

Peace in the minds: UNESCO, mental engineering and education

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Abstract: UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – is often associated with its prestigious world heritage list. For a good reason. The list is undeniable the most popular initiative in the organization's entire history. But UNESCO is of course more than world heritage. It has over the years been preoccupied with a series of what appears to be extremely diverse topics, such as education for global citizenship, literary translation programs, copyright rules, nuclear power research and technical assistance to developing countries. But how exactly are the many different activities related to peace-making and mentality construction and what exact role does education play besides constituting the «e» in the organization's name? In order to answer that, I will bring the reader back to three unpretentious but rather important seminars that took place simultaneously in Paris at the beginning of the organization's existence, because I believe the subsequent projects they initiated embody what the employees at UNESCO initially defined as the organization's core tasks.

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1. Introduction

UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – is often associated with its prestigious world heritage list. For a good reason. The list is undeniable the most popular initiative in the organization's entire history. Whether at Machu Picchu in Peru, on the sea shore of the West Lake in Hangzhou, China, or along the European highways, there is always another monument, inscription or traffic sign indicating the nearby presence of a sight recognized by the international community as a masterpiece of human creative genius or a natural wonder of outstanding value. Every time highlighting the organization's name.

But UNESCO is of course more than world heritage. It has over the years been preoccupied with a series of what appears to be extremely diverse topics, such as

education for global citizenship, literary translation programs, copyright rules, nuclear power research and technical assistance to developing countries. No wonder if it is hard to remember them all and even harder to understand their interrelatedness.

What is supposed to bind them together is a sentence inscribed on a stone wall outside of UNESCO's Headquarters in Paris, featuring the preamble of the organization's constitution: «Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed» (UNESCO, 1945).

But how exactly are the many different activities related to peace-making and mentality construction and what exact role does education play besides constituting the «e» in the organization's name? In order to answer that, I will bring the reader back to three unpretentious but rather important seminars that took place simultaneously in Paris at the beginning of the organization's existence, because I believe the subsequent projects they initiated embody what the employees at UNESCO initially defined as the organization's core tasks. But also because they seem to be the starting point of many of the much wider range of activities that followed. Nevertheless, historians have so far dealt with the three seminars and projects in different ways and treated them as separate entities. The state-of-the-art research is therefore not one, but three different without any interlinkage other than the projects were being initiated by UNESCO. According to this research, the outcome of the first seminar – on UNESCO's race deconstruction initiative – was somewhat successful because it managed to help legislators, court judges and scientists to diminish the power of the concept and to condemn the use of the racial hierarchies, but at the same time proved to have problems reaching the attention of ordinary citizens (Barkan, 1996; Pogliano, 2001; Prins & Krebs, 2007; Brattain, 2007; Hazard, 2012). The second seminar – on creating a unifying concept of mankind – on the other hand, is often characterized as a somewhat a failed enterprise that did not have the impact initially envisaged (Duedahl, 2011; Betts, 2015). The outcome of the last seminar – UNESCO's history textbook project – however, gives us a glimpse of a project with some success because it managed to formulate international rules for textbook changes and to get new textbooks out at least in some countries (Kulnazarova & Ydesen, 2017; White, 2011).

But none of the scholars preoccupied with the history of UNESCO has so far focused on the relation between them. In the following, I will therefore go through the outcome of each of the seminars to show how they were related and inspired each other and to look at their lasting impact, if any, to see how they relates to the organization's apparently very diverse undertakings today.

2. Choosing mental engineering projects

According to American historian Akira Iriye (1997), the dangers of violent nationalism in the 20th century made politicians and scholars throughout the world embrace the spirit of internationalism. But whereas the United Nations ensured peace primarily through military and economic measures, there was also a recognition that peace could only be maintained if it was based on a genuine solidarity between people, and to achieve this end, UNESCO was established in November 1945.

According to Iriye (1997), UNESCO was the single-most important international organization promoting cultural internationalism in the wake of World War II.

Soon after its establishment, the organization established its domicile in what had been the German military headquarters in France during the war, a former hotel in Avenue Kléber near the Arc de Triomphe. It was a symbolic take-over, and the first Director General, the English biologist Julian S. Huxley, housed himself in the German commandant's office at the head of a budget of eight million US dollars and around 800 employees, and launched a series of what I would call mental engineering initiatives. Initiatives that – along the lines of the organization's constitution – were supposed to change people's mindsets in a way that would make them give up on hostile and divisive attitudes and lead them in the direction of global unity (Huxley, 1978, pp. 13-36).

In his philosophical manifesto for the organization, Huxley identified what he called «scientific world humanism» as the organization's overarching principle, and identified the scientific disciplines that he found were more likely to dismantle the idea of inequality and to promote equality. At the forefront were the social sciences, whose practitioners had been active in criticizing nationalism and racism before and during World War II and among whom he would find the people that would help him lead the direction toward a new worldview. A special role was given to educationalists because they would be the key if the organization should have a lasting impact. Only they would be able to make its values become everybody's values (Huxley, 1946, p. 8).

In the months that followed, UNESCO made a significant effort of controlling all branches of science. Within the humanities and social sciences, the organization founded a number of worldwide associations in the fields of history, economics, law, political science and sociology to encourage these disciplines to work in accordance with the ethical standards of the UN. The associations and their internationalization was supported economically in order for them to gather at international conferences, to publish a number of international bibliographies, launching new international journals, establishing common guidelines for the use of concepts, theories and methods, and by contributing financially to the establishment of new humanistic and social science university studies. At the same time, their members were invited to carry out projects or serve as advisors for UNESCO (UNESCO Secretariat, 1949; Platt, 2002, pp. 7-20).

In August 1948, for example, 2,000 psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists from 54 nations met in London during such a UNESCO-supported International Congress on Mental Hygiene. They discussed «Mental Health and World Citizenship», and formed a World Federation for Mental Health supposed to cooperate closely with UNESCO. Its leading figure, the Canadian-American social anthropologist and psychologist Otto Klineberg from Columbia University in New York, was already deeply involved in UNESCO's work by helping Huxley to pinpoint the human tensions that the organizations should deal with and the alternatives to promote (UNESCO, 1948).

But Huxley's agenda almost instantly encountered opposition. The Yugoslav delegates saw it as a right-wing agenda, whereas the US delegates characterized it extremist left-wing, and in a top secret statement, the CIA suggested to President

Harry S. Truman that UNESCO had been infiltrated by communists that were believed to have set up listening posts in the organization's headquarters (Singh, 1988, p. 27)¹.

In November 1948, a hard-pressed Huxley was forced to leave the organization. But the lack of alternative guidelines pushed the employees to adopt a so-called «UNESCO spirit» or «mission civilisatrice» that was very much influenced by Huxley's approach. In that sense Huxley still determined the organization's direction and its many project plans, whereas it was up to his successor as Director-General, the Mexican writer and diplomat, Jaime Torres Bodet, to carry them out. The former Mexican minister, well-known for his educational reforms and effective fight against illiteracy, chose those of Huxley's projects that he thought would have an lasting impact².

3. The three seminars

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in Paris on December 1948, and in the following months, UNESCO managed to prepare what was supposed to be some of its core mental engineering projects, and around the time of the Declaration's first anniversary, from 12-16 December 1949, three seminars took place at the UNESCO House. Jaime Torres Bodet opened the meetings and told the participants that their projects had been carefully chosen to carry forward UNESCO's mission and support the ethical standards of the human rights declaration. He also told the participants that the projects were closely interrelated, and he urged the experts to keep close contact³.

The first meeting consisted of a number of anthropologists and sociologists supposed to deconstruct the concept of «race» so that it was left without a politically usable content. The concept had been a central part of the war rhetoric before and during the War, it had legitimized military interventions and genocide, and was still used to legitimize discrimination, segregation and colonialism. That was possible because physical anthropologist claimed that people could be split in hierarchical categories based on skin color and cranial measurements, so dealing with their divisive theories formed an essential first step toward peacemaking.

The second meeting consisted of historians and archeologists supposed to construct a version of the concept of «mankind» – or «l'humanité» in French – which could serve as a conceptual alternative, which could form the basis of world-mindedness and sincere solidarity between people on a global scale. The experts

¹ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives, Paris (1946). *Preparatory Commission, Executive Committee, 4th Session, PV 6*, p. 4-10, Declassified Documents Reference System // Ohio University (1947). «Evaluation of Communist infiltration of UNESCO. Report. Central Intelligence Agency. Top Secret», 7.2.1947.

² Huxley, Julian // Rice University (1949). Memorandum from Julian Huxley (Former Director-General, UNESCO) to Jaime Torres Bodet (Director-General, UNESCO), 17.1.1949, Box 118, The Julian Sorell Huxley Papers.

³ The speech is carefully cited by a member of the Danish National Commission to UNESCO in Danish National Commission to UNESCO // Danish National Archives (1949). Journal no. 65/50/355, Den Danske UNESCO-nationalkommissions arkiv, private archive no. 1248.

should come up with a plan for the formulation of a history book, the most important ever published and with the stamp of the international community, that highlighted the unity of humanity.

The third consisted of educationalists supposed to come up with ways to disseminate the new view of man by devising a strategy for the revision of textbooks used in schools all over the world, so that UNESCO's viewpoints would become everybody's viewpoints.

4. Deconstructing Race

With regard to the first meeting, UNESCO found that the primary and most important outcome should be a statement endorsed by scientific authorities from around the world and formulated in the spirit that racial hierarchies were a social construct and that the consequences of racial inequality were profound not only in human but also in economic terms⁴.

To formulate and approve a globally agreed statement of this kind, the organization invited a team of ten scientists all of whom were recruited from the marginal group of anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, and ethnographers who perceived the race concept primarily as a social construct. Most of these had at some point either been affiliated with Franz Boas and the cultural anthropologists at Columbia University in New York, or had carried out studies in South America, where certain countries were often cited as examples of how people of all kinds could live peacefully together. Among them were Claude Lévi-Strauss, the French ethnographer from Musée de l'Homme in Paris, and Ashley Montagu, professor of anthropology from Rutgers University, who was already widely known in the U.S. at the time as an outspoken critic of racial inequality. A physical anthropologist by training, he was now invited to represent biological views on the concept of race. Altogether, the ten scholars were expected by UNESCO to come up with «a global scientific consensus on race» (Pogliano, 2001, p. 351).

But right ahead of the seminar, the head of UNESCO's social science department, the Brazilian ethnographer Arthur Ramos – an outspoken critic of racial inequality in South America – suddenly passed away. Ramos had been preparing an outline for the statement to be discussed, and as an emergency measure, Montagu was asked to do the job, and with his sudden intervention in the writing process, the immediate control of the content and the ability to set the agenda slid out of the hands of UNESCO⁵.

Montagu finalized the writing over night at a nearby hotel and presented the outcome at the seminar. The central argument of his draft was in line with UNESCO's idea that mankind belonged to a single species, but in some areas Montagu went further than it had been Ramos' intention. The draft was his attempt to create a single,

⁴ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1949). Activities of UNESCO [29.10.1949], in box 323.1, Statement on Race; UN Archives (1949). Committee of Experts for the Study of Racial Prejudice, SG 76/5/05, Branch Registries 1948-1959, S-0441-0401.

⁵ Angell, Robert C. // UNESCO Archives (1949). Letter from Robert C. Angell to Ashley Montagu, November 28, 1949, in box 323.1, Statement on Race.

universal rejection of the concept of race, which he found scientifically indefensible, and he was convinced that, by discrediting the concept, UNESCO would effectively prevent any racial theories for being used for political purposes in the future.

UNESCO had a number of external people to read the preliminary results, among them Julian Huxley and Otto Klineberg, but also other well-known critics of racial inequality. Its conclusion, however, that race was entirely a social myth made shocking reading for some of them. Huxley in particular was dissatisfied with certain passages that he found too dogmatic or provocative. He suggested that Montagu revised the statement so that the concept of race was not reduced solely to a myth but dealt with the fact that people did at least look different in different parts of the world. If the statement only addressed racial differences that had social or cultural origins and could be dismissed as «pseudo-racial», or if it was too negative in its design, it would not last for long and at worst would damage the reputation of UNESCO⁶.

Montagu promised to make the statement «bomb proof». Meanwhile UNESCO created a new unit entitled the Division for the Study of Race Problems under its social science department. Montagu immediately put himself forward for the new post, but it was given to the Swiss-American ethnographer Alfred Métraux in April 1950. Métraux already knew the organization very well from within and was even described by Julian Huxley as the «UNESCO Man». He knew several of the experts on racial issues through his profession and at more or less the same time his brother became in charge of the daily affairs of the mankind project, and they were therefore in daily contact, could share ideas, updates and scholars that would help the positive outcome of the other⁷.

In July, Montagu's final version was complete. It began by stating that all people belonged to the same biological species. There were indeed several different groups with distinct physical characteristics, but the differences between them were small and insignificant in the context of the overall similarities. From a biological point of view, one could therefore consider a «race» – Montagu added the quotation marks – as a population characterized by certain overlapping features that were associated with the frequency and distribution of hereditary facilities and were a result of geographical or cultural isolation. These differences and their role were often over-estimated and seen as more fundamental than was the case, so that national, cultural, religious, geographic, and linguistic groups had been called «races» on false premises. As a result, the idea of racial superiority was unscientific, and the statement recommended that the race concept was replaced by the concept of «ethnic group». This concept made more sense scientifically, because people gravitated into marriage and procreation on the basis of cultural similarities and

⁶ Huxley, Julian // UNESCO Archives (1950). Letter from Julian Huxley to Robert C. Angell, January 26, 1950, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race.

⁷ Huxley, Julian // Rive University (1949). Letter from Julian Huxley to John Skeaping, May 10, 1949, in Julian Huxley Papers: Box 18; Montagu, Ashley // UNESCO Archives (1950). Letter from Ashley Montagu to Robert C. Angell, February 13, 1950, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race; Angell, Robert C. // US National Archives (1950). Letter from Robert C. Angell to Richard Heindel, February 9, 1950, in box 45, RG 84: Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, France, Paris Embassy.

subjective feelings of belonging to the same culture, which were crucial for the spread of individual genes. This meant that culture steered human biology and not vice versa (UNESCO, 1969a, pp. 30-35).

This *Statement on Race* was published on July 18, 1950 and accompanied by a press release with a headline proclaiming: «No biological justification for race discrimination, say world scientists: Most authoritative statement on the subject'. A second press release, which explained the statement's historical background, declared that «race is less a biological fact than a social myth', while the *UNESCO Courier* promoted the news as «the scientific basis for human unity»⁸.

The first statement on race was undeniably an intellectual landmark, and UNESCO estimated that the arguments legitimizing racial prejudice and racial discrimination would collapse and disappear by themselves as the news spread, the history project launched an alternative identity, and the educationalists made it known to a new generation of world citizens (Banton, 1969, p. 18).

The statement did indeed receive much publicity. An inventory of the press clippings that UNESCO managed to collect in the year 1950 shows that it was mentioned in 133 news articles, 62 in-depth articles and leaders, and in eight major news reports from all over the world. In addition, there was some radio publicity and the distribution of the thousands of copies of the statement itself. «Whenever it is, whatever form it takes, racism is an evil force, and to the extent that UNESCO can kill it by the truth, it will do good', the *New York Times* proclaimed⁹.

Nevertheless, it soon appeared that the environmentalist statement went beyond what mainstream scientists accepted as factual evidence about race, and it could most certainly not be said to represent a universal definition of race at the time. By failing to involve a selection of physical anthropologists – and especially any with a wide reputation – in the preparation of the statement, its authors found that it simply lacked the support of those who considered themselves as the most obvious experts.

The debate caused renewed publicity, and UNESCO later concluded that the «dogme raciste» was one of the most talked-about topics in the news media over the following months. Since its release the statement had been the subject of some 500 news stories, reports, and columns in newspapers. Mainly Western. But it was far from all positive press, and the American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, a staunch supporter of UNESCO's race program, wrote an alarming letter to Alfred Métraux urging the organization to come up with immediate countermeasures, otherwise its work was in danger of being discredited and ridiculed. She also indicated that Montagu exploited the crisis to his own advantage by writing a book about the work on the statement in which he claimed the honour of having composed

⁸ UNESCO Archives (1950). «No biological justification for race discrimination', July 18, 1950, and «UNESCO Launches Major World Campaign against Racial Discrimination', July 19, 1950, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race; UNESCO (1950). *The Scientific Basis for Human Unity: UNESCO Publishes Declaration by World's Scientists*. *UNESCO Courier*, July 6.

⁹ NN (1950, July 19). *The Myth of Race*. *The New York Times*; NN (1950, July 31). *All Human Beings*. *Time*, p. 34; Schneider, Douglas H. // UNESCO Archives (1950-51). Letter from Douglas H. Schneider to Alva Myrdal, October 16, 1950, and letter from Douglas H. Schneider to Max McCullough, January 4, 1951, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race.

it. This work came out in spring 1951 under the title *Statement on Race: By Ashley Montagu*¹⁰.

Torres Bodet and Métraux therefore recognized the need to have the statement revised by assembling a new panel of experts. But it should not just replace the old statement with a new, a move which would give the impression that the organization had a political agenda that was manipulating the scientific facts, and which would undermine its legitimacy. Instead, Métraux asked Montagu to participate in the design of the new statement, even though he had proved difficult to work with. This would give the impression that UNESCO would only be strengthening the existing declaration by providing a «supplement» designed by biologists. Montagu agreed because he wanted to put his stamp on the new statement, but this time Métraux left it to the American geneticist, Professor L.C. Dunn from Columbia University, to formulate the outcome (Brattain, 2007, p. 1398)¹¹.

The other experts on the panel were, like Dunn, all renowned scientists, and in order to make sure that the second statement would not differ too much from the first, UNESCO clearly stated this time that the aim of the statement was to be the foundation of a campaign against «racism» and the abatement of «racist» ideas by the propagation of truth in the form of the findings of science. On that basis the 12 scholars met in Paris in June 1951, and as expected, there was substantial disagreement between them. By December 1951, Dunn had incorporated the many comments. The main conclusion of the first statement was retained since the experts agreed that all people had the same origin and were fundamentally equal, but on other issues the new statement seemed rather vague, since the intention was to make it both politically and scientifically watertight this time. For example, it did not make much use of the race concept. On the other hand, it did not reject the concept and acknowledged that it did make sense to divide humanity into three main races, black, yellow and white, as long as the division only was claimed to hold true for physical and not for mental differences (UNESCO, 1969b, pp. 36-43).

The second statement was a clear retreat from the first since it came up with a way to retain race as a meaningful category, which then received official approval from UNESCO. But at the same time the concept was defined in a non-racist way by rejecting the notion that mental traits could be used in classifying races, which was a reinforcement of the first statement. In that way the concept of race lost its potential to legitimize racial discrimination and could form the basis of UNESCO's efforts to combat «the evil of racism» (Shapiro, 1952, p. 363).

The main conclusions were immediately leaked to the press, so that UNESCO could take into account any criticisms before releasing the statement. At the same time, it was circulated for comment among some one hundred scholars to ensure that they could familiarize themselves with the content. This turned out to be a highly effective strategy. UNESCO received several letters, most of which accepted the

¹⁰ Mead, Margaret // UNESCO Archives (1950). Letters from Margaret Mead to Alfred Métraux, November 6 and November 9, 1950, in box 323.12 A 187, Manifestations of Racial & Religious Prejudices – Report for UN; Montagu, Ashley (1951). *Statement on Race*. New York: Henry Schuman.

¹¹ Métraux, Alfred // UNESCO Archives (1951). Letters from Alfred Métraux to Ashley Montagu, March 2 and March 22, 1951, in box 323.12 A 187, Manifestations of Racial & Religious Prejudices – Report for UN.

statement without comment, though there were others that were bitterly ironic or even aggressive. Métraux reproduced the objections in a special supplementary chapter in the printed version of the statement. This way the world could see what kind of dangers it was still facing¹².

Some of the comments were incorporated, and in April 1952 the final *Statement on the Nature of Race Differences* was published. The statement came out in several languages, and Métraux made sure that it was reproduced in full in the British journal *Man* as well as in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* and in the French *L'Anthropologie*¹³.

But due to recommendation from the educationalists, it was clear that UNESCO had to go further than simply reviewing the scientific fact of race. The content needed popularization to educate the public and in a form that could be used in class rooms all over the world, and the members of the history of mankind project were also encouraged to use it as frame of their writings. The following years UNESCO therefore launched three series – *The Race Question and Modern Science*, *The Race Question and Modern Thought*, and *Race and Society* – to combat racial inequality. Each of the series consisted of a number of small pamphlets written by leading scholars. Including Claude Lévi-Strauss» *Race and History* from 1952, which sought to avoid an interpretation of cultural differences as an expression of biological inequality, seeing it rather as an expression of diversity developed under the influence of historical events (Lévi-Strauss, 1952).

Métraux claimed in 1952 that UNESCO's pamphlets on race were the organization's best-selling publications, and today Lévi-Strauss» work is still considered to be the best-selling book of the organization's entire history. Nevertheless, the pamphlets came out mainly in French and English, and for some of them also in a few other languages, and they did not seem to be very effective for educational purposes in the short run. They had problems reaching the «man in the street» in most of the member countries. This was because they were written in foreign languages for most people but also, as a study from New York University showed, because they were too difficult to understand. The reader required at least a high school degree to grasp the contents (Saenger, 1955; Freedman, 1954)¹⁴.

Maybe it was naively optimistic to think that UNESCO could resolve conflicts and tragedies on a global scale only by disseminating the knowledge of Western researchers. The publications, however, proved their ability to infiltrate national education systems in several countries, because they were written by recognized scientists, were discussed and used in leading scientific journals, and represented a steady bombardment of publications that at least physical anthropologists had to deal with. In the early 1950s the pamphlets represented a substantial proportion of all the

¹² Métraux, Alfred // UNESCO Archives (1952). Letter from Alfred Métraux to Ernest Beaglehole, February 1, 1952, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race.

¹³ Métraux, Alfred // UNESCO Archives (1952). Alfred Métraux to J.B.S. Haldane, April 15, 1952, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race.

¹⁴ Métraux, Alfred // UNESCO Archives (1952). Letter from Alfred Métraux to Harry L. Shapiro, February 19, 1952, in box 323.12 A 102, Statement on Race.

new titles published in the field of anthropology, and in the late 1950s the pamphlets had been translated into 13 languages and printed in more than 300,000 copies.

Slowly the discipline of anthropology changed its content. The number of anthropologists that based the career on physical measurements or family studies was reduced, and those that were left began to characterize themselves as physical anthropologists and no longer as anthropologists. Their subject became a sub-discipline. According to the historian Robert N. Proctor, as a result of UNESCO's authority as a worldwide organization the campaign against racism worked so effectively that the race concept was left without a politically useful content. Now even paleoanthropologists could only refer to the human diversity of the prehistoric man with a certain amount of anxiety (Proctor, 2005, p. 253).

Conversely, ethnographers and cultural anthropologists grew in numbers and espoused the concept of anthropology as a science providing clear evidence that culture rather than race was becoming the unifying concept in mainstream anthropology (Lévi-Strauss, 1967, p. 7).

5. Reconstructing Mankind

A move from national arrogance and Eurocentrism to worldviews was highly sought after in a number of UN member states in the wake of World War II and in the era of Decolonization. Therefore universalism and the notion of «one world» or a standardized «world civilization» came to overshadow the idea of cultural diversity as the foundation of post-war inter-governmental relations in the beginning (Ranasinghe, 1969, p. xvi).

The second attempt of peace-keeping through mental engineering was therefore to promote a universalist concept – the concept of «mankind» – by launching an authoritative world history without particular geographical orientations. This was intended to provide a profound understanding of the interdependence of various cultures and to accentuate their contributions to the common cultural heritage, thus disarming history by constructing a sense of global unity.

To come up with an idea of how to promote the concept and write its history, Huxley had invited his old friend, Professor Joseph Needham, an eccentric biochemist from the University of Cambridge, to make the first sketch. Needham had been in charge of British scientific assistance to China, was deeply interested in Chinese culture and history and had published a book on the history of Chinese technology, in which he demonstrated the enormous and underestimated importance of Chinese inventions on developments in other parts of the world. Now he would use this knowledge to formulate his version of world history (Needham, 1945).

Needham found that the principal factor promoting historically significant social change was contact with strangers possessing new and unfamiliar skills, and on this basis he made a plan for a series of volumes on the «history of mankind» that stressed cultural interchange – as an antidote to the kind of history taught in many schools focusing on military and political events and based on ethnocentric biases and preconceptions. The volumes should be written by the world's leading historians and archaeologists and eventually become an authoritative work – the most important history book ever written. But the work should by no means stand

as a monument in itself, it should be used as a source for classroom textbooks for schools in all countries, so that it could contribute to UNESCO's mission of education for peace (Huxley, 1970, p. 54)¹⁵.

Ahead of the meeting, numerous scholars were involved to formulate an improved outline of the project. Among them the French historian Lucien Febvre, Professor at the Collège de France, who was already a living legend among fellow historians for his journal commonly known as the *Annales*, with its emphasis on social rather than political and diplomatic themes, and for his own agenda of organizing the past in accordance with present needs¹⁶.

Febvre stressed that the History of Mankind project should in his eyes attempt truly to integrate all cultures in the new world civilization. Thus the final plan wiped out cultural hierarchies and emphasized the «exchanges» between all cultures. To ensure this global approach, the work was to be written by an entire group of specialists representing all continents. Huxley, the evolutionist, insisted however, that the interactions should only be chosen when they indicated a direction that pointed forward towards greater unification and integration. The plan's «universal character and the factors which it will take into account will invest it with a new meaning and a new scope,» Huxley concluded, fully content with this outcome¹⁷.

In December 1949, the group of experts finally met. It consisted of a number of leading historians and archaeologists of which not many are not known today except the two leading members, Febvre and Needham, who guided the direction. They came out with a plan, where the overarching theme should be «the history of peaceful relations» based on the conviction that communication and exchange of knowledge, products and values between cultures had occurred for centuries, that all cultures had contributed, and that only cultural loans could explain the sudden appearance of large arrogant civilizations.

The scholars imagined a work consisting of six volumes of a more encyclopaedic appearance. Two of the volumes should clarify «everything that had been subject to circulation» such as technical knowledge, systems of ideas, beliefs, material objects, animals etc. «From that will emerge the image of a moving humanity since its origins, travelling permanently through a perpetual series of transcontinental migrations». Two other volumes would be divided geographically in order to see what each of the continents had contributed to or received from other parts of the world, starting with Asia. «From this picture would emerge the idea that separations in the world are mere illusions, and that the earth never ceases to diversify, to enrich, to mutually fertilize with streams of peaceful exchanges»¹⁸.

¹⁵ Huxley, Julian // UNESCO Archives (1948). Letter from Julian Huxley to L.H. Frank, 3.9.1948, 2.31 (2) – Planning of the work. UNESCO Secretariat. Natural Sciences Section (NS). File 9.3., SCHM 8: Huxley, Julian // Rice University (1950). Letter from Julian Huxley to F.J.H. Stratton, 5.9.1950, Box 19, The Julian Sorell Huxley Papers.

¹⁶ Huxley, Aldous // Rice University (1948). «Comments by Aldous Huxley', October 1948, Box 118, The Julian Sorell Huxley Papers.

¹⁷ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1949). «Draft Document for the General Conference. Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind', p. 1, 2.31 (1) – Planning of the work before the 1st Meeting of the Committee of Experts, SCHM 7.

¹⁸ Febvre, Lucien // Rice University (1949). «Rapport de M. Lucien Febvre', Box 118, The Julian

Within a few days they held a further 10 meetings to finalize the plan, and the members easily found a common understanding which included an opposition towards strictly positivistic, evolutionistic and Eurocentric approaches, and throughout the meetings terms like «culture contacts», «interrelations of cultures», «interchange between peoples» and «cultural exchanges and transmissions» were used frequently in the spirit of Febvre's improvements.¹⁹

Soon the various national commissions also welcomed the plan, especially the fact that «cultural exchanges» were going to be the central pillar of the entire work. The objections centred rather on whether the results would justify the great expenses or related to details that were supposed to take national demands and wishes into account, all of which Febvre characterized as the result of «the obstinacy with which so many representatives of so-called «European» or «Western» civilization regard the latter – their own – as the only true civilization»²⁰.

The Project was approved by the general conference and in December 1950 the new International Commission for the Writing of the History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind met in Paris. The American member, Professor Ralph E. Turner from Yale University immediately insisted on taking the floor. During the war, Turner had written *The Great Cultural Traditions* in which he had developed his own ideas on the history of mankind and he was thus the only member of the commission, who had a working knowledge of the task ahead.

Turner proposed making an entirely new plan for the project, and the other committee members reluctantly agreed to give this a try. Turner worked all night and returned next morning with his plan. It included a strict timetable for the elaboration of the six volumes without changing much at the heart of the Needham-Febvre plan with its emphasis on cultural exchanges and its global scope. There was one noteworthy exception. Turner reintroduced Huxley's idea of a clear chronological line of development from prehistory to the present time, which through a selective progress had reached its preliminary climax in – as the French representative, Charles Morazé, bitterly described it – «the American way of life» (Morazé, 2007, p. 181)²¹.

The atmosphere turned aggressive, and the session was postponed, but Turner, who obviously had flair for the practical work, managed to get the post of chairman of the editorial committee to ensure that the editors and authors followed his schedule, while Morazé got support for his idea of publishing an additional journal with Febvre as the editor (Morazé, 2007, pp. 181-182).

In the early days of July 1953 the first issue of the *Journal of World History*, *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale* or *Cuadernos de Historia Mundial*, to give it the names of the three editions, hit the streets – including abstracts in German, Russian and

Sorell Huxley Papers.

¹⁹ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1949). Summary records 12.-16.12.1949, «2.633 (1). Committee of Experts 12-16 Dec. 1949», SCHM 23.

²⁰ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1950). 2.324 – Comments on the Plan, 1950, SCHM 8 and Report 5C/PRG/2, SCHM 7, 2.225.

²¹ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1951). «Plan of the History of Mankind», «2.632 (4). Working Papers 1-6», SCHM 24.

Arabic, and in the following years Febvre printed about 1,000 pages of original contributions annually, published on a quarterly basis, and made it possible for researchers of all kinds to help shape discussions on the design of the plan.

Several contemporary scientific authorities contributed. Among them were the American anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, the German historian Werner Conze, the Polish philosopher and sociologist Florian Znaniecki, and the British-American historian, orientalist and political commentator Bernard Lewis. In fact, the scholarly quality of many of the first contributions to the *Journal of World History* proved to be very high.

But within the commission two members set the agenda: Turner and Morazé. Both were energetic, eloquent and proud historians, and these similarities brought them onto an increasingly confrontational course. Turner's enthusiasm for the project and immense knowledge of early history on a global scale was a thorn in the side of Morazé, because Turner's arguments often proved to be decisive when giving the volumes their definitive form and selecting the editors and authors. It was, for instance, Turner's idea to avoid national biases by appointing authors who were experts on periods that were different from the heyday of their own culture. This meant planning for the first volume, dealing with prehistory, to be written by scholars from United Kingdom, while the following five in chronological order would be written by people from Italy, France, USA, Peru and India. It was also at Turner's initiative that the commission was enlarged to comprise additional members, to widen its geographical and cultural representation – which had a positive impact on the project and gave it the much needed and enthusiastic support of countries like India, Pakistan and Iraq (Huxley, 1970, p. 70)²².

But Turner's ideas were never adopted without intense clashes with Morazé. Each and every time these two men met there were thunderstorms. Turner's occasional outbursts of temper when his ideas were opposed soon became legendary and gained plenty of attention within UNESCO House. The most dramatic meetings attracted so many spectators from all parts of the organization that even its great hall could not hold them all, and people from outside were eventually banned from entering the doors to listen (Morazé, 2007, p. 182).

But what most radically changed the whole enterprise, was the involvement of the USSR. Until the death of Joseph Stalin in March 1953, the Soviets had refused to have anything to do with UNESCO, but the Khrushchev administration inaugurated a reappraisal of USSR's foreign policy priorities and the country joined the organization in April 1954 (Gaiduk, 2007, p. 282).

That was bad news for Turner, who certainly wanted the commission to be international but never missed a chance of depicting politicized Marxist history-writing as the image of what the History of Mankind project was not. Now he feared that these historians would ask to join the commission, which they did²³.

²² UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1952). «The Seventh Session of the General Conference of UNESCO», 18.12.1952, «0.30», SCHM 2.

²³ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1954). «Fifth Plenary Meeting [UNESCO]», 15.11.1954, «0.30», SCHM 2.

The Soviet representative, Alexandre A. Zvorikine [Зворыкин Анатолий Алексеевич] who was a professor at the Institute of History at the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow, arrived in Paris in January 1956 and was – despite Turner’s objections – appointed Vice-President of the commission. Zvorikine proved to be a pleasant man, liked by all members of the commission but, of course, very much influenced by the system that had sent him. He explained that he and his Soviet colleagues had already been working on a series of detailed, in-depth comments on the plan, and he intended to return to Paris as soon as possible, at his own expense, to present them²⁴.

But the Soviet scientists would soon manage to remove the shine from the miracle of a truly international history of mankind that the commission was in the process of compiling. In fall 1956, Turner received the first full manuscript of one of the volumes. The commission circulated it to their members and to consultants all over the world and to the UNESCO National Commissions, from where the authors then would receive comments that would be incorporated before the volume was prepared for publication in September 1957. But this time the Soviet comments were so voluminous that they verged on the absurd, and, since several of the eastern European countries that had also been included in the work sent in alterations on a similar scale, the commission realized that there was no way that the authors could possibly comply with the deadline, and the commission had to go to UNESCO to ask for additional funds²⁵.

The field of history had now taken on a tangible reality as a major political battlefield of the Cold War, where the different sides of the Iron Curtain fought over the correct interpretation of their common past. The whole thing made Turner turn ill and with him out of the picture the Soviet objections to the manuscripts reached their culmination point. This happened when the commission received the final manuscript for Volume 6, covering the 20th century. Only a few days after the manuscript had been handed over to the Soviet scholars, Zvorikine and his colleagues returned a comprehensive critical review – a total of 500 pages of objections to the treatment of Communism, of technological developments in the USSR, of the Soviet economy and political system – not to mention a very detailed guideline for the re-writing of the entire manuscript²⁶.

It was difficult to see how to reach agreement. For how should the concept of democracy be dealt with when, according to Soviet historians, it only expressed «the will of the economically and politically dominant class»?²⁷ And could the concept of «colonialism» be used only about Western phenomena, or could it also be used

²⁴ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1956). Letter from Paulo E. de Berrêdo Carneiro to Julian Huxley, 31.1.1956, «2.624 (1). Dr. Julian Huxley’, SCHM 17,

²⁵ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1957). «Notes made by G.S. Métraux in the course of several meetings held with Mr. R. Williams of Little, Brown & Co. (February-March 1957)’, «0.27 & 0.28’, SCHM 1.

²⁶ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1961). «Resolution adoptée par le Bureau au Cours de sa XVème reunion’, 27.-28.2.1961, «0.30’, SCHM 2 and letter from Julian Huxley to Paulo E. de Berrêdo Carneiro, 17.4.1961, «2.624 (2). Dr. Julian Huxley’, SCHM 17.

²⁷ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1963). Notes on the revised manuscript of volume VI, april 1963, p. 17, «0.27 & 0.28’, SCHM 1.

about Tsarist Russia, or the huge investments in other countries made by American companies?

The American author-editor felt obliged to incorporate into her text notes to her Soviet colleagues» notes, which they tried to prevent, and when they failed they demanded space for notes to the author's notes²⁸.

The volumes only managed to get done due to the fact that the daily management was in the hands of the Swiss-American historian Guy S. Métraux, the brother of Alfred Métraux from the race project and just as efficient as him. In June 1963 the first volume was published simultaneously in London and New York, marking the first achievement of an international endeavour without parallel in history. To UNESCO and the members of the commission it was a great relief, and even more so as it turned out that the reviewers treated the volume kindly.

Behind the scenes the commission was still awaiting half of the final manuscripts, of which one was way behind schedule. »Every time I tried to satisfy one critic, I would dissatisfy another,» one of the authors told. «So I plead incompetence» (Allardyce, 1990, p. 34). Only in 1965 was the second volume released, and this was accompanied by positive reviews in some newspapers, but this time also by rather more critical comment. This was particularly the case in the influential *New York Times*, whose reviewer characterized the volume as a history with no soul, a mistaken enterprise with a lot of distracting notes. «The total effect is of an encyclopaedia gone berserk, or resorted by a deficient computer,» the reviewer claimed, concluding that it was altogether «a great story left untold» (Plumb, 1965). The review surprised the members of the commission, and, according to Métraux, some American scholars regarded it as «one of the most savage reviews ever published in the *New York Times*»²⁹. The review had the immediate and negative consequence that a number of publishers in various countries withdrew from their initial agreement to publish the entire work in their respective languages.

In the following years volume by volume was published, and the criticism grew no less trenchant as time went, despite the fact that reviewers could never agree on alternative approaches to the writing of a global history of mankind. Nevertheless the commission managed to have the volumes published in translation in several languages. In 1967 the first volume in French appeared, and one year later came the first versions in Serbo-Croat, Slovene, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, Dutch and Japanese. The last volume of the *History of Mankind* was published in 1976.

6. Dissemination of Human Rights and World History

The last seminar was officially a meeting of experts on the teaching of history. They should come up with a strategy to provide history school textbooks that would be able to promote the outcome of the two other meetings.

²⁸ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1965). Letters from Guy S. Métraux to Paulo E. de Berrêdo Carneiro, 18.3. and 30.3.1965, «0.29', SCHM 2.

²⁹ UNESCO // UNESCO Archives (1965). Memo from Guy S. Métraux to the members of the International Commission, SCHM, 5.10.1965, «0.29', SCHM 2.

Education had right from the beginning been at the very core of UNESCO's work, in fact the idea of creating the organization in the first place was developed by ministers of education, and it was believed that everything it ever produced had to be disseminated through the educational system in order to have an impact. A couple of UNESCO-sponsored conferences and seminars was therefore held at an early stage, most noteworthy a summer seminar on «Education for International Understanding» in Sèvres near Paris in July 1947 with the participation of 100 teachers, scholars and school administrators. The seminars were at that stage seen as the way to most efficiently spreading ideas on education for living in a world community to the member states.

UNESCO also helped setting up a number of new organizations such as the World Organization for Early Childhood Education, the International Federation of Children's Communities and the International Universities Bureau, and had published a guideline, *Teaching about the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies* in 1948, which urged teachers to develop «a sense of belonging to the United Nations and of pioneering in the development of a world community» (p. 8) as well as *A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding* in 1949, which for the first time presented a set of criteria for the revision and writing of textbooks with the aim of enhancing international understanding and which also offered advice for setting up international textbook committees (White, 2011; Pingel, 2010, p. 11).

Geography and history books attracted special attention. History, because the books often reflected the positive self-image of the nation and negative counter-images of the neighbouring countries, while geography books delivered an even longer series of negative, ethnocentric counter-images. As far as history was concerned, the handbook recommended that all future textbooks were improved according to the following standards: 1 Authors should emphasize the history of civilization and to a lesser degree political and military history. 2. Textbooks should be written in a way that could be easily understood by children. 3. Textbooks should not only be about a nation's heroes; also great men of other nations should be included, such as outstanding inventors and great humanists. 4. The Orient and Africa should not be ignored; history books should aim at being global. 5. All new history books should be submitted to foreign historians for critical review, and the values and ethical standards of the United Nations should be the very foundation of any future textbook.

The initial work had in other words, been carried out already, and what went on at the Paris seminar was more a general debate about history teaching, an opportunity to see what went on at the two other seminars and to discuss how to implement their findings, as well as reviewing the outline of three new UNESCO pamphlets. One that would provide guidelines for the teaching of young people on the declaration of human rights written by American educationalist Alan Griffin, one that would become a teachers handbook for the teaching of human rights formulated by the American education professors and human rights pioneers Frederick Nolde and Howard Wilson, and one on teaching world history produced by French-Swiss educator Marie-Thérèse Maurette. Its overall purpose was however to develop ways

to changing the mind-set of teachers and pupils and to reach a wider audiences (Maurette, 1950)³⁰.

The early development of the educational activities at UNESCO is most likely the reason why the seminar is hardly mentioned in any of the books and articles about the organization's educational undertakings. It is nevertheless a vital meeting in the sense that the participants here received a first-hand impression of the topics vital for UNESCO's *raison d'être* in the following years, and which were expected to be taken into account and implemented as part of future textbook revisions. It was for the same time followed by a series of new seminars initiated by the organization where historians, geographers and educationalists of various nations met and went through their own or other countries' textbooks in order to improve them in accordance with UNESCO's guidelines. That was for example the outcomes of the UNESCO Conference on History Textbooks in Brussels in 1950, where Belgian textbook writers, teachers and publishing houses agreed to review and revise all the country's history textbooks.

One historian in particular, Professor Georg Eckert at the Kant Academy in Braunschweig, stands out. In him, the organization had a man specifically committed to reconciliation between Germany and its former war adversaries, and in 1951, he established the Institut für Schulbuchverbesserung – International Institute for Textbook Improvement – in Braunschweig, and would in the next many years be preoccupied on a daily day basis with such tasks in close cooperation with UNESCO. He organized talks with scholars from Germany's neighboring countries and former enemies about textbooks and the influence they had on international understanding, and that led for example to the Franco-German Agreement on Controversial Issues in European History of 1951 and the establishment of the Franco-German Textbook Commission that held its first meeting of German and French teachers the following year. In each and every improved textbook, racial hierarchies were deliberately wiped out and a global mindset introduced instead, which almost always turned out to be easiest with the geography books, whereas a lot negotiations about national differences had to go ahead of each revision of the national history textbooks (Pingel, 2010, pp. 64-65)³¹.

UNESCO held a series of simultaneous textbook seminars up until 1953, when the organization suddenly had to cut its budget for textbook revision, recognizing the problem of «unresolvable differences» between East and West that made it impossible to establish a set of criteria for improvements agreed by both sides in the Cold War. That paved the way for Eckert's private textbook institute, which took on the daunting task, and in the following years it held a large number of bilateral and multilateral conferences in quick succession, sponsored partly by UNESCO. The gatherings made it possible for geographers and historians from various countries to sit on bilateral textbook commissions that aimed to filter out all references to either

³⁰ Maurette, M. // UNESDOC (1949). «The teaching of history from an international point of view. A draft outline for a UNESCO pamphlet on the teaching of world history, as a basis for discussions at the meeting of experts to be held at the UNESCO House, 12 to 16 December, 1949'.

³¹ German National Commission to UNESCO // Bundesarchiv (1953). Referat 5.3.1953, Deutsches UNESCO-Kommission, Übergreifende Angelegenheiten, B336 / 403 (Bd. 1, Vollzugsausschuss – Protokolle, Arbeitsunterlagen, 1950-1959).

country as «the enemy» and made Eckert the world's leading proponent for textbook revisions and campaigns for international understanding through cooperation on textbooks and history teaching³².

Another important outcome of UNESCO educational dissemination efforts was the formation of a series of UNESCO clubs in Japan and model schools in Germany from 1951. For a school to become a model school, it had to change its curricula and base its teaching around knowledge about foreign countries, peoples and cultures while its values should be based the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It should also promote the work done by the UN and its specialized agencies.

Schools in Hamburg, Bremen, Hannover, Hofgeismar, Cologne, and Schondorf (Ammersee) in Germany were among the first willing to join, and in the following years the schools worked closely together with the German Commission for UNESCO and Eckert's textbook institute. These model schools were obvious places to actually implement new teaching methods and materials, and places where new textbooks would easily get through the school boards and be used on a daily basis. The schools were relatively few, but grew in numbers, and spread to other countries and resulted in UNESCO's larger Associated Schools Project in Education for International Understanding from 1961 and onwards (Kulnazarova & Duedahl, 2017).

But there were also other important outcomes. In 1952, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru warned the UN that Asian and African nations might eventually withdraw from the organization if they were not given more attention, and the Asian-African bloc went on to demonstrate its potential strength in 1955 at a famous meeting in Bandung in Indonesia, together representing 1.5 billion inhabitants, and forced UNESCO to undertake real measures improving the «mutual appreciation» in the context of the rapidly decolonizing in the Asian region in particular. That led to the so-called East-West Major Project launched by the organization two years later and which went on for ten years. The Project included hundreds of different activities, many of which were not directly overseen by UNESCO, but by the national commissions or various NGO's around the world. It included scholarly exchanges, social science research, exhibitions and radio broadcasts and a huge translation program of Eastern and Western literature with 300 pieces of translated literature as the direct outcome.

But at the same time, a series of trans-continental textbook conferences was held, which brought the imperial powers and newly independent states together in a multilateral environment to discuss their respective presentations of East and West in school textbooks. Particularly meetings held in Paris in 1956 and Tokyo in 1958 are of great interest because of their focus on the legacy of colonialism in educational texts examined in the context of East-West reconciliation. Textbook surveys made by the national commissions on the representation of East and West showed numerous examples of inaccuracy, bias and national prejudice. For example, Italian textbooks» history of India was generally confined to the history of British colonization, while in

³² German National Commission to UNESCO // Bundesarchiv. Deutsches UNESCO-Kommission, Übergreifende Angelegenheiten, Dokumentation, Frieden und Menschenrechte, B336 / 279 (Bd. 1, Schulbuchausschuss. Schriftverkehr, 1950-1961) and B336 / 280 (Bd. 2, Schulbuchausschuss. Schriftverkehr, 1963-1976,

other textbooks, the history of China began with the entry of the Western powers. The conclusion was that Asia was given very little attention, and that the teaching practices appeared Eurocentric. In the following years, a great deal was done to improve the textbooks. Eckert got himself involved with representatives from Japan, India and China to change the content of Western and mainly West German textbooks, and other members states did something similar, which had an impact on the content of the curricula in many countries – for example in Sweden and Japan to mention two of the countries where recent impact studies have been carried out. Not to forget Mexico and Brazil, where separate commissions for the revision of textbooks were set up initiated and inspired by the leading UNESCO figureheads Jaime Torres Bodet and Paulo de Berredo Carneiro – as well as bilateral commissions, like the one including scholars from the US and Mexico. That tendency did not grow smaller as equally large «major projects» were launched for Africa and Latin America (Wong, 2008; Nygren, 2011; Kulnazarova & Ydesen, 2017, pp. 127-145)³³.

At least 42 countries» curriculum and textbooks were revised under influence by UNESCO and then that number only includes the countries that implemented the United Nations and its specialized organizations in its programs, but the image is most likely the same if one made a similar overview within the field of history. The number can be interpreted as many or few depending on the eyes of the beholder, but there seem after all to be a clear pattern: more economically developed countries most clearly followed the international guidelines. Many of the newly independent countries, on the other hand, tended to be more interested in fundamental education, adult education and technical assistance (Rauner, 1999, p. 99).

7. Conclusion

The article looks at three seminars that took place at UNESCO House in Paris in December 1949 at the first anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Historians have so far dealt with the seminars in different ways and as separate entities. This article look at them as what they were supposed to be: seminars reflecting UNESCO's peace-making mission and mental engineering approach as a whole. An entirety supposed to deconstruct the divisive concept of race in order to make politically impotent, to construct a vision of mankind to make it the new unifying concept, and to disseminate the new view of humanity via the educational system.

The are many ways one can evaluate the outcome of these meetings:

If one look at the immediate impact, the race project came out with two at the time very influential statements on race, which changed the way scholars used the concept, and which led to the concept being wiped out as a meaningful category including in all new school textbooks. The mankind project instantly led to a plan for the production of a series of history books, while the textbook seminar led to more seminars on where scholars met beyond borders and began to talk and find a common understanding.

³³ UNESCO Archives (1956) // Committee of Experts on the Treatment of Asian Cultures in Western Textbooks and Teaching Material, UNESCO House, 2-12 May 1956, WS/026.131, 1956, 6.

If one look at the impact after a generation's time, the race statements had been replaced by two updated versions that were referred to in American court decisions to declare those laws unconstitutional that prohibited segregation in public schools and banned mixed marriages, and they formed the basis of a UN convention of 1965 that wiped out discrimination in national legislation as soon as it was implemented by the member states and which to this very day represents the principle legal text against racism and racial discrimination in UN member states. The History of Mankind Project had finally been published but barely have a fraction of the impact initially envisioned, and rather stood as a monument of the first trial of nationalism and Euro-centrism after World War II and as the expression of how far it was possible to extend a Euro-centric view in an era of burdensome ideological divisions and a time when Western colonialism was still very much both a political reality and a relevant frame of reference for the way historians looked at the world. This initiative in itself was therefore not nearly as successful as the transformation of the race project. On the other hand, however, it had inspired a number of scholars and to initiate similar initiatives. The process and the project's focus on «cultural exchanges and transmissions» for example inspired other historians, not least from Chicago, and the post-war trend they initiated of writing global history. The textbook improvement initiative at that time proved much more efficient, both due to UNESCO and to a very active German scholar that had taken over whenever the organization had to give up on its efforts during the Cold War, but also via the creation of a series of UNESCO model schools and via its major projects of international understanding.

If one look at the lasting impact, the race project is nowadays seen in various forms and with the purpose of combatting discrimination, but mostly as a worldview that has become more or less mainstream and to which the project helped giving birth. The History of Mankind later came out in a new and updated version, but even more importantly, the work was followed by several others, supporting the United Nation's decolonization practice through a kind of «mental decolonization», rehabilitating countries and continents by giving them a place in the history of humanity. The most noteworthy being the work initiated in 1966 as a response to the lack of information on Africa in the *History of Mankind*, which resulted in the *General History of Africa* published in the English edition from 1981 to 1993 in eight volumes. UNESCO's series of area studies also include the important multi-volumes, *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (1992ff), *General History of the Caribbean* (1997ff.), *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture* (1998ff) and the *General History of Latin America* (1999-2009). But maybe even more important, UNESCO used the mankind project to form its so-called «World Heritage List» (1972) which is probably UNESCO's most widely known activity today. The textbook institute in Braunschweig still works even though its involvement is no longer the same and so urgent as it was in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Meanwhile education for international understanding has turned into education for global citizenship and the model schools into the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, which today consists of more than 11,500 member schools in 182 countries. Schools that now carries though the dissemination of the organization's values.

If one wants to get a better understanding of how these three different and rather small seminars were able to infiltrate the members states and have an impact

on their legislation, court decisions and educational systems, one will have to take into account that UNESCO in its first formative years, in the immediate slipstream of World War, was not only an immensely popular organization, but at the same time had almost a monopoly on scientific, cultural and educational internationalism. That can explain the prominence of the projects and the path dependency of all subsequent initiatives, in the very same way as scepticism, UNESCO's loss of prominence and the range of competing organizations and initiatives in more recent years can explain why the initiatives are almost forgotten and why it is difficult to understand how the organization's later undertakings are interrelated. The efforts have after all gone in many different directions and several projects have been launched at later stages as responses to new demands. But when all comes to all they are still bound together by UNESCO's mental engineering mission – the one carved into the stone wall at UNESCO's headquarters – to create peace in the minds of men and women.

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