. 31). In doing so, the textbook demonstrates a shared history, involving common concerns and cooperation between the two communities.

Chapter two portrays Cypriot society as a multicultural society, by addressing the social lives of Cypriots. The book goes on to explain that the religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences of people did not lead to conflict. Family life, marriages, crimes and their punishments, property matters and relationships amongst different communities are discussed on pages 32 to 36. Societal and religious objections to mixed marriages are also cited (p. 37). The textbook attempts to highlight the importance of mutual respect towards one another's culture and beliefs, and stresses the importance of a peaceful co-existence of the people of Cyprus. These messages are in striking contrast to the messages found in the old textbooks. The position of women in society is also given attention. Often, women and their own personal history are not addressed in history books.

Moreover, unlike the old book, the new textbook gives great precedence to the issue of social history. This is of fundamental importance because social history is a vital tool in de-nationalizing history. Instead of simply addressing the goal of building national identity (by simply teaching the history of one's nation), social history contributes to students' understanding of how people used to live in the past.

Volume II only contains two chapters relating to the Ottoman rule in Cyprus. Contrary to the former textbook, this theme does not dominate the whole book. Chapter Three proceeds to discuss the British rule and the role of Cyprus in the British Empire. The history of colonialism and the geo-strategic interests of the British Empire are stated in the beginning of this unit (pp. 41-45). The decrease in power of the Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers balance of power struggle are explained excellently by the use of interesting caricatures (pp. 46-47). Within this context, the importance of Cyprus for the British Empire is highlighted (pp. 48-49). Subsequently, the Congress of Berlin and the agreement of the Ottoman

Empire with the British Empire (concerning the future of Cyprus) are addressed (pp. 50-51).

The next chapter concentrates on the arrival of the British to the island. Despite their (the British) fears there was no resistance from the locals (pp. 54-55). The nationalism movement in Europe and its manifestation in Cyprus; the desire of some Greek nationalists to unite all Greek lands; ENOSIS and its so-called '*Megali Idea*' ambition are all explained within an international context. In doing so, the subject matter is normalized. Interesting, previously Turkish Cypriot textbooks purposely used the grammatically incorrect word MEGALO IDEA, which is more aggressive in its meaning. However, this book uses the correct word MEGALI IDEA (p. 55).

This section of the textbook (chapter 4), discusses the rise of nationalism as a global issue and not simply an ideology that was limited to Cyprus. This is strikingly different from the previous textbook. Moreover, Greek Cypriot/ Greek nationalism is not described as evil (pp. 55-56). Furthermore, the Greek and Turkish flags are presented side by side (p. 56), suggesting an equality of the two countries.

The divide and rule policy which was used in Cyprus in order to avoid any common struggle by the Cypriots against the British; the so-called democratization of Legislative Council (Kavanin Meclisi) in 1882 and its implication on the equality of the Cypriot communities are all explained with the use of caricatures. Moreover, on page 57 a diagram using scales proves an interesting way to explain the changing balance of power in the Kavanin Meclisi. By drawing on visual materials, students are encouraged to use critical thinking rather than absorbing various imposing ideas (p. 57).

The socio-economic conditions of Turkish and Greek Cypriots and the effect on Cypriot social life are described in the next section. Everyday experiences, common food, culture, music, customs, and common entertainments are highlighted. Furthermore, shared sufferings such as famine, epidemics, earthquakes, corrupt administrations and heavy taxes are also cited. The unit concludes by explaining that the real problem between the two communities did not emerge due to differences in religion and language, but due to the political abuse of the communities by nationalist movements, as well as the divide and rule policy of the British (pp. 58-59). In addition, examples of various professions undertaken by Cypriots are illustrated with the aid of pictures, and no distinction between Greek or Turkish Cypriots is made (pp. 60-61).

The education system during the British rule, the role of the teachers, textbooks being produced in the respective motherlands and their contribution to the rising nationalism and conflict in Cyprus, are also highlighted (p. 65). The book goes on to illustrate Turkish Cypriot society and the development of a Turkish Cypriot identity. Furthermore, Turkish music and art, the Turkish Cypriot family structure, marriage ceremonies and rituals are portrayed on pages from 66 to 68. The contribution of the British to the island's infrastructure, railroad, harbour, road building, forestation, establishment of village cooperatives, department of Antiquities and the first press office are also described. In doing so the positive aspects of British colonialism are stated, this is a good example of multi-perspective history teaching.

The last chapter covers the First World War (WWI) and Cyprus. Reasons for WWI, the annexation of Cyprus by the British and the consequences of the war are discussed and explained throughout pages 72 and 73. The negative impact of the war on Cyprus, such as the emergency measures of the Colonial government and the deprivation of the economy are indicated. Unlike the previous textbook, the War of Independence in Turkey is only briefly mentioned in one paragraph. In the old textbook, the subject was given great coverage, including details of how the war was conducted. Instead, the new textbook discusses the position of Turkish Cypriots and their support by means of donations, therefore placing Cyprus at the core of the subject matter. The textbook proceeds to explain how the "Greek Cypriots celebrated the Greek invasion of the Ottoman territories and that the Turkish Cypriots celebrated Mustafa Kemal's victory" (p. 74). Even though the contrasting standpoints of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots are revealed, the book does so in a non provocative way.

Following this unit, the book discusses the conditions of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, Atatürk's, "peace at home, peace in the world" policy and the rapprochement between Atatürk and Venizelos (p. 74). An open ended question is posed: "Do you think that this friendship would come to an end due to the Cyprus conflict?", therefore, encouraging the reader to consider the topic further. The book also attempts to deal with the matter of whether Cyprus was negotiated in Lausanne and it points out that Turkey agreed to give up all its rights over Cyprus and accepted British sovereignty (p. 75).

Consequently, around 5,000 Turkish Cypriots immigrated to Turkey during the period 1924-1927. The Turkish Cypriots which remained in Cyprus demanded to rule Vakıfs, as well as their educational and religious institutions. Therefore, the need for organisation was paramount. Thus, the

next topic of the textbook focuses on the leadership and organisation of Turkish Cypriots (p. 76). After Lausanne, the island fell solely into the British legislation. Due to these changing conditions, Turkish Cypriot members of the Legislative Council fell into conflict and divided into Kemalists and Conservatives (Evkafçılar). In contrast to the previous textbook, the new book exposes the dispute amongst the Turkish Cypriot elite at that time, instead of merely concentrating on the dispute between the Turkish and Greek Cypriots (pp. 76-79).

Following this, the 1931 Riot in Cyprus is described. The common social and economic hardships of the Cypriots are explained, as well as their joint vote in the Legislative Council and the punishment of both communities by the British. However, the previous textbook had a completely different approach to this subject matter and placed all of the blame on the British administration in Cyprus. Furthermore, the old textbook suggested that the British treated the Turkish Cypriots unfairly, as they had not taken part in the riot. The previous textbook went on to accuse the Greek Cypriots for the heavy sentence imposed on the Turkish Cypriots. In contrast, the new textbook focuses on the common position and suffering of the two communities regarding the 1931 Riot.

### **III c) Cyprus History Book, Volume III<sup>40</sup>**

Volume III of the Cyprus history textbooks, consists of 7 units including “The Second World War”; “The Cold War and Cyprus”; “The Big Problem in the Small World”; “A Solution for Cyprus Problem: The Republic of Cyprus”; “Difficult Years”; “New Era in Cyprus”; and, “The Cyprus Peace Movement”.

The first chapter explains the situation in Europe during the Second World War period and relates the issue to Cyprus by describing the social life of Cypriots at that time. The countries partaking in the War and the economic crisis that European countries faced are explained objectively. The words in the text are chosen and described carefully, such as totalitarianism, Nazism and fascism. Furthermore, the reader can understand how the people of Cyprus experienced the War. For example, in a caricature on page 15, a young Cypriot man decides to go and fight in the War and explains to his mother the reasons why he wants to go. Interestingly, this conversation takes place in Cypriot dialect, which was not even a matter for discussion in

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<sup>40</sup> *Kıbrıs Tarihi, 3. Kitap: Ortaokullar İçin Tarih Kitabı*. KKTC Milli Eğitim ve Kültür Bakanlığı. Nicosia: 2005.

the old textbooks. Similarly, other examples presented in the book, such as letters written by a Cypriot mother to her son, Cypriot women soldiers joining the Auxiliary Territorial Service of the British government, and a Cypriot man suffering due to the effects of war (p. 19, Resource 1), provide a general overview of the bitter experiences Cypriot people faced. Moreover, the Cypriot people are shown as a whole, rather than being divided into Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

Up until page 27, the textbook addresses the common experiences of the two communities (Turkish and Greek Cypriots) living in Cyprus. The book then turns its attention to the political situation during World War II. One can see how politics becomes a divisionary force. The subject matter is now largely explained from the Turkish Cypriot point of view. Resource 7, (p. 29) for example, shows a group of Turkish Cypriot people asking how Enosis could be prevented, however the concerns of Greek Cypriots are not taken into consideration. Yet, it should be noted that unlike the old textbooks, different sections of the Greek Cypriot community are described in this chapter. On page 30, one can see that the Greek Cypriots were not a uniform group, but in fact quite diverse: the different perspectives of AKEL and the Church are explained and this point is further illustrated through a caricature in resource 9. The textbook also features information regarding the Cypriot workers' organisations (including PEO), which were formed by the two main communities of Cyprus, and this common experience is highlighted with a picture in resource 11-13 (p. 31-32).

Chapter 2 discusses "The Cold War and Cyprus". Here, the Cold War is the main topic; however attention soon turns to Cyprus. On page 40, the main ideology of the Turkish and Greek Cypriots are explained without 'romanticising' the issue. Instead, the different political ideas of people are presented and examples are given highlighting the common social life of the two communities; such as sports, cultural lives and social clubs. The discussion of sporting activities does not solely focus on the Turkish Cypriot community but also addresses the Greek Cypriot community. An example of this can be found on page 46, resource 1, which illustrates the bi-communal football team. The textbook goes on to explain how political tensions on the island affected sports. Interestingly, at the end of the chapter, pupils are asked whether or not it was a good thing that the political problems of the time intervened in sports activities. The question is posed in a very neutral way and encourages the pupils to think by asking to what extent they agree, don't agree and partly agree. Furthermore the students are asked to give reasons for their answers.

“The Big Problem in the Small World” is the title of the third chapter of the textbook. This section comparatively discusses the Turkish and Greek Cypriots as two separate ethnic communities and highlights their political differences. The textbook states that the major problems in Cyprus started after 1974. It then goes on to explain that the problems in Cyprus were not based on ethnic differences, but political differences. Turkish Cypriot nationalism is explained in a self-critical way. For example resource 11, page 66 shows how village names were changed to Turkish after 1974. The second half of the chapter discusses the social life of the Turkish Cypriot people, such as traditional weddings (p. 71); life in the villages (p. 74); eating traditions (p. 75); city life (p. 77); ceremonies at schools and bairams (p. 77-78).

Chapter 4 discusses the Republic of Cyprus. It begins with the Treaty of Guarantee and goes on to highlight the most important articles of the 1960 Constitution. In doing so, the textbook describes the experiences of the two main groups of people (in Cyprus) until 1963 and then attempts to verbalise the political views of the Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots separately (p. 84). It is interesting to note, that while explaining the role of the media in this complex environment, the book gives the example of two Turkish Cypriot journalists, namely; Ayhan Hikmet and Ahmet Muzaffer Gurkan of the daily ‘Republic’ These journalists were strong believers in the notion that the two main groups of people in Cyprus must live together in peace. Sadly, these journalists were killed by unknown persons. At the end of the chapter on page 90, a drawing illustrates the map of Cyprus crying and pondering ‘why are we in this situation?’ This emotional picture highlights the suffering of all Cypriots (Turkish and Greek). Furthermore, the reasons given do not lay blame solely with the Greek Cypriot, therefore not creating the idea of a single enemy.

When we come to Chapter 5, titled the “Difficult Years”, the post-Republic years are explained from the Turkish point of view. This unit discusses the bitter experiences of the Turkish Cypriots, the political position of their leaders, and plans for a solution. Although the words have been carefully chosen in order not to trigger nationalistic feelings, the experiences of the Greek Cypriot people are not mentioned whatsoever. Nevertheless, the chapter does not only focus on the political issues of Cyprus, but also addresses the social life of the ordinary Cypriot people. For example, a sketch depicted by two Turkish Cypriot actors, explains what people were listening to on the radio on Sunday mornings. This sketch takes place using Karpasian dialect and the Cypriot words used are explained in a glossary

(p. 109). The textbook goes on to discuss Cypriot musicians and the music clubs of the time. Therefore, in contrast to the old book, which was very biased in favour of the Turks and their experiences, the revised textbook addresses the social life of all Cypriots. Nevertheless, the period between 1964 and 1974 is described as particularly bad for the Turkish Cypriots.

Chapter 6 is titled “A New Era in Cyprus”. This chapter describes ‘the new era’ in Cyprus but not just in terms of Turkish Cypriots, but also acknowledges the lives of Greek Cypriots.

The last chapter deals with the “Cyprus Peace Movement”. This chapter describes how Turkey ‘saved’ the Turkish Cypriots (from the Greek Cypriots) and the subject matter is addressed from the Turkish point of view. Although the authors of the textbook appear to have attempted to remain as objective as possible, this may not be sufficient as the textbook still discusses the 1974 intervention from one perspective. Nevertheless, this chapter neither promotes hatred nor portrays the ‘other’ as the enemy. However, the very last chapter of the textbook bombards the reader with nationalistic feelings and sentiments.

To conclude, the third volume of the textbook begins by explaining the history of Cyprus from World War II in a very animated way. Many examples of the social lives of Cypriots and other Cypriot things such as common eating traditions; common sports clubs, workers’ solidarity and Cypriot dialect are presented to the reader. However, the textbook concludes with great emphasis on the Turkish Cypriot point of view, especially in term of describing the 1974 intervention of Cyprus by Turkey. Last but by no means least, it can be argued that the book does not use triggering words such as “the motherland Turkey”; “Greeks”; “Mehmetcik, the hero”, but instead attempts to explain plans for a solution of the two communities. Moreover, the textbook does attempt to address the suffering of Greek Cypriots. Whilst discussing the “movement”, the book explains that Greek Cypriots lost their relatives and loved ones; had to leave their homes and villages, highlighting the similarities of the suffering experienced by Turkish Cypriots in the 1960s.

#### **IV) Visual Evaluation of the Cyprus History Textbooks: Talking Pictures**

##### **(Picture pages are shown in the Appendices)**

Children are often drawn to visual images rather than text; therefore the pictures in the revised textbooks are of fundamental importance. They should not be viewed as meaningless images or pretty pictures but rather as an additional method of transmitting a particular message. It is these messages that we must be concerned with. Thus, it is important to understand the purpose of the pictures in the textbooks and the possible effects they may have on their readers.

The revised textbooks contain many visual images including photographs, drawings and caricatures. The pictures are used as an additional learning tool and help to further explain and highlight important points. For example: Book 1, P.35: There is a diagram illustrating the process involved in constructing a pyramid. A caricature of a girl accompanies the picture and asks “why did the Egyptians build pyramids?” An Egyptian looking caricature answers her, and explains that they were used to bury Emperors in.

The textbooks use of imagery is also a way of further engaging the young reader into the subject area. A caricature of a child asking questions or stating particular points, appear frequently. As a result, questions are placed in the child’s mind, therefore encouraging further reflection on a particular topic. The fact that the caricature is portrayed as a child also helps the young reader to identify with the image. Such imagery is not presented in a passive format but rather as a method of interacting with the reader. Interestingly, in Book 3 the child caricature does not appear. Instead, discussion points are raised and the reader is asked to discuss why they may agree, not agree or partially agree with a particular statement. In doing so, the child is encouraged to think for himself/herself about a particular issue and consider the various arguments surrounding the subject matter. Thus the contents of the textbooks mature along with the readers.

Unlike written information, visual images allow for greater personal translation of a subject matter. For instance, when looking at a piece of art work, each individual will have his/her own interpretation of the art and

what it means to them personally. However, the pictures in the textbooks are often accompanied by relevant text, therefore steering the reader towards a particular way of thinking about the image and as a result, partially restricting personal translation.

The front cover page of all three textbooks illustrates an outline of the map of Cyprus, therefore laying the groundwork of what the book involves. Furthermore, the reader is immediately able to identify with his/her homeland. This is further emphasised with the photographs on the back of the textbooks in which social aspects of Cyprus are presented.

Book 1: a turtle; Book 2: a Cypriot flower, Book 3: the central square in north Nicosia. All of the above exemplify "Cypriot-ness" and immediately create a sense of relationship with the subject matter.

However, once the textbook is open the child is introduced to the subject matter by way of the Turkish and 'TRNC' flag. The flags are presented side by side, implying that the two countries continually stand side by side in a natural sense of togetherness. Interestingly, the Turkish flag is presented first, thus ensuring the reader never forgets who is leading the northern part of Cyprus and further emphasizing the importance of the "motherland". Directly under the flags is the National Anthem (which is the same for both the northern part of Cyprus and Turkey). This evokes feelings of nationalism and belonging to all things Turkish. This Turkish nationalism is further enhanced with a picture of Atatürk who portrays the image of real "Turkish-ness" to many Turkish Cypriots. Interestingly, Atatürk never visited Cyprus during his life time. These nationalistic messages play on the consciousness of the child's mind and when reading the book he/she remembers that they are a Turk first and foremost and as such, should be proud to be one.

Despite the introductory nationalistic overtones, by and large the pictures contained in all three books attempt to provide a balanced view of Cyprus and are very informative.

The books contain numerous visual images portraying the social features of Cyprus, such as geographical aspects, nature and social activities. Such subject matters are presented using a variety of diagrams and photographs. As a result the child is able to make sense of Cyprus and its natural space and to identify with familiar features presented to them. For example:

Book 1, pp. 5-6: diagrams of various mountain formations are illustrated. Book 1 also contains many photographs of artefacts and archaeological

discoveries in Cyprus which assist in explaining the history of Cyprus and how the history of the young reader's country has not always been concerned with the issue of Greek versus Turk.

Moreover, such geographical and social illustrations are linked with the national identity of Cyprus and not Turkey. Therefore, such visual images hold similar meanings to both Greek and Turkish school children as they can mutually identify with them.

Book 1, p. 2: Cyprus is shown in terms of its position on the world map, therefore placing it in a world context. Cyprus' proximity to Turkey or Greece is not highlighted as an important aspect.

The visual images used in the textbooks use a less ethnocentric approach than the previous textbooks. The premise of one culture and/or its people as being superior is less dominant. In fact, the revised textbooks attempt to portray the Turkish and Greek culture as equally important. For example;

Book 1, pp. 56-57: A diagram stating the structure of the Orthodox Church in Cyprus during the middle ages. On the opposite side of the page a photograph of Hala Sultan Tekkesi with accompanying text is shown. Such visual presentations imply that the two religions (although different) are of equal importance.

Book 1, p 4: A map of Cyprus is presented highlighting various places using both Turkish and Greek names for certain areas.

Images such as those mentioned above highlight an important notion; that although Turks and Greeks may have differences in their culture, (such as religion and language) this does not mean that one culture is more superior to the other. Instead, the textbooks use of imagery implies that these differences should be understood and respected.

As well as highlighting the differences between Turkish and Greek culture and people, the pictures in the textbooks also endeavour to draw attention to the similarities between the two communities.

Book 2, p.60–62: Photographs illustrating Cypriots performing various occupations (such as a grape seller and a musician).

The people photographed are not identified as being either Turkish or Greek but as Cypriot. Thus, the notion of "us" (Turks) and "those" Greeks is not depicted and feelings of nationalism are not steered towards being Turkish, but instead being Cypriot. Moreover, a typically Cypriot way of life is presented and the activities and experiences of Cypriot people are illustrated. Thus the cooperation amongst Turks and Greeks in everyday

life is given greater precedence than the political conflict between the two communities

Furthermore, the textbooks go one step further in terms of illustrating Turks and Greeks living and working together.

Book 3, p. 22: A photograph of Turkish and Greek men serving in the Cyprus army.

Book 3, p. 31: A photograph illustrating Turkish and Greek Cypriots working in the coal mines in Lefke together.

Book 3, p. 46: A photograph of a Cypriot football team in 1955 having both Turkish and Greek players.

Such photographs verbalise not only that the two communities worked and lived together, but they actually fought on the same side against the “other” i.e. in war and in football.

The notion of the “other” in the old textbooks was of principle importance in terms placing the two communities against each other. However, although there still is an element of the “other” in the revised textbooks, the “other” now seems to be depicted as the English. Furthermore, the English are portrayed as the enemy of the Cypriots, thus placing Turks and Greeks as being on the same side.

Book 2, p. 72: A Turkish Cypriot and Greek are shown having the same thought about Cyprus and Britain; “What is going to happen now?”

From the onset, the subject of Cyprus and Great Britain presents the English as “bad”.

Book 2, p. 42: An illustration of a “white” man holding a whip with two “darker skinned” men in chains carrying barrels. Such an image presents the English as the “enemy” and a nation which treats others badly. Furthermore it portrays the English as racist and suggests a new conflict; “white” versus “dark”.

Although it is true that the English did have slaves, the picture is not shown in context to the issue of slavery and is not relevant to the text on the page. Secondly, the aforementioned illustration is the first picture to be shown of the English, thus establishing the notion of the English as “evil” from the onset.

Book 2, p. 58: A picture of an English man standing in a dominating fashion in what appears to be a uniform, addresses both a Turkish and Greek man. The positioning of the three men is important as the English man is portrayed as commanding the discussion. Furthermore, the visual

appearance of the Turkish and Greek man is the same (both physically and in dress) and the only way to differentiate between them is by the text labelling them “Rum” and “Turk”. Hence, from a visual perspective the notion of being a Cypriot is given greater precedence than the political agenda of the two communities. The Greek man is shown to be wishing for Enosis and declaring the desire to have more Greeks in parliament (and the proportion should be calculated on the basis of the population). On the other hand the Turkish man is thinking that the ideal scenario would be for the English to leave Cyprus and that the Island be given back to its real owners (the Ottomans). Furthermore, the Turkish man is saying that he wants equality. Although the two men are thinking different things, they are presented as looking the same because they are Cypriots. Again the diagram is highlighting the similarities between Turks and Greeks because they are Cypriots, as well as identifying their differences. Furthermore, the English man is presented as the “enemy” of both men, as he is shown to be the manipulator of the two communities as he sympathises with the Greeks desire for Enosis whilst expressing a desire for the Turks to collaborate with the English to minimise the Greeks’ power. Thus both the Turks and Greeks are portrayed as being in the position of the “victim”.

This premise of the English being the reason for the division between the Turkish and Greek communities (in Cyprus) is further enhanced in;

Book 3, p. 59: A diagram of a hand with the British flag on its sleeve dividing two groups of people in the middle.

The Turks are also presented as victims in other visual images in the textbooks;

Book 2, p. 45: An Osmanli figure is being pulled on one arm by the English and on the other by the Russians. Furthermore, this once again emphasises the notion of the “enemy” (English).

In the previous textbooks the imagery used was very emotive e.g. soldiers, tanks, dead bodies, graveyards etc. This led to a clear division of “us” (Turks) and “those” Greeks, “good” versus “evil”. Thus, children learnt to fear the enemy (Greeks) and in doing so, feelings of nationalism were formed.

The images in the new textbooks are very different. Although the books contain some images of the suffering incurred by the Turks, (due to conflict between Turks and Greeks, the imagery used is not as emotive and the pictures are very few. Examples of such imagery are;

Book 3, p. 55: A photograph showing a building on fire and the accompanying text explains that this is due to the activities of EOKA. Interestingly, this photograph is quite small and has not been enlarged, which perhaps would have had a greater psychological effect on the young readers mind.

Book 3, p 57: A picture with accompanying text which explains that the incidents in Izmir and Istanbul led to several Greek citizens of Turkey having to leave Turkey. Hence the suffering of the Greeks is also presented. Interestingly this photograph is larger than the photograph mentioned above.

Book 3, p. 92: A photograph depicting an event that took place on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1963. Blood can be seen on the pavement but no dead bodies are shown.

Book 3, p. 93: A photograph with accompanying text shows people having to live in tents in Küçük Kaymaklı. Although the image illustrates the displacement of some of the Turkish people, it does not show the destruction of their previous homes, which perhaps may have had a more profound psychological effect on a child's mind.

Book 3, p. 63: Two pictures depict a demonstration by Turks in which they shouted "Divide or Die". The text explains that the English police attacked the demonstrators with tear gas and seven people were killed. It goes on to explain that the English police were wearing protective clothing. Yet again the English are presented as "evil" and the enemy of the Turks.

In fact, some of the most emotive visual images to feature in the textbooks are those of wars which took place in other parts of the world and are not related with Cyprus.

Book 3, p. 12: There are two photographs depicting people's lives in England during World War II. One photograph shows two women wearing gas masks as they talk and carry out domestic chores. The other photograph highlights numerous people sleeping on the floor of an underground station.

Book 3, p. 13: A photograph shows a scene from Hiroshima after an atom bomb has exploded.

Book 3, p. 14: A photograph illustrates the devastation caused in Germany after an air bomb.

These photographs assist the child in understanding that people suffered all over the world because of war and that the issue of war and conflict is not specific to Cyprus.

As mentioned previously, the notion of commonality between the Turks and Greeks is greatly emphasised in the textbooks, especially in a social context. However, the idea of commonality is further enhanced in relation to the issue of war. War is presented as being a common experience shared by Cypriots and as such the effects of war are shown to affect all Cypriot people. Cypriots are presented as a collective group and Cyprus is placed in the centre of the subject matter. Furthermore, the textbooks approach to the issue of war uses a humanist approach.

Book 3, p. 18: A photograph illustrating Cypriot women soldiers looking eagerly at a newspaper for news of peace. This photograph highlights a common desire amongst Cypriots regardless of being Turkish or Greek.

Book 3, p. 19: An illustration shows a man (not identified as being either Turkish or Greek) sitting and contemplating the effects of war. He is presented as being a victim of war and he worries “war, destitution, unemployment...where will it end?”

Book 3, p. 15: A drawing depicts a conversation between a mother and her son. The woman is portrayed as being a typical Cypriot village woman, thus not restricting the image to being Turkish or Greek. Furthermore the language in the text uses Cypriot dialect. The nature of the conversation is also not specific to being Turkish or Greek, but being Cypriot. The woman asks her son if he is stupid to want to go and fight in the war and the son replies that he is not stupid as the English are providing many benefits to those who decide to join the army, and he goes on to list them. For example: a good wage, free room and board, a uniform, medical and dentistry care. The mother replies, asking her son if it is worth it. Depending on one’s personal interpretation of the text, the English can either be viewed as being “good or “bad”. If the text is taken literally then the benefits may be interpreted as being very positive. However, some readers may see this illustration as another example of the English as the “enemy”. Firstly, the conversation is emotionally driven and this is further enhanced as the conversation takes place between a mother and her son. Moreover, the previous illustrations of the English in the textbooks have generally not presented them in a positive light. Hence the reader may see the list of benefits as a bribe by the English to recruit Cypriot men to fight “their” war, thus not risking the lives of English men.

Nevertheless, perhaps one of the most fascinating visual images to be found in the revised textbooks can be found in;

Book 3, p. 90: A drawing illustrates the map of Cyprus crying and pondering "Why are we in this situation?" Several reasons are given; secret gangs, biased press, nationalistic messages by Turkey and Greece, speeches from politicians, the 1966 Akritas Plan and its aims and nationalistic Turks and Greeks which caused distrust between the two communities.

Firstly, the crying map of Cyprus suggests that all the people of Cyprus have suffered, not just the Turkish Cypriots. Furthermore, the reasons given do not lay blame with a single group and as such do not create the idea of a single enemy. The old notion of "us" (Turks) versus "them" (Greeks) is not addressed. Moreover, specific segments of both the Turkish and Greek population and their establishments are held responsible for the current problems in Cyprus today. Thus, countries (Turkey, Greece and England) political agendas and political figures are presented as the main cause of the division of Cyprus. Therefore, stressing that the majority of Cypriot people are not to blame for the "Cyprus Problem."

Interestingly, the textbooks highlight a prominent division in Greek politics by stressing the division between The Greek Church and AKEL.

Book 3, p. 30: A diagram presents an Orthodox bishop and a man from AKEL in conflict. The bishop proclaims that the Church wants Enosis and the man from AKEL says that they also want Enosis, and asks why they are fighting then?

Book 3, p. 54: A drawing of a bishop beating a man from AKEL with a stick. The man from AKEL is shown to have been hit on the head and to have a black eye. The bishop is standing behind a door labelled Enosis. The drawing stresses the importance and power of the Greek Cypriot Church in politics. Furthermore the man from AKEL is shown as the "victim" due to his injuries. Thus, the textbooks highlight the notion of division amongst the "other" and hence the differentiation of the "other" is suggested.

In conclusion, the imagery used in the revised textbooks has been thoughtfully chosen in order to cover many aspects of Cyprus and Cypriot studies (social, geography and history). Furthermore, much care seems to have been taken in order to utilize visual images which present a balanced view of the "Cyprus problem", as well as being informative. The aforementioned changes go a long way in assisting peace and understanding between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities. This is

a vital step in the right direction in terms of educating the young people of Cyprus; textbooks which highlight the similarities between the Turkish and Greek communities but also attempt to explain and make sense of their differences. As a result the children of Cyprus will learn respect and tolerance, instead of fear and hostility.

## V) Conclusions

History is an important subject in any country's national curriculum. But its significance is even greater in countries where ethnic tension is still present. The essence of good history teaching should involve the respect, tolerance and understanding of others - as well as creating an awareness of one's identity. Whilst studying history, pupils have the opportunity to understand their past, which in turn helps them to make sense of their present situation. History (if taught well) should also promote an analytical form of thinking and encourage a questioning approach to society.

Having conducted a textual and visual analysis of the old and new history textbooks used in lower secondary schools in the Turkish Cypriot Community, it is apparent that history textbooks have gone through a fundamental change. The previous textbooks (written by Dr. Vehbi Zeki Serter) contained many nationalistic themes that encouraged students to view the "other" (Greek Cypriots) as the "enemy". The head of the Turkish Cypriot Education Planning and Programme Development department, Dr Hasan Alicik pointed out in an interview with Simon Bahceli for the Cyprus Mail newspaper, that "in one part of the book (the old history textbook), it describes how the Greek Cypriots gouged out the eyes, filled bodies with holes etc. This kind of language, as well as breeding hatred, can also cause lasting psychological damage to the young reader"<sup>41</sup>. Such emotive language and descriptions of brutality (by Greek Cypriots towards Turkish Cypriots) are not found in the new books. Moreover, the old textbooks did not allow for the questioning of events, nor did they make allowances for the "other's" point of view.

One of the most significant changes in the new textbooks is the promotion of Cyprus as the country of all Cypriots. Serter's book was written from the ideological perspective that 'Cyprus is a geographical extension of Anatolia'. In Serter's book, Cypriot history would always be tied to Turkey, thereby rejecting the idea of Cyprus having its own personal history from the onset. However, the new books are written from a different perspective: The different ethnic communities of Cyprus are presented as communities whose history, culture and even language is tied to the island of Cyprus, rather than Turkey (or Greece). This paves the way for a new form of

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<sup>41</sup> For more information see the Cyprus Mail (archive article – Thursday, 15 July 2004) *Making History* by Simon Bahceli.

thinking, which is vital if students are to fully understand their past and present situation, while at the same time enabling them to empathise with other communities on the island. The new textbooks talk in terms of the former, whilst the old book attempted to prove the latter.

Moreover, the new textbooks provide students with an opportunity to make sense of their social history, which we see as imperative if they are to form an identity for themselves based on the country that they live in. Despite the conflicts that have occurred in the past, students are encouraged to feel proud of their homeland and to learn about their own culture.

It is not only the subject content that is strikingly different in the new textbooks, but also the teaching style – a factor paramount to the approach and content of the textbooks. The old books were written and used in a style where the teacher simply reads from the book, and students listen and digest the information. However, the new textbooks are written from a student-centred perspective. Information is provided to students, but they are encouraged to formulate their own perspective of events. This is important for various reasons. Firstly, it represents an important step in terms of peace education by helping students form an objective view of history (personal interpretation of events is given greater precedence). Secondly, by encouraging students to question events from differing perspectives, they develop an analytical and critical way of thinking about the world they live in.

The student centred approach found in the new textbooks is supported through the use of visual materials. Pictures, photographs and caricatures help to engage the reader further into the subject matter and emphasise important points. Moreover, the caricatures in the books are presented in the form of a question and answer conversation, which again promotes an analytical approach.

However, we felt that the contents of new textbooks failed in one very important aspect, and that is that there is no mention of other minorities living in Cyprus, such as the Cypriot Armenians, Maronities and Latin populations. Therefore, their experiences are not considered, which risks the interpretation that they are of lesser importance.

## Findings from the workshops

From the analysis, it is clear that the revised history textbooks are a positive step towards peace education and a more balanced approach to history. However, the revision of history textbooks is only one element of a much greater challenge. Therefore, the research team organized three workshops (in Nicosia, Famagusta and Kyrenia) in order to fully grasp how the textbooks have been received in schools. Although the majority of teachers that attended the workshops saw the revised textbooks as a positive change, they also spoke of the various problems that they had experienced in terms of using them.

Positive responses from teachers included: "In the old books, one would see blood and hatred. In the new textbooks, one can see examples of joint demonstrations by Greek and Turkish Cypriot workers at the Lefke mines. And pupils are shocked when they hear this story. Students are also surprised to hear that the population of the Island experienced bad economic conditions in the past. Therefore, we must teach common events and experiences to our pupils." Another teacher expressed; "I as a higher secondary school teacher (11th grade), taught the 6th grade lower secondary school history textbook in my class. Through this book, pupils learnt that Cyprus history does not start in 1571, but in 9000 BC. They also learnt that Cyprus history is a compact matter and not separate for both communities living on the island."

However, the teachers spoke mainly of the problems they experienced in terms of using the revised textbooks. One of the major problems was in relation to the limited time allocated to the teaching of Cyprus history. "We don't have much time to teach the book. We have only 40 minutes a week and we don't have a chance to use the caricatures and the other exercises in the textbooks," one teacher commented, adding that because the education ministry had drastically reduced the amount of curriculum time for teaching history, teachers had been forced to "complete 4 chapters in a limited time period. Because of this, most teachers simply highlight the most important parts of the book."

Thus, although the books are intended to be taught using a student-centred approach, time constraints mean that such an approach is not actually possible in the classroom. Instead, a teacher centred style of education is still taking place.

Moreover, important subject matters are being omitted because it is not possible for teachers to discuss all the information contained in the books.

Therefore, teachers use their autonomy to select subject areas they personally believe to be the most important. This is problematic, as the teachers themselves have their own viewpoint of Cyprus history. Some may be very conservative in their approach, while others may be too eager for change.

As such, the information contained in the textbooks actually goes through a screening process before it is transmitted to the pupils. Moreover, the subject matter is not free from the personal perspectives of the teachers. However, if more time was allocated to the teaching of Cyprus history, then the entire content of the books could be covered, allowing students to formulate their own perspective on varying events.

From the workshops it also became apparent that teachers had received no training in light of the new textbooks. Neither was a manual provided. The teachers, being more used to teacher centered teaching methods; prefer to stick to the old ways, which are obviously not in line with the revised textbooks. Therefore, although teachers have been equipped with an important tool (the revised textbooks) they do not have the technique to be able to use the books effectively.

Moreover, the teachers complained that no supplementary materials had been provided to them (such as maps and videos), which they believe would be most beneficial in supporting the courses. As one teacher pointed out; "the books are well written, but the physical infrastructure is not sufficient".

### **Vision for the future**

Although the new textbooks are progressive in terms of their textual and visual content, their effectiveness is limited due to varying factors, such as limited teaching time, and, perhaps more importantly, the lack of training given to teachers. In order for the proper implementation of the textbooks to take place, teachers urgently need to be trained in student centred approaches to teaching.

Moreover, history teachers have learnt history from the old perspective, namely Serter's textbook. Thus, their idea of events and Cyprus history may not be in line with those of the revised textbooks. Therefore, it is essential that teachers are re-educated so that they too can learn to see Cyprus' history with a more analytical eye.

Another important point to note here is that a reform of Cyprus history cannot be successful unless both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots both make the necessary changes to their textbooks and curricula. Understanding and tolerance is a double sided coin and both communities need to work together to formulate a better understanding of each other.

In order to ensure our findings and proposals for change are actually implemented, it is POST RI's vision to continue with its aim of promoting peace education in Cyprus. We think this process can be aided by examining best practise techniques in the teaching of history in secondary schools in countries such as Germany, France, the UK, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Poland. Teaching techniques will be analysed, paying special attention to student-centred teaching. In light of our findings we will then suggest a best practice for history teaching in Cyprus.

Furthermore, by working closely with the *Association of Historical Dialogue and Research*, POST RI plans to invite international specialists on teacher training to take part in a conference on student-centred approaches to teaching. All history teachers in Cyprus will be invited to attend further workshops and we will then proceed in order to train teachers from the Turkish Cypriot Community. These workshops will involve international experts, local historians across the green line, as well as pedagogues. Additionally, a separate workshop will invite teachers from both sides of the island to share their experiences of teaching Cyprus history.

In order to sustain and implement the new practises proposed, a user-friendly manual will be produced which will provide a practical guide to using student-centred approaches in the classroom, which teachers can refer to on an on-going basis.

Thus, although an important step has been taken in terms of peace education in the Turkish Cypriot Community, more work needs to be done. The revised textbooks offer a pathway which should be built on and taken forward. This is essential if we are to see a different method of both history teaching and learning, and the development of a new generation of citizens who will be able to live and work in a multicultural environment.

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