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Contents

Miroslaw Patalon, Tolerance and Education .........................................................3

L. W. Hessel, Religion as cause and critic of intolerance.................................6

Kate Craddy, Remembering the “Other”. Sites of Memory in Poland and Rwanda.................................................................................................................12

Musa Adesina Abdu-Raheem, The Importance of Education to Curb Violence among Muslims. Nigerian Situation as a Case Study....................20

Norman Richardson, Education for Religious Tolerance. The Impossible Dream?.............................................................................................................39

Monika Szostakowska, Integrated Education in Northern Ireland..............54

Lydia G. Lysiuk, Helen A. Birukevich, Self-Consciousness As the Psychological Factor of Tolerance............................................................64

Maciej Domanski, Is Tolerance Always the Best Thing in Ethnic Relations? Reflections Based on Research among Polish Immigrants in Canada........75

Gideon Greif, The Meaning of Auschwitz for our Generation and for the next Generations.......................................................................................88
TOLERANCE AND EDUCATION

Edited by
Mirosław Patalon
On 15-16 November 2007, the University of Gdansk in Poland hosted an international conference on Tolerance and Education, dedicated to the issues of tolerance, cultural openness, minority rights, ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. Over 80 speakers took part in this event, among them 20 from abroad (Great Britain, USA, Canada, the Netherlands, Sweden, Israel, Bulgaria and Belarus). The conference organisers, disturbed by the rise of fundamentalist beliefs, attitudes and sociopolitical movements, wanted to discuss the mechanisms which have led in the past to intolerance, xenophobia and anti-Semitism, in order to recognise and oppose them in the present sociopolitical climate.

The papers and following discussions focused on issues of tolerance in education, among them:
- how to educate today’s generation in the spirit of respect for diversity;
- how to influence the processes which, uncontrolled, can lead to the damaging exclusion of one group by another;
- how to promote openness and respect for others of different persuasions, traditions, religions, nationalities, ethnicities;
- how to teach and educate for responsibility, to see each neighbour who differs from us not as a threat, but as a chance to develop our own identity.

An evening was dedicated to seeing the historic sites of the city of Gdansk, especially those connected with the Solidarity movement, which is a great example of the fight for freedom and tolerance. We hope that this conference in Gdansk, which received wide interest from scholars, students and the local media, will be a benefit for the quality of social life in Poland. A book containing the papers of Polish participants of the conference will be issued by the University of Gdansk Publishing House this year. Here the articles of some international participants of the conference are presented.

Mirosław Patalon
Tolerance and intolerance are matters of life and death in a globalising world. Tolerance is usually considered as a virtue, on which the survival of human civilisation depends; intolerance is seen as its opposite, the root cause of strife and war. But tolerance is only a halfway house; halfway between acceptance and rejection. Acceptance involves risk; rejection involves loss.

Western, substance-based, philosophies interpret experiences of tolerance and intolerance as accidental to some underlying self-sufficient reality, variously called soul, mind, self, ego etc. Relations are considered as secondary properties, and a relation like intolerance is justified as a means of protection of the underlying, most precious entity. For relation-oriented philosophies no such permanent substances exist, except in the form of past events, which are no longer actual. New events arise by the integration of prehensions of past events with ideals in the future. The world is envisaged as an ever growing network of relations in which new events come into being in a never-ending stream. This is the creative advance of the world. From this perspective intolerance does not mean protection but rejection: rejection of new possibilities. In many cases this may be unavoidable, but it always involves loss, sometimes, but not always, due to a lack of integrative power.

Intolerance has its roots deep in evolutionary history. Plants poison the soil around them to prevent competitors from sprouting. Animals fight
to repel intruders. Humans wage tribal wars. They all are driven by feelings of insecurity and fear of novelty. On a planet which is not very friendly these fears are not unjustified. As the mentality which is present in all beings reaches the level of consciousness in man we find him projecting his need of security and stability upwards, creating gods who will provide for his needs. First he creates many gods, quarrelling and sometimes fighting amongst each other. But then, as monotheism conquers, only one god remains, who, in order to be a perfect protector and guarantee of permanence does not tolerate any other. “No other gods”: the first of the Ten Commandments; *shirk*, the giving of partners: the unforgivable sin in Islam. Religion as mainspring of intolerance.

Experts in theology say that this is a caricature, a picture of the abuse of religion, not of religion itself. But how can there be so much and such terrible abuse. Not once or twice, but systematically? The memories of the religious wars in Europe will not go away, the bloody history of early Islam, many centuries earlier, is continuing even in the 21st century. How can a sound tree bring forth such evil fruit, not once but through the ages.

Pharaoh’s, emperors and kings claimed that their right to rule was entrusted to them by god and as god was supposed to be the guarantee of permanence, the maintenance of stability was their main duty. This divine right of kings was continuously reinforced by priests whose pronouncements could not be doubted because they claimed to be divinely inspired.

The system has been successful, as can be seen in the history of the great civilisations of the past. Under imperial rule most people could live in relative peace and the rulers could be tolerant of many things.

But what was not tolerated was to challenge the system itself. Deviations even within the same religion were considered as dangerous, witness the hunt for heretics in medieval Christianity, the persecution of Anabaptists and Quakers in early Protestantism and of Ahmadiyyahs in
present-day Islam. Religious intolerance as a major cause of bloodshed. These things are well known, it is David Hume’s complaint, not answered after 2½ century.

Rather than as an abuse of religion these evils can be seen as rooted in one of the major doctrines of classical religion. It is the doctrine of divine omnipotence, which is for many professionals as well as for common people, the defining characteristic of God. He has all the power because he is the creator of all things, and because he is the creator he has not only the power but also the right to compel. The idea has its merits. It provides what it is supposed to provide: stability, a safeguard against chaos, which otherwise might break out at any moment in societies of autonomous humans. The very survival of an animal herd often depends on the dominance of a dominant male.

But the world will not stand still and stability comes at a cost. The cost is stagnation. Minority groups and deviating individuals pay the price of overall stability. They are felt as defying the absolute power of the ruler, and of his god-given authority. As these movements grow in influence what little freedom they had is taken away from them by the ruler. Then there is strife, and in the struggle for survival there is repression on all sides. Mosaic laws, Muslim sharia, the political history of Christianity, and Jewish, Christian and Muslim fundamentalism offer examples. In all cases there is a clergy whose appeal to divine command makes them immune to a broader and more conciliatory view. No serious questioning of existing leadership is allowed; weaknesses of the own group are played down by comparing them with the wickedness of the enemy. As the new group becomes successful, history repeats itself: what started as a fight for survival becomes a struggle to retain and to increase power. All for the good of the new dissidents. The persecuted become persecutors. Intolerance as a barricade against chaos.
Thus the appeal to divine saving power degenerates into the intolerance of a dominant class. It advertises its own morals and religious convictions as divinely originated. In “Christian” nations Jews, Roma, Jehovah’s witnesses, members of other sects and other religions and people with deviant sexuality are repressed and at risk of persecution. Such are the results of religions based on dominant power as the first attribute of the divine.

But the visions of the Old Testament prophets, of Jesus and of Mohammed in his early Mekkan days were different. Their message did not centre on power, not on security, not on survival but on a new ideal: justice or righteousness. It comes late in evolution; one does not find it in the animal kingdom; it is a cultural achievement, grown out of the animal instinct of care for the young. It is first centred on the care for orphans and widows, then includes everyone near of kin, then it is extended to the neighbours, then to compatriots and fellow-believers, then to the ends of the earth. Jesus took the last and most costly step: justice for all on the basis of acceptance of all. He used the most risky word of all: “love”. But only by acceptance of the other, with all the risks involved, the true self would be built. Jesus said it and in a relational view of reality it cannot be otherwise.

There is also a place for tolerance. It is exemplified in the parable of the weeds which threaten the growth of the good grain and yet are not to be pulled out until the day of proper judgment. So tolerance requires patience but it is not to be the endpoint. The divine command, enticing and promising, is: acceptance. It does not in any way exclude criticism. It is like the father who warns his son but will never reject him, not even as a criminal. Morals are important but they are relegated to a subordinate place.

The clearest demonstration of its character and gradual development can be seen by comparing the list of death penalties for apostasy in the
Tenach and the Koran with the superiority of Jesus’ words to his few remaining friends: “and you, would you also like to leave”. The Eternal One is no longer felt as power but as goodness.

If intolerance is part of our evolutionary make-up, it is not intolerance but tolerance which must be explained and learned. For intolerance there are causes, for tolerance reasons must be given. The possible causes of intolerance are many, and they must be acknowledged for the very sake of justice. Poverty, danger, fear of extermination are a few of them, and they can be summarised as: struggle for survival. There are conditions which must be satisfied before any plea for tolerance can be made. A minimum of livelihood is one of them. Oppression causes intolerance by the oppressed

Governments of national states must go by numbers and averages. Political responsibility is at variance with personal ethics. There will always be minorities and the observance of their rights will always lag behind that of the majority. A certain subordination and in extreme cases even repression is unavoidable in the present world. States are hostages of the past. They must try to satisfy the need for stability. They cannot allow too much difference.

But in civilised societies there are also other communities, with a different responsibility. Synagogues, churches, mosques are the heirs of the prophets. They have as their first duty to keep alive the vision of those prophets. Their task is future-directed. Because they will not be satisfied with the status quo they will be critical of the state, of any state, and they will challenge the state whenever it becomes unduly oppressive. They have a double task: not only to keep alive the hope of a better world but also to be a sanctuary for the oppressed. They go by individuals, not numbers.

They are not the guardians of good morals. What is paraded as morality is often nothing but aesthetic dislike cloaked in religious terms.
As often as monotheistic religions have claimed to be the proper guardians of good morals they have not escaped becoming intolerant and whenever they have allied themselves with secular governments the result has been disastrous. This reflects the absolutistic character of a religious belief based on power. But why should power be worshipped. The reasons why the Eternal One should be worshipped is different. It is that the He/She saves without collateral damage, by accepting the risks involved. Acceptance is comparable to biological conception: there are great risks involved, but it is the only way towards new life.

A change from intolerance to acceptance and integration does not come by itself.

As the state is the guardian of stability, its power to combat intolerance is severely limited. It must be suspicious of novelties and it will educate to conformity. Obedient citizenship is its major virtue.

As church/mosque/synagogue hold up the vision of the future they will educate to novelty and praise courage, which is faith. This is their major virtue. Their instruction will not be by laws and prohibitions but by stories from the past and examples in the present. In line with their founders they may appeal to divine support which is not of the present world.

Permanence and novelty are the two irreducible characteristics of all reality. In the present era they are embodied in the different tasks of states and religious institutions.
The term ‘genocide’ encompasses a range of dimensions. The term itself was coined in 1943 by a Polish Jew, Rafael Lemkin, who had escaped from Europe for the United States in 1941. He formed the term from the ancient Greek *genos* (meaning race, or tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), and initially propagated the term to respond to the destruction of, among others, the European Jews by Nazi Germany. In the years following World War II, Lemkin fought to have his term adopted by international law and,
although rejected for inclusion at the Nuremberg Trials, it eventually formed the basis for the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, or what we call today simply the Genocide Convention. And whilst today the term genocide is often applied to any case of mass killing or state sponsored atrocity and its application is often widely debated, the legal definition of genocide (according to the Genocide Convention) is actually very specific: it means the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.

But even within such a definition, no two genocides are alike. And from those genocides best known in contemporary Europe, the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda are perhaps reflective of just how different genocide can be. The first, the Holocaust was conducted by an industrialized, European power.\(^1\) It took place during the course of a world war, in which a large number of the world’s countries were involved. The greatest number of killings took place in an occupied country by occupying forces, as the Nazi Germans occupied Poland and chose it as the site of the mass killing of Europe’s Jews. They also occupied other countries in the region and submitted Jews there to the same policies of elimination, or else transported them to Poland where they were killed alongside Poland’s Jewish community. The Holocaust happened over a six year period, there were regional variations, and it took place in stages: there was a progression in the violence against the Jews, which eventually culminated in their mass murder. In the decades after the end of World War II, the Holocaust has risen in public consciousness to become the “archetypal” genocide, the standard by which all other forms of evil – not only genocide – are now judged.

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\(^1\) The term ‘Holocaust’ is also etymologically problematic, and can suggest several different definitions. For the purposes of this paper, it is used to refer to the destruction of the European Jews by Nazi Germany, in the period 1939-1945.
Contrast this with 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which took place fifty years after the Holocaust in a small, densely populated country in central Africa. There, eight hundred thousand people, mainly Tutsi from the country’s minority ethnic group (comprising 14% of the population), were murdered in approximately one hundred days, from April to July 1994. They were murdered by extremist members of the country’s majority ethnic group the Hutu (who comprise 85% of the population), with the killings led by governmental forces and state organized militia, the interahamwe. There were no ghettos, no deportations, no camps, and certainly no gas chambers or gas vans – none of those elements characteristic of the Holocaust. Instead, Tutsi (along with moderate Hutus) were killed mainly by machete, at a rate often noted as being faster than that ever achieved by the Nazi German gas chambers. The use of rape and sexual violence was widespread, and active participation by the local population was far greater than in Nazi Germany: it was not only those in the army or specially established forces that killed in Rwanda: although the State led the killing, it was carried out by individual members of the public.

Yet, despite such fundamental differences, there are both historical and sociological parallels between the two genocides. We see similarities in terms of the identification and isolation of both the Jews and the Tutsi as minority groups, in the periods leading up to the genocides. There are distinct similarities between the rising antisemitism in Nazi Germany with that of anti-Tutsism in post-1990 Rwanda, with both the Jews and the Tutsis being blamed for the national economic crises, both the victims of various conspiracy theories, and the “Hutu Ten Commandments” vaguely reminiscent of the Nuremberg Laws. Further, both during the genocides

2 For example, see Linda Melvern, A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide, London: Zed Books (2000), who suggests that the rate of killing achieved during the Rwandan genocide was five times faster than that of the Holocaust.

3 The “Hutu Ten Commandments” were first published by the extremist daily newspaper Kangura (Kinyarwanda for “Wake Up!”), in December 1990 and purported the ethnic superiority of the Hutu.
and in their immediate aftermaths, the world struggled to distinguish between the genocides and the wars that surrounded them: in defining his new term, Lemkin had specifically referred to genocide as being in antithesis to The Hague War Regulations on war, which recognizes war as aimed at sovereigns and armies. Genocide, he argued, is instead aimed at civilians and subjects. But as the number of victims emerged following the end of the World War II, the victims of the Holocaust were often confused with civilian war casualties. In Rwanda, where the country had been in civil war since the invasion of the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) from Uganda in 1990, it took too much time for the world to recognise that a genocide was now taking place amidst this civil war. The problems continued following the liberation of the country by the RPF: as Hutus fearing retaliation fled the liberated country, images of the resulting refugee crisis were broadcast internationally which created further confusion about who were the “real” victims of the tragedy.

But the complexities of the subject are such that, for every area of comparison to be found, there are yet further contrasts. In focusing in particular on Poland and Rwanda, it is necessary to highlight the difference in circumstances between the two countries during the genocides. Poland was an occupied country in the middle of a major international war. The country had a significant Jewish population before the war, but many more were deported there during the course of the war, in order that they could be killed more easily. The majority of the ghettos were located in Poland, and it was the country where the Germans decided to locate the death camps. Polish Catholics – the majority population– were also targeted by the occupiers, and the level of terror and destruction inflicted on the country as a whole was devastating.

There were, sadly, isolated incidents of Polish Catholics participating in the violence against Jews, of which the 1941 events in Jedwabne are probably the best known example. But with these few exceptions, during the Holocaust in Poland it was not neighbor killing neighbor. Instead, majority and minority populations were both targeted – albeit in different ways - by the occupying force, the Nazi Germans. In Rwanda, with the exception of the moderate Hutu who were killed for their political views and on occasion resisting the violence against the Tutsi, it was neighbor against neighbor, colleague against colleague, even husband against wife, and mother against children. Yet, despite these fundamental differences, in the aftermath of genocide both Poland and Rwanda have shared the challenges of remembering a minority population in a country that has been targeted as a site for mass murder; where the country has been devastated by war; and where the minority has not been protected by the International Community.

But the differences in circumstances, such as those mentioned above, impact significantly on how the genocide can be memorialized – that is, publically remembered and commemorated – in each of these countries. If there were no camps, as there were not in Rwanda, there cannot be any former camp museums, such as at Auschwitz or at Majdanek in Poland. In a country where there were gas chambers it meant that most victims were cremated after their murders, whereas in Rwanda huge challenges exist now about what to do with whole human remains. In Poland, some of the key memorialisation challenges have related to the preservation of original artifacts, such as prisoner and Jewish belongings, or to the barracks at former camps, or to remaining parts of ghetto walls: where no such places existed and there were no “prisoners”, there are no such difficulties.

There are significant problems in Poland in knowing the sites of mass killings of Jews, and as yet there has been no systematic
documentation of these sites and there is often very little to mark them. Likewise, it was been a slow process to ensure every village and town from where Jewish communities disappeared has at least a commemorative plaque remembering its lost community. But despite these difficulties, there were a limited number of ghettos and camps, and therefore there is at least some kind of boundary and priority in the places that need to be commemorated. In Rwanda, killings took place over every area of the country, in the streets, in villages, in city centers, in churches, in schools. One of the first questions in Rwanda is knowing where to even begin establishing memorial sites.

In a country recovering from genocide, what to do with actual sites of mass killing is perhaps one of the greatest challenges. And such are the challenges Poland that has been battling with for more than sixty years, and Rwanda for the last thirteen, and which are likely to be ongoing in both for many more. But in both countries, as well as authentic sites of genocide, there are also interpretive sites, “museums”, that seek to describe what happened either at that particular place (for example in the exhibitions at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum) or elsewhere in the country. Jewish museums in Poland, for example, are impacted by being located in such close proximity to the sites of the Holocaust, and this impact is frequently expressed in their permanent exhibitions. How Jewish museums seek to interpret the Holocaust in Poland, located perhaps in a city’s former Jewish quarter where only ten percentage of its prewar population survived the war, or in a former ghetto area, perhaps just an hour or two drive from a former death camp, is very different from how a Jewish or Holocaust museum may do so in Israel, the US, or the UK.

Such interpretive sites present their own challenges: who is responsible for them, who should create them, maintain them, fund them, even visit them. And what should these sites be about? What should
visitors learn there? Whose story should be told there, and who is going to
tell it?

In Poland the case is very complex – are Jewish stories of the
Holocaust told, or Polish, or both? Do the exhibitions focus on the victims
(the definition in itself encompassing a whole spectrum of possibilities),
the bystanders, or maybe even in the perpetrators? And in any case, what
should be said about each of these groups? What is expressed now in
museums in Poland is often very different than what might have been said
under communism, which even then differed at different times during the
forty-five years of communist party rule. Political concerns in a country
always shape what is being remembered about the past, as well as who is
doing the remembering, and Poland is no exception to this.

And neither is Rwanda. There, public memory is very much shaped
by the RPF-led government, that is, by those who originally liberated the
country. The structuring of public memory is just one aspect of rebuilding
a country after a civil war and genocide. As well as economic concerns,
rebuilding the country also includes dealing with the problem of
reconciliation, which in turn impacts memorialisation. In a country where
the perpetrator and victim population are being expected to return to
being neighbors, how can this happen when memorials give the constant
reminder of how the Hutu killed the Tutsi? The Rwandan government is
currently trialing one solution: there are no longer Hutu or Tutsi in the
country, there are simply Rwandans. Ethnic categorizations, the
government suggest, were socio-economic distinctions that were only
given ethnic meaning by the colonizers, which then remained after
independence and were used to devastating effect by the post-
independence Hutu government. If the country can return now then, the
governmental position suggests, to a pre-colonial Rwanda state
comprising simply “Rwandans”, then there is hope for unity and
reconciliation. But how then the narrative of the genocide is told, when
categories of victim and perpetrator need to be assigned to ethnic groups that now no longer exist, means that the stories begin to get complicated.

Challenges in memorialisation are by no means the only shared area of difficulty in the aftermath of genocide: There are also significant parallels in the challenges faced by both Poland and Rwanda in how to educate future generations about the country’s past, how to implement justice to the perpetrators, and how to support survivors, to name but a few. But by focusing on memorialisation, the most public arenas of the shared – and contrasting – challenges can be identified. Rwanda is, of course, in the very years of forming its public memory; the memory is still very malleable, still very open to change. Poland, however, is still struggling with the difficulties of commemorating events more than sixty years after they happened. How both move forward from here is not known, but in studying the two countries in parallel we are able to see lessons to be learned, lessons to be avoided, and whether parallels in history also transfer to parallels in the way this history is remembered.
Introduction:

The re-scheduling for London of the Miss World Beauty Pageant which Nigeria was billed to host in December 7 (2002) throws up albeit unwillingly, a number of issues in our troubled situation. Trouble started when an inadvertent goof by reporter in This Day publication of November 16, portrayed Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in a rather unedifying light. All hell was left loose in the Northern city of Kaduna and Federal Capital City of Abuja, leading to loss of lives and property. The disposition of public affairs commentators to see the conflagration in Kaduna and Abuja through the narrow lens of religion and ethnicity is simplistic and typical.
It is rather symptomatic of a greater undercurrent of discontent and disorientation in the society⁵.

The quotation above from the editorial comment of a popular and influential daily newspaper in Nigeria reveals largely the common scenario of religious crises in Nigeria - general situation of peaceful coexistence, ruffled by rumours going round which later transform to a real threat and conflagration consuming lives and property. A closer look reveals that the crisis is mostly as a result of dysfunctional social order which fails to address the problems of ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and disease, just to mention a few, in the society.

Apart from this introduction, this paper looks into the issue of Muslims and violence in Nigeria, causes of violence, education as a veritable means of preventing violence, the National Policy on Education in Nigeria and the extent of implementing it to lead to the results desired. The paper rounds off with concluding remarks.

Muslims and religious violence in Nigeria:

Based on the fact that most of the crises that have religious undertone take place in the Northern part of Nigeria⁶ where Muslims are apparently more than other religious groups, the tendency is to identify the Muslims with violence. As a result, most of the works on religious violence focus on Northern Nigeria.⁷

Many analysts are of the opinion that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to regard any particular outbreak of violence as being purely religious. This is in view of the fact that many factors combine to trigger

⁶ Out of 178 cases of clashes recorded by Shehu Sani from 1980 to 2004 to have taken place in Northern Nigeria, 104 of them are related to religion. In fact, most of the purely communal clashes took place in the Middle Belt where the number of Muslims is lower than in the far North. For details, see Shehu Sani, The Killing Fields: Religious Violence in Northern Nigeria (Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd, 2007), pp.61-185.
off violence while the religious issue may merely be the last straw that breaks the camel’s back.\(^8\) Some of the remote causes of violence in Nigeria include ethnicity, political manipulation, poverty, social imbalance, frustration, poor security measures by Government and law-enforcement agents, just to mention a few.\(^9\)

In a country in which poverty is widespread with attendant adverse effects on the psyche and disposition of the people, survival is the preoccupation of every individual. To achieve this, every opportunity that comes one’s way is exploited to the maximum. It is in the light of this that religion comes handy to whip up sentiments and mobilize credulous people for mass actions. Incidentally, most of the citizens are impoverished and lack formal education. They are mostly won over by providing them with free meals and doling paltry sums of money to them. With this, they are prepared for indoctrination after which they do not mind to take any risk with their lives.

Many attempts have been made to identify the various types of religious crises in Nigeria. Yahya Imam prefers using the name of Muhammad Marwa Maitatsine as the basis of categorisation. Thus, he divides the crises into Maitatsine and non-Maitatsine.\(^10\) Taye Adamolekun would prefer the use of terms “religious puritanism”, “ethno-religious” and “political crises” to draw a line of demarcation between those he regards to be purely religiously-motivated, those caused by the combination of religion and ethnicity and ethno-political crises resulting from struggles between two communities for land, power, dominion or freedom.\(^11\) Musa Adeniyi goes further to divide the crises into intra-

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\(^9\) Imam, Religious Crises... pp. 9-16.


religious (between members of the same religion) and inter-religious
drawing attention to the fact that inter-religious crises in the North are
mostly between Muslims and Christians while they involve Muslims and
traditional worshippers in the South apparently referring to South-West
because South-East is mainly populated by Christians and traditional
worshippers.\(^\text{12}\)

Causes of the violence:

Nigeria is a pluralistic nation in terms of ethnicity, faith practice,
culture, social and economic status. Various groups interact by sharing
boundaries, exchange of goods and services, and pooling resources for
internal cohesion and protection against external aggression as the case
may be. Of course, the interaction “is dynamic, reflecting the mutational
nature and character of man’s relationship with his environment”. The fact
is that, according to Okpeh O. Okpeh. Jr, this dynamism passes through
many stages, five of which are germane to this study as follows:

1. the stage of contact and interaction.
2. the stage of compromise and co-operation.
3. the stage of competition
4. the stage of conflict, and
5. the stage of assimilation and integration.\(^\text{13}\)

Much as the argument above cannot be denied to be true of the pre-
colonial era in Nigeria, the contemporary situation at present proves the
last stage inapplicable. It is difficult, if not impossible, to have any case of
complete assimilation and integration of one group in the other in the
modern dispensation. The fact is that a group may have an upper hand in a
conflict situation leading to the dislodgment of the other group at times,

\(^{13}\) Okpeh O. Okpeh, Jr, “Conceptual and Theoretical Issues Arising from Studies in Inter-Group Relations in
Nigeria in the 20\(^{th}\) Century” in O. Akinwumi et al. (eds.) *Inter-Group Relations...* p.17.
but the displacement is not usually total and permanent. At least, the cases of Jukuns versus Tivs in Benue State, Ife versus Modakeke in Osun State can be cited here as examples.\textsuperscript{14}

It is apposite to draw attention to the fact that the stage of competition, if not well-managed, may degenerate to unhealthy rivalry, bad blood, mutual suspicion and stereotypes. Stereotypes create imaginary problems and a gulf between groups. According to Agatha Inweregbu, “stereotypes, no doubt, are potent sources of inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflict in Nigeria. This is because an invocation of negative stereotypes in a competitive situation is most likely among Nigerians”\textsuperscript{15}.

The diversity of the various outbreaks of violence within Muslims and between them and other groups makes it difficult to identify general causes for them or the extent to which one factor has contributed to the situation as against others. Generally speaking, the following are some of the major causes with brief explanations to illustrate:

i. Distorting the teachings of Islam\textsuperscript{16}

In a situation whereby most people suffer from social, political, economic and health problems, brainwashing in form of raising false hopes thrives. Charlatans capitalize on the prevailing general malaise to preach un-attainable ideals. Criticizing those in Government, religious leaders, traditional rulers and wealthy people in the society enlists the followership of gullible masses and their interest in such self-styled religious leaders. Since the security system in the country is far from what it should be, the situation will have gone out of control before any attention is paid. This

\textsuperscript{14} For details, see Sani, \textit{The Killing Fields}… p. 77, and O.A. Bukola “Problem of Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria: Origin and causes of Ife-Modakeke Conflict” in Akinwumi, et. al. (eds.) \textit{Inter-Group Relations}… pp. 711-735.


\textsuperscript{16} Many scholars use words like “indoctrination”, “extremism” or “unorthodoxy” for this concept. For instance, see Yusef Al-Qaradawi \textit{Islamic Awakening Between Religion and Extremism} (Riyadh, International Islamic Publishing House, 1412 A.H./ 4991) pp.28-48.
was the form the Maitatsine riots of Kano in 1980 took. Some followers escaped to re-group in some other parts of the North to cause uprisings in Bullum-Kutu in 1982, Jimeta in 1984, and Gombe in 1985.\textsuperscript{17} Thousands of lives were lost and property worth thousands of millions of Naira was destroyed aggravating the already comatose economic situation.

ii. \textbf{Dichotomy between indigenes and settlers}

The problem of indigene-settler dichotomy contributes to the outbreak of conflict and violence. Competition for the ownership of land, control of economic resources and political power is mostly hinged on the claim of being “the sons of the soil” in contrast to being “strangers” or “immigrants”. Ethnic groups who have co-existed for centuries without any credential to prove claims of indigeneship beside unverifiable legendary tales of the old will suddenly draw out daggers against each other as a result of a minor misunderstanding. As a matter of fact, there is hardly and community across the nation that has remained at the same place over the centuries. Migrations occasioned by war, economic pursuits, natural disasters or any other factor are common to all the ethnic groups.\textsuperscript{18} The fact, therefore, is that every ethnic group relatively has the right to claim indigeneship after staying at any particular place for generations. It is unfortunate that the constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria has not addressed this all-important issue.\textsuperscript{19}

iii. \textbf{Poverty}

Widespread poverty resulting from unemployment makes the youth ready-made tools in the hands of unpatriotic Nigerians wishing to exploit the situation to fan the embers of disunity and acrimony. According to

\textsuperscript{17} Imam, \textit{Religious Crises}… pp. 19-24.
\textsuperscript{18} A.M. Yusufu “Migration as a factor of Contact and Interactions in the Lokoja Area in the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century” in Akinwumi, \textit{et. al}. (eds.) \textit{Inter-Group Relations}… pp. 858-863.
\textsuperscript{19} Sani, \textit{The Killing Fields}… pp. 47-50.
Sani, “poverty, within the control of the Nigerian society, means lack of employment and employment benefits otherwise known as security. It also includes lack of access to good education, house to live in, health care and nutritious food, lack of clean water for both domestic and industrial uses, electricity, effective, efficient and affordable rail, road, air and water transportation system, cheap but effective and efficient communication and telecommunication facilities and insecurity of lives and property. Increasing unemployment of our willing and our able young men has a translative security implication for the country. The idle hands of the youths have on several occasions been manipulated by the economic and political elite”\(^\text{20}\).

**iv. Marginalisation**

There are allegations of marginalization by ethnic and religious groups. The various ethnic groups in Southern Kaduna, mostly Christians, allege that their Muslims fellow citizens of the Hausa-Fulani stock relegate them to the background and deny them adequate representation in Government and opportunities to be actively involved in running State affairs. According to Reverend Father Mathew Hassan Kukah, “There is a strong feeling that Kaduna does not belong to all those that are in the state. There is a feeling of alienation, perception of exclusion, although those perceptions may not be factual, but in human calculation, they are important because they breed suspicion, fear and anxiety. These are largely part of the combustible material that stoke the fire in Kaduna”\(^\text{21}\).

Muslims in South-West made up of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo States complain that President Olusegun Obasanjo, also from the same geo-political region although a Christian, persistently pursued the policy of distancing Yoruba Muslims from having any share from his

\(^{20}\) Ibid. p.51.
\(^{21}\) Ibid. p. 351.
cabinet and the organs of the Federal Government. Mr. Tafa Balogun, a Muslim, who became Inspector General of Police on account of promotion was later removed and jailed having been found guilty of corrupt practices. It is alleged that no other Inspector General of Police before or after Tafa Balogun has been less corrupt than he.²²

v. Socio-ethnical values

The effects of globalization paving the way for the spread of Western values and way of life at the expense of the indigenous ethos and practices means many things to the various ethno-religious groups in Nigeria. It is apparent that most Christian denominations accommodate such practices without showing any serious protest. Scanty dresses and wearing of tight-fitting trousers by young ladies are taken to be immoral among Muslims. The argument that every Nigerian has the right to dress according to his choice since the country has no dressing code is countered by the claim that such provocative and sensual outfits lure young men and women of different faiths into sexual promiscuity, drug abuse, gangsterism and other forms of social malaise.²³

The same thing is said about alleged sacrilegious comments, cartoons and speeches which allegedly insult religious susceptibilities of the believers in a particular faith. A good example here is the plan to host Miss World Pageant in Abuja from November 21 to 24, 2002. That period coincided with the month of Ramadān when Muslims were observing fasts. To aggravate the situation, a columnist in This Day, Isioma Daniel, did not see any reason why any Muslim should protest against staging the beauty contest. He added that even Prophet Muhammad “would probably have chosen a wife from the contestants”. This comment did not go down with

²³ For example, on April 4, 1996, there was a lunar eclipse in Maiduguri which was interpreted to be a warning sign for the Last Day. Peaceful procession to sensitize people to repent from their sins later became violent. Brothels, drinking parlours, hotels and churches were attacked. For details, see Sani, The Killing Fields,… p.82.
Muslims and violence broke out in Kaduna and Abuja. In the end, about 220 people were killed, many more sustained injuries and a lot of property was destroyed.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{vi. Sensational reports by mass media}

Sensational reports by the print and electronic media lead to the outbreak of violence or reprisal attacks. Reports on and pictures of charred bodies and landed property and places of worship may make tempers fly among the kith and kin of the slain and the injured. Worse still, some mass media take sides with this or that group involved in a violent clash and incite people to take up arms and ammunition to attack the members of the other group. In some cases, the media may exaggerate the extent of the violence in an attempt to make more sales but to the detriment of maintaining peace and order in the society.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{vii. Foreign Influence}

Hardly can any incident of importance take place in any part of the world without being felt in the other. Problems like the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, political crises in the Middle East and the Sudan, and the face-off between the Sunni and Shi\textsuperscript{a}ah Muslims in Iraq cannot but have some effects on a nation like Nigeria with such a large number of Muslim citizens and residents. For instance, the protests in Europe against the cartoon that satirized Prophet Muhammad in \textit{Jollands Posten} of Denmark, September 30, 2005, led to violence in Maiduguri which claimed many lives and property.\textsuperscript{26}

Potent as these causes of violence are, citizens can avoid taking laws into their hands if they understand the issues involved and are capable of

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Ibid.} p. 110.
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.} p. 83.
handling the situation with maturity. This can be done if only they are well educated and mentally alert.

Education as an agent of socialization

The importance of education in its formal and informal forms cannot be over-emphasised. It refines man and enables him to cultivate and develop the qualities that are necessary for his integration into the society as a responsible and self-reliant citizen. It makes him develop physical, cognitive and psycho-social qualities he requires to lead a happy and fulfilled life.

In early childhood, covering approximately the first five years in life, the child is expected to receive adequate attention from parents and care-providers to lay a solid foundation for his life. This is the period “of rapid physical growth, including the development of the brain almost to its full adult size, and is also a critical period for the development of cognitive functions”27.

From the age of 6 to 11, the child enrolls in a primary school to be introduced to and acquire formal education. At this stage, he is supposed to learn literacy, numeracy, life skills and general knowledge in preparation to face the challenges of life. Physical growth continues but not as fast as in the previous years. Parents and care-providers are expected to provide for the needs of the child at this stage to lay a good foundation for the next stage and later as an adult.28

Leaving the primary school at the age of 12 for the secondary school, the child enters into another critical stage in life up to the age of 18 when he is expected to graduate from that level of education. Between the ages of 12 and 18, “the child experiences another spurt of physical growth and related physical and psycho-social challenges associated with the

28 Ibid.
development of sexual functions. In addition to being a period of further formal education, this is a period of relative physical and psycho-social stress, during which the individual adjusts to the major changes in the body and the development of new emotions and desires, and acquires more advanced life skills to meet the challenges of sexual relationship and entry into the world of adulthood and work"\textsuperscript{29}.

According to the \textit{National Policy on Education}, the overall philosophy of Nigeria among other things is to “live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice”\textsuperscript{30}. It is pertinent to draw attention to the three principles mentioned above on which the nation, Nigeria, is to be sustained. They are\textsuperscript{31}:

.a \textbf{Freedom:} This implies the citizenship of Nigeria confers on each individual to enjoy freedom of choice in issues relating to his welfare, hopes and aspirations. Nobody has any right to dictate to him what religion he should practice, where to live and how to dispose of his property subject to the compliance with the law of the land.

.b \textbf{Equality:} The egalitarian posture means that all the citizens of Nigeria are on the same pedestal and no citizen has any right to lord it over another either as an indigene or a settler or as a rich or poor person.

.c \textbf{Justice:} This is in the sense that parties to any case are to be treated with justice without fear or favour in the law court or any other statutory body set up to settle differences between citizens.

Based on the future anticipated for Nigeria to which the Philosophy of Education is channeled, the following, among other things, are the principles on which Philosophy of Education for the nation is based:

(a).the development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
(b). the full integration of the individual into the community, and (c). the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system.\footnote{Ibid. pp.7-8.}

A look at the aims and objectives of education as enunciated in the \textit{National Policy on Education} raises hopes and gives the impression that the Nigerian child will grow up equipped physically, emotionally, psychologically and socially to successfully face the challenges of life. Unfortunately, there is a wide gap between the situation on ground and the paper work. This leads us to critically examine the Nigerian Muslim child and his educational needs with a view to showing the extent to which education can be used to make him realize the necessity of maintaining peace, law and order in the society.

The Nigerian Muslim child and his educational needs

The fate of the Nigerian Muslim child in terms of access to education is far worse than that of any other child in the country. For the purpose of this study, it is taken for granted that the Muslim child in mind is the one born and brought up in the Northern parts of Nigeria. This is the region where Muslims overwhelmingly constitute the majority of the populace.

Our theoretical assumption above is premised on the fact that outbreaks of religiously-motivated violence are more common in the area than in any other part of Nigeria, and the fact that most of the people involved are Muslims. In some cases, it may be among Muslims alone like sectarian clashes between the Tariqah Tijāniyyah members and \textit{Izālah} group in Makurdi in 1980\footnote{Sani, \textit{The Killing Fields}… p.72.}, and the intra-Shi'ite Group clash of 1996 in Kano State Polytechnic.\footnote{Ibid. p. 119.} The former resulted from the accusation that \textit{Ahl al-Tariqah} (Muls belonging to mystical groups in Islam) were polluting the
teachings of Islam by introducing *Bid’ah*, (unorthodox doctrines) into the religion in form of mysticism. The rivalry and antagonism between these groups had been there all along almost everywhere in the North. The latter resulted from the disappointment of the splinter group from the original Jamāʿat being headed by Ibrahim al-Zakizaky. Named Jamāʿat Tajdid al-Islāmiyyah (the Islamic Revival Group), the splinter faction accused the mother group of being too slow and compromising in bringing about an Islamic revolution in Nigeria patterned along the revolution in Iran.\textsuperscript{35}

Some crises are between Muslims and Christians. The commonest causes are allegations of blasphemy, desecration of the Qurʾān and immoral practices contrary to the teachings of the *Sharīʿah*, (the Islamic law) or ordinary personal misunderstandings between individuals or groups. There has not been any record of Christians attacking Muslims for blaspheming against Jesus or desecrating the Bible even though it is apparent that there cannot but be one over-zealous Muslim cleric or preacher falling into that kind of lapses. This calls attention to the general orientation of Muslims in the study area with particular reference to the educational process and opportunities available to the Nigerian Muslim child.

As far as pre-primary education is concerned, statistical data available show that the North lags for more behind than the South. A multiple indicator cluster survey conducted in 1999, reveals as follows\textsuperscript{36}:

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN AGED 36-59 MONTHS ATTENDING SOME FORM OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMME, 1999:

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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall percentage of children in school</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Hodges (ed.) *Children’s and Women’s Rights*... p. 140.
The national overall percentage of 18% is too low and unacceptable for a nation aiming to bring up future generations capable of sustaining and uplifting her. In contrast to the 41% recorded in South West with almost even numbers of Muslim and Christian inhabitants, and 39% in South East predominantly inhabited by Christians, North West has 4% while North East has 3%. It may be added here that most of the schools lack basic amenities, required manpower while Government does little or nothing to enforce quality control. According to a report, “overall, it is clear that early child care and pre-primary facilities have been given little attention by the various tiers of Government. The quality of most facilities leaves much to be desired, inspection is minimal and high fees exclude the vast majority of children”\textsuperscript{37}.

At the level of primary education which enables children to acquire literacy, it is stipulated in the \textit{Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria} (Chapter 2, section 18) that all Nigerians will enjoy the right to education. At the inception of the democratically elected government in 1999, Government committed itself to the extension of free education to the three years of junior secondary school.\textsuperscript{38}

Despite the assurance of Government at all levels of providing free education for the Nigerian child to acquire literacy, the situation on ground

leaves much to be desired. The overall literacy rate in Nigeria is 49 percent which is “below the average of 57 percent for sub-Saharan Africa and compares very unfavourably with countries such as South Africa (84 percent), Kenya (79 percent), Cameroon (72 percent) and Ghana (68 percent). In particular, female literacy is much lower in Nigeria than in all those countries”\textsuperscript{39}.

The record of the average numbers of pupils aged 5 to 11 years attending school is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
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Causes of the low literacy rate among Muslim children in the North

There is no doubt that the Nigerian Muslim child is not mentally inferior to any other child in the country. If at all he lags behind in the educational

\textsuperscript{39} Hodges (ed.) \textit{Children’s and Women’s Rights}… p. 143.
sector, the causes are to be found in the socio-cultural life styles of the parents. Government, to a large extent, has roles to play to sensitize parents on the need for educating their children on the one hand, and provide facilities and manpower for the educational needs of the children on the other. In specific terms, the following among others are the causes of the lower level of education of the Muslim North than what obtains in the South.

1. Identification of western education with Christianity: Western education was introduced to Nigeria by Christian missionaries. The first attempts to spread Christianity among Nigerians did not succeed at the beginning. It was later decided to exploit education as an instrument of proselytisation. Pupils brought to school had to adopt Christian names and convert before they were enrolled. Muslims who preferred to maintain their religion even at the expense of formal education resisted the pressure to send their children to school.\(^{34}\) The situation changed a great deal after Independence in 1960 when Government began to enforce the constitutional provision outlawing all forms of discrimination but the boycott of schools continued especially among rural communities. Up to date, a wide gap exists between Christians and Muslims with formal education across the country. The case in the North is alarming because Muslims are in the majority there.

2. Poverty: The poverty level in Nigeria is among the highest in the world almost the same with the countries ravaged by war. According to a World Bank report, “... indeed, despite having earned about $320 billion from oil since 1970 (to 2000) Nigeria presents some of the characteristics of a post-conflict society, with decaying infrastructure, a stagnant economy and some of the worst health and education indicators in the world”\(^{40}\).

Abject poverty which many Muslim parents suffer from has negative effects on the education of their children in many ways. In the first instance,
they cannot afford to pay school fees and buy uniforms, books and stationeries. Secondly, the labour of the child is required on the farm to supplement that of the father who still uses cutlasses and hoes to till the ground. The child is also to hawk groundnuts or any other thing for the mother to make some income. Worse still, he may be given out as a house-help in the city for which the parents are paid monthly or as agreed. In short, poverty is a big impediment to the Muslim child’s education in Nigeria. The alternative is to send the child to a Mallam for Islamic education and Arabic learning. Since no arrangement is made for his upkeep, tuition and welfare, he has to join other pupils (known as almajirai) in street begging to survive.41

3. Material value of education:

The high rate of unemployment in the country resulting in the fact that most graduates of tertiary institutions still depend on their parents for livelihood makes many parents doubt the utility value of formal education. Children who are apprenticed to artisans to become carpenters, automobile mechanics, drivers, traders just to mention a few, appear to fare better. Instead of wasting time and money, many parents would reason to forgo sending their children to school.42

4. Gender discrimination:

In many parts of the country especially in the North, many parents still believe that spending money to educate their daughter is a waste. She will grow to become a wife to another man in another family. Some feel that acquiring western education will not make the daughter submissive to her husband, a quality she direly needs to be a successful housewife and mother, being her primary role in the society. There is always suspicion of the negative

42 For details, see Y.A. Quadri “Commercialization of Religion: An Islamic Assessment of the Street Begging in the Name of Allah” in Ade-Dopamu et al. (ed.) Issues in the Practice of Religion… pp. 416-422.
effects of western education on religion, morality, social responsibility and resistance to materialistic tendencies.

5. Peer-Group influence:

In few cases in which parents summon courage and take the risk of sending children to school, it often happens that the children may refuse to go. They see other children playing all the day, not forced to conform to the strict rules and regulations of the school. Others are tempted by little sums of money given to their friends who are apprentices to one artisan or the other. Some others may have been brainwashed by self-styled clerics condemning the pursuit of western education in favour of Islamic education. Whatever the case may be, some of the children out of school have a share from the blame.

Concluding remarks

Many reasons account for the outbreaks of violence among Muslims and between them and Christians especially in Northern Nigeria. Conflict cannot but occur between individuals and groups having differences in ethnicity, language, religion, culture and geography. The challenge is how to effectively manage the conflict in such a way that it will not go out of hand to lead to the loss of life and property. The case in Nigeria is quite worrisome. Almost every conflict becomes a conflagration, totally out of control. Surprisingly, Muslims are actively involved in many of the crises despite the fact that their religion is peace and places a high premium on peace. It cannot be therefore said that it is the religion that encourages wanton killings and destruction of property.

Education is the refinement of character and equipping one with knowledge and skills to be useful to oneself, the family and the community at large. As an agent of socialization, education enables one to be broad-minded,

43 Hodges, (ed.) *Children’s and Women’s Rights*… p. 144.
far-sighted and large-hearted. As a result, an educated person is expected to react to a crisis situation with thoughtfulness, restraint and foresight. He should not succumb to the dictates of his whims and caprices and sentiments of bigotry, stereotypes and suspicion. It is in view of this fact that this paper advocates making provisions for and getting the youth properly educated. They are the people who perpetrate violence. This will go a long way to curb or effectively manage conflict situations.

The case study is the Nigerian Muslims who constitute the majority of the populace in the North. True to our assumptions, it has been discovered that most clashes relating to religion took place in the North. Secondly, Muslims were actively involved in them either exclusively or together with Christians. The situation is quite different in South-West where Muslims coexist with Christians almost in equal proportion, or in the South-East where Christians predominate.

Some of the immediate causes of clashes in the North also exist in the South. For instance, there are so many Christian denominations, some of the doctrines of whom contradict each but they do not fight openly to the extent of resorting violence. There are occasional misunderstandings as well between Muslims and Christians in South-West but such are managed peacefully and hardly get out of hand.

As depicted in the statistical data provided, there is wide imbalance in the educational attainment in the North and South even though the whole situation of education in the country is far below expectation. There is an urgent need to improve on the literacy level in the North. This will go a long way to pave the way for peace, harmony and conflict prevention in the area. This laudable objective cannot be achieved, of course, without addressing poverty in the country and making the environment conducive to economic recovery, gainful employment and healthy harmonious living.
Education for Religious Tolerance.  
The Impossible Dream?

As a youngster I was fascinated by the movie version of a Broadway musical, “South Pacific”, one of the themes of which was a relationship between an American GI and a Polynesian girl. Very quickly in the story the themes of race and prejudice come to the surface and feature bitterly in one of the songs, which has stayed with me quite vividly ever since:

- You’ve got to be taught to hate and fear
- You’ve got to be taught from year to year
- It's got to be drummed in your dear little ear
- You’ve got to be carefully taught

- You’ve got to be taught to be afraid
- Of people whose eyes are oddly made
- And people whose skin is a different shade
- You’ve got to be carefully taught

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This made a particular impression, and I learned the words by heart and have never forgotten them, but it was only much later that I realised the significance of the song, which came out around the time that some of the early challenges to racial segregation were emerging in American society. There is now a good deal of research evidence that affirms the basic message of this song – that prejudice can be learned at a very early age and can be quickly reinforced.

If racial, cultural or religious prejudice is so easily learned then surely people can also learn skills in tolerance and respect for others. It may not be so easy, but it is surely important in order to counter those learned responses which all too quickly diminish, demonise and dehumanise others. This is surely a key value in education – to enhance people’s dignity and sense of humanity and their respect for others. It is clearly expressed in Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

"the education of the child shall be directed to ... the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin”.

We live in a world that is prone to many expressions of prejudice, in which religious attitudes still play a disturbingly significant part. Sometimes these attitudes are deliberate and malicious; but perhaps more often they are due to a straightforward lack of awareness and
understanding – the ignorance that creates the vacuums into which the prejudices may rush! Northern Ireland is just one of the places where the negative impulses of prejudice have damaged people’s humanity. This is not the place to give a detailed account of those problems, but there is little doubt that the many dimensions of the conflict there – political; territorial; cultural; ethnic; economic – have all too easily been enhanced by partisan, exclusivist and often ill-informed religious attitudes. Thankfully some of the more extreme expressions of sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants have subsided in recent years, but they seem to have been re-directed into some ugly expressions of racism, so much so that in reporting research on bigotry published earlier this year by the University of Ulster (Borooah & Mangan, 2007), some journalists described Northern Ireland as “the hate capital of the western world” (Belfast Telegraph, 07/02/2007). Even if there is a degree of hyperbole in this language, it seems very clear that many people in Northern Ireland have a problem when it comes to dealing with difference, with the way in which they perceive and treat “the other” (Connolly & Keenan, 2001; Richardson, 2003). Other studies (Connolly et al, 2002) have shown how such attitudes emerge early in life and how they may quickly develop into adult prejudices.

Many observers of Northern Ireland have pointed to the way in which such a situation is made more difficult by the separation of schools on perceived religious grounds, which is still effective in respect of about 90% of the school-going population. If most Catholics and Protestants (terms that are used in a very broad sense in Northern Ireland) are educated separately, what chances do they have of ever learning about each other through encounter and dialogue? How will they learn to develop informed and mutually respectful attitudes towards their differences? This is not helped by an official Religious Education syllabus that pays almost no attention to religions other than Christianity.
The results of what I would describe as this significant educational deficit express themselves in a very low level of inter-denominational and inter-religious awareness across the population in general. Teachers, who in most cases are the products of this system, may well be the most disadvantaged by it, especially when they are told that their responsibilities include the promotion of a shared society marked by tolerance and mutual respect!45

I want to suggest in the remainder of this paper that religious teaching in schools can be carried out in ways that may help to promote more positive attitudes and values towards religious and cultural differences. Northern Ireland, of course, is not unique in its need for better intercultural and inter-religious awareness and respect, and discussion about the importance of religious education in schools to this end has become increasingly significant in many places where religion is perceived to play a part in national and international conflicts. In seeking to challenge religious ignorance and intolerance through education in any society one of the most important factors will surely be the nature and effectiveness of Religious Education. Teaching for religious tolerance and mutual respect need not be an “impossible dream”! Clearly even the best-intentioned high quality Religious Education cannot be a panacea, and there are no “easy-fix” solutions, but I believe that there are strategies which can provide better long-term outcomes than those described above. So what might be the features of such an approach?

First of all there must be a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education. Here I make a clear distinction between Religious Education and Religious Instruction, although in discussions about religion in schools the two concepts are all too often confused,

45 As, for instance, in the Government policy document “A Shared Future”, which proposes that “All schools should ensure through their policies, structures and curriculae that pupils are consciously prepared for life in a diverse and inter-cultural society.” (OFMDFM, 2005, para 2.4)
leading to considerable wariness about the purposes of R.E. By “Religious Instruction” I mean a process of teaching a particular faith as truth – what we may call “confessional” or denominational or dogmatic teaching. This is entirely appropriate in faith communities, of course, where such teaching is in a voluntary context, but it is much harder to justify in ethical and educational terms in publicly funded schools, especially if it is accompanied by a requirement or demand for the separation of children for such teaching. By “Religious Education” I mean processes of learning that are open-ended and inclusive, suitable for people of all backgrounds and justifiable on educational grounds. Such learning must take account of knowledge about religion and religions, but also of the affective dimension of religious understanding – the importance of values and attitudes. This is what has been termed as the balance between “learning about religion” and “learning from religion”. Educational religious teaching is a crucial element of intercultural education and as such must help children to understand and value those expressions of religion with which they are familiar but also to equip them with ways of reaching out towards that which is less familiar. Schweitzer (2005, p.2), writing from the German context, has emphasised this point:

“Pluralism has become the hallmark of our time. No model of religious education that does not live up to the challenges of this pluralism can claim to be well-founded educationally or politically, at least not from the perspective of democracy”.

Religious Instruction and Religious Education may in some circumstances be complementary, but they are certainly not the same thing. As long as such confusions remain it will be extremely hard to persuade an often sceptical public that Religious Education is concerned with awareness and understanding rather than persuasion towards a particular religious position. Opposition to religious instruction has clearly been a significant motive in some countries where religion does not appear
on the school curriculum, but in also excluding religious education such states have missed an opportunity to deal positively with important issues. There is a major task here for academics, teacher educators, educational administrators and others to develop and practise a soundly educational rationale for programmes and approaches in relation to the teaching of religion. As John Hull has argued:

“religious education shares the ideals of the enlightenment [and] has to do with the development of reason in the area of religion, ... religious-education teachers hope to help young people overcome superstition and bigotry. This educational religious education is far removed from the dogmatic instruction of former centuries” (Hobson & Edwards, 1999:ix).

Another significant obstacle to engaging with such a process is the discomfort that many people appear to feel in discussing religion. Generations of people have learned skills in avoidance of any religious discussion, especially in company that is perceived to be religiously mixed, and teachers are prone to this no less than others. Fear of “offence” or self-consciousness about personal ignorance in religious matters has reinforced this unwillingness to address such issues. Children clearly learn this avoidance “skill” at an early age, especially if the messages picked up from teachers and other significant adults reinforce such an approach. One task of teachers is surely to model openness to religious discussion and to encourage mutual listening, honest sharing and open, respectful enquiry, while at the same time using more effective learning processes to challenge the ignorance that feeds the self-imposed silences. This requires a building up of trust and the creation of what has been called “safe space” in the classroom, a skill that is absolutely essential if teachers and learners are to be able to talk about the more contentious and divisive aspects of religious ideas (Lynagh & Potter, 2005:107; Keast, 2007:57ff).
A significant part of the process of Religious Education must surely be centred on how to engage constructively with difference. We do our young people, and perhaps our wider society, a grave disservice if we fail to do this, not least in a world where religious conflicts are emerging increasingly on the national and international scene. Towards this end we will need to encourage cohesion in the curriculum and be open to the significant links between religious education and other values-related areas such as personal and social development and education for citizenship, not least in relation to issues of prejudice, racism and sectarianism. Significant work in this area, much of it inter-related, has been carried out in various parts of the world by influential religious educators. Time and space prohibit detail of the methodologies employed, but of particular importance is the work of Jackson and others on the “interpretative approach”, which takes particular account of diversity within religious traditions (Jackson, 1997; 2004; Jackson & McKenna, 2005); also the “dialogical approach” which encourages questioning, listening and the sharing of diverse perceptions within and between religious traditions (Ipgrave, 2002; 2003); and also the “contextual approach” which builds on children’s experiences of religious and cultural traditions and seeks opportunities for learning from encounter with people, their artefacts, practices and religious festivals (Leganger-Krogstad, 2003; Schreiner, 2007). It is significant that in almost all cases these mutually supportive approaches in different countries have been developed in recognition of the transition from a former monocultural approach to religious learning, towards intercultural and inter-religious approaches. They also reflect a movement away from didactic teaching towards participation and experiential learning.

For more information on these and related strategies I would commend an excellent book issued by the Council of Europe, entitled “Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education” [Keast, 2007] and also the website of the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion and Belief [www.oslocoalition.org/html/project_school_education].
For such approaches to represent more than just the enthusiasms of a few activists they will need to be incorporated into the content and methodologies of religious education syllabuses. Examination of the work done on such broadly based, plural syllabuses in places like England and Wales, Norway, South Africa and some parts of Eastern Europe can be particularly valuable to this end. We need to be very careful, however, that in a desire to include specific topics for religious learning we do not “crowd out” the opportunities for human encounter. In the development of an appropriate basis for inclusive Religious Education in schools, the emphasis should perhaps be less on a highly prescriptive syllabus and more on the establishment of core principles for inter-religious learning and dialogue. These should be based on human rights principles (see, for example the recommendations of the UN Consultative Conference on School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance or Non-Discrimination, Madrid 2001) and could also refer to existing guidelines for inter-faith dialogue, such as those issued by various ecumenical and inter-faith organisations (for example the statement on “Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs” [UK Inter-Faith Network, 1993; 2000]). These emphasise the importance of listening, of openness and honesty, of letting others speak for themselves, of acknowledging internal diversity within religious traditions, of respecting people’s convictions on matters of food, dress, etc., and of respecting the rights of others to disagree with us. Where these principles and practices are implemented within classrooms or other learning environments they can provide a valuable basis for an ethos of respect for diversity, which is fundamental for promoting greater religious understanding and tolerance.

One of the key areas in promoting such an approach to religious education is in the preparation and training of teachers. If we expect children to learn skills in dealing with difference through encounter,
discussion, reflection and in handling conflict and controversial issues in positive and creative ways, then teachers themselves will need such skills. I have already indicated how difficult this can be in Northern Ireland and other places where societies, including teachers, have been substantially separate and have therefore lacked fundamental opportunities for contact and interaction. The vicious circle of uninformed attitudes can best be broken when teachers themselves experience the processes that I have advocated for children and young people, on the important principle of modelling the behaviours we wish to encourage in others. In an attempt to put this into action, a set of values has been agreed for student teachers of Religious Education in the present writer’s academic institution, promising to promote:

"respect for and equal treatment of persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group;
appreciation and understanding of difference through balanced investigation, research and critical analysis;
open exploration of controversial issues and competing truth claims;
creative approaches to dealing with conflict."

(Nelson & Richardson, 2004)

This reinforces the importance of effective teacher education processes if an open and inclusive ethos of this kind is to have any chance of impacting on education in general.

This may also have implications for the way in which teacher education in relation to religion is organised. Considerable emphasis has been placed in the past on separate training in these areas, not least in Northern Ireland, and an early change in such structures seems unlikely. Nevertheless I would argue strongly that if we want to develop genuine inter-religious learning it would be infinitely better if we were to do it together, not separately. Where the separation continues this surely
places on such training institutions an even greater responsibility to offset the negative outcomes of separation by a much stronger emphasis on encounter and shared programmes. This, I would suggest, is equally true of schools or classes within schools that are separated on the basis of religious tradition.

The question of who should be responsible for devising a syllabus of religious education may also be very pertinent. It is often perceived that this should be the task of religious bodies, such as in Northern Ireland where the responsibility has been devolved by government to the Churches alone, most unwisely in my view. If Religious Education in places like Northern Ireland is to have any real chance of greater effectiveness in challenging religious intolerance, it will need to operate on the basis of new and more representative partnerships. The statutory SACREs (Standing Advisory Conferences on Religious Education) which devise local R.E. syllabuses in England and Wales on the basis of nationally promoted principles exemplify a useful and well-tried model, not least because of their representative and inclusive composition. If those devising the syllabus are engaged in positive relationships and meaningful dialogue then there is a reasonable chance that the users of the syllabus will also be encouraged to do so. This was the thinking of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum when it called for:

“... all educators, including those from the churches and the other faith communities, to commit themselves enthusiastically in dialogue and partnership to this task of developing an education system which contributes to the establishment of a fair and just society in Northern Ireland for all sections of the community”. (NIIFF, 2001)

Friedrich Schweitzer, a leading German writer on R.E., has suggested that European Religious Educators should consider “something like a
declaration on religious education based on the rights of children” (Schweitzer, 2005:11). Elsewhere he has outlined five standards for religious education in schools that seem to summarise the argument of this paper. He proposes that:

- R.E. must and can be taught in line with the criteria and quality of general education;
- R.E. is relevant to the public and must be taught as a contribution to general public education;
- R.E. must seek to make a contribution to peace and tolerance in a plural world, and therefore should include both inter-denominational and inter-religious education;
- R.E. must be based on children’s right to religion and religious education, which will involve child-centred approaches;
- R.E. teachers must be professionals – i.e. they should have reached a level of academic understanding, self-reflexivity and critical self-awareness in relation to their own beliefs and backgrounds.

(paraphrased from Schweitzer, 2006:149)

Many teachers and committed educators will continue to find creative ways of challenging the negative religious perceptions of those they teach, as they have always done, using inclusive and adventurous approaches in the teaching of religion, sometimes producing excellent resources to that end. In Northern Ireland some particularly creative practice has been evident in the shared or Integrated Schools, where the demands of a diverse classroom add a touch of reality to the call for inclusive provision. But if there is to be any real hope of improvement, in Northern Ireland or anywhere else where religious and sectarian divisions persist, many believe that it will require systemic policy change, rather than small-scale one-off initiatives, towards to the teaching of religion in an inclusive and thoroughly educational manner.
The late American writer Neil Postman (1931-2003), in the opening sentence of one of his books, has succinctly expressed the heart of the challenge to educators. “Children,” he writes, “are the living messages we sent to a time we will not see” (Postman, 1982:xi). Religious tolerance will not be achieved quickly in our turbulent world, nor will it be reached by recourse to education alone, but if we want to send that message to the future in positive terms, we need to be actively and hopefully engaged with the process now.

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OFMDFM (2005): *A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland*, Belfast: Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister


UN Consultative Conference (2001): *School Education in relation with Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance or Non-Discrimination* (Madrid), available on the website of the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion & Belief -
Integrated education can be described as bringing together in one school pupils, teachers and staff from both Protestant and Catholic traditions, as well as children from different religious background and other cultures. Integrated education gives pupils an opportunity to understand and respect all religious traditions, to recognize what they have in common as well as what separates them, and accepting both.

Schools have been created mainly by parents; the first was Lagan College opened in 1981 in Belfast by the first parent group ACT (All Children Together). These parents believed that educating children from divided communities, they would help them to understand and respect

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cultural differences. Before 1981 parents didn’t have any choice in choosing a school for a child – he or she would attend a segregated school (predominately Catholic or Protestant).

From that time parents who are unlikely to live on one side of the division have a third option: integrated schools. It has been noticed that parents who sent their child to these schools became very enthusiastic about it:

- “I was always conscious of my own ignorance about the other side. I knew nothing about Catholics except bad things, the myths.”
- “Ours is a mixed marriage. At the beginning you never think of children, but once they come along you have to take sides. It doesn’t help the marriage. The integrated school was an answer to my prayer.”
- “I’m from England and I don’t want my children to know about just one side of the argument.”
- “I’d heard that it was a good school, that the teachers worked all hours, and that you could talk to them.”

There are 61 Integrated Schools in Northern Ireland – 40 primaries and 21 colleges, which brings the number of pupils to around 18,500. Although there are more and more schools, every year a large number of children is turned away – there are not enough places in classrooms. Parents with help from NICIE (Northern Ireland Council of Integrated Education), which is an umbrella organization for groups all over Northern Ireland interested in Integrated Education, work hard in order to open more integrated schools. Establishing a new school can be done in two ways:

- Building a new school – a very expensive way and rarely used because of the demographic fall in the number of children, or

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46 Wilson D., Dunn S. INTEGRATED SCHOOLS Information for Parents, Coleraine 1989, p. 16
Transformation (process that happens when an existing school wants to change the status to an integrated). The school can assume a Grant Maintained Integrated or Controlled Integrated status – both of them are fully integrated, the only difference is the way in which they are managed:

- **Grant Maintained Integrated School (GMI)** is under control and management of a Board of Governors and receives its budget directly from the Department of Education. In these schools, where the Board of Governors consists of 16 persons, at least 6 are elected from the parent body. Parents are therefore guaranteed influence on the life and policies of the school. Most planned integrated schools belong to the Grant Maintained Sector.

- **Controlled Integrated School (CI)** is also managed by a Board of Governors, but receives its budget from an Education and Library Board. The school is treated like any other controlled school, 4 parents are entitled to sit on the Board of Governors (compared with 2 in an ordinary controlled school and 6 in a GMI school).

How does a school transform? This process can be done in two ways:

- A written request to transform to an integrated status is submitted to the Board of Governors by 20% of the parents

- The Board of Governors of the school decides that it would like to consider transformation and then consults the parents

If the school decides to proceed the parents vote in a secret ballot which is conducted by the Electoral Reform Services in London. If the
majority of voting parents are for an integrated school, the transformation starts.

When a school wishes to transform to an integrated one, many changes must be made. At first, the school is required by the Department of Education to draw up an Action Plan, which will identify key areas of school life which may require change. If a school is to be properly integrated, it must try to take account of three important issues, which are to do with enrolment patterns, management of the schools and the school ethos.

Firstly, school must include members from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds and should be open to pupils from other cultures and religious beliefs. Two main groups should be in roughly equal numbers in order to ensure that neither of them becomes dominant. The Department of Education accepts a balance of 70:30 (30% coming from whichever is the smaller religious group in the area) as a minimum for a school to be recognized as integrated.

The second important issue is the management of the school. In integrated schools parents are the most important group and should be involved in planning and running of the school. Parents are encouraged to become involved in many school committees, but the most important for them is Parents Council, where their education interests can be represented.

The last issue that should be taken into account is the school ethos. It is the most complex and difficult issue, because it is about preparing children for life in a pluralist society. The curriculum will therefore include “appreciation of the historical and religious differences, as well as obvious cultural forms such as language, art, music, literature and folklore.”

47 Wilson D., Dunn S., INTEGRATED SCHOOLS Information for Parents, Coleraine 1989, p. 12
The integrated schools are quite determined to be good schools in every sense. The main goal is to teach children to accept and understand differences, but a great emphasis is also laid on the level of education. Integrated schools are child-centered, which means that their ambition is to produce children who have high level of self-esteem. Children who are confident, not unduly worried about criticism and who enjoy participating in things. In order to achieve this, teachers should show that they value their pupils as people, show respect for their views and do not compare them with other children. What is more, parents work closely with teachers and are consulted regularly regarding their children’s behavior and work habits.

Is the curriculum in integrated school different from curriculum in other schools?

In the NICIE Statement of Principles it is written that “(...) the school as an institution seeks to develop mutual respect and consideration of other institutions within the educational community. Its core aim is to provide the child with a caring self-fulfilling educational experience which will enable him/her to become a fulfilled and caring adult”⁴⁸ - which means that like all other schools they should provide the best possible education for their pupils. The only difference is in integrated nurseries, where a unique ABC curriculum exists. This is an anti-discriminatory, anti-bias program, which is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. The teachers work with children on similarities and differences in culture, religion, gender, disability and race. Hopefully the curriculum will be used in all pre-school centers in Northern Ireland.

⁴⁸ Blakeman M., Cross M., Currie C., Minford S., Turkington O., Murphy E., What’s What in Integrated Education., a guide for teachers, published by NICIE, p. 22
One of the most interesting aspects, essential in integrated education is religion. Schools are Christian in character but children from all faiths and of none are equally welcomed. How is religion taught? If Protestant and Catholic children are in one class, what does the preparation for the sacraments look like?

Catholic children are offered preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in P3, the Sacrament of Eucharist in P4 and the Sacrament of Confirmation in P7. For other pupils it is time to focus on their own religious tradition (there is a programme looking at the Christian faith from a Protestant perspective, especially developed for integrated schools and also available for pupils whose parents desire this), however they attend to their friends’ feast to show them support. Children learn about Christianity together, visit churches and other religious places together, they pray together. They learn that it is possible to have different views and beliefs about some things and this has no consequences for the relations with friends.

Religious Education is an important element of integration but all parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious classes if they wish to do so.

Like in every school, conflict issues are natural and appear also in integrated schools. The question is how to prevent a conflict arising? The NICIE Statement of Principles affirms “that children should learn to use and trust non-violent methods of resolving conflicts” like circle time, open debate and discussion, assemblies and team building exercises.

Does Integrated Education make a difference? According to Schubotz and Robinsons` researches done in April 2006 among 16 year old pupils from integrated schools, 0% indicated unfavourable feelings towards people from minority communities. Schubotz and Robinson

A Background to the Development of Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, published by NICIE, p. 20

concluded in their studies that integrated schools “have a significant positive impact on how their students view the other main religious community.” On the other hand, the growth of the number of integrated schools has not been without opposition.

In Northern Ireland, apart from Catholics and Protestants, there is a third group of people called Christians. They are neither Protestants nor Catholics, they do not attend mass and do not go to church for any meetings. Instead of that, Christians gather together, read the Bible and have discussions. They try to live according to what Jesus said, but everyone can interpret His words in his/her own way.

During my visit to Belfast in August 2007 I devised a short survey that consists of 8 questions in which I asked for an opinion about present education system, as well as the role of integrated schools in Northern Ireland.

Ten people took part in the survey: 4 Christians (2 women, 2 men, aged 30-57), 5 Protestants (4 women, 1 man, aged 23-55) and 1 Catholic (woman, aged 51) who finished Grammar or Secondary School (3 people), had a degree level (4 people) and did not write their education level (3 people). I met these people in different places: in the street, shops or leisure centers.

Here are the questions and answers to them:

The first question was “What do you think about the present school system in Northern Ireland? Could you suggest any changes?” People taking part in the survey; all Christians, four Protestants and a Catholic, expressed a positive attitude towards integrated education, one Protestant answered “no” – that person answered “no” also for all further questions.

To the second question “What is your opinion of integrated schools? Are they needed in the present socio-political situation in Northern Ireland? Why?” Christians, as well as a Catholic person, answered that it is
a step forward towards integrated society. Protestants (apart from this one person mentioned above) had the same opinion.

Answers to the next question “What do you think about the number of integrated schools in Northern Ireland” were very similar- Christians, three Protestants and a Catholic person think that there should be more integrates schools. One Protestant person did not have an opinion, he suggested that there should be enough schools for people to have a choice, the last Protestant answered “no” without explaining the answer.

The fourth question concerned factors that are important in choosing a school for children: “What is the main factor while making a decision about choosing a school for your child? [For example: a character of the school- Integrated, Catholic, Protestant], closeness to your house, etc.? Why?” All people (except this one Protestant) answered the question very similar: the main factor in choosing a school for a child is firstly the level of the school, then closeness to house. In addition a Catholic person also underlined family tradition.

The fifth question “If an integrated school was in your neighborhood, would you send your child there? Why?” all Christians, a Catholic and four Protestants answered that integration with people from different communities is needed and they would do it. One of these four Protestants would send a child to an integrated school if the level of the school was high and only one Protestant person (the same one who is against integration in previous answers) answered “no” also to this question.

The sixth question “What subjects could a teacher from different religious background teach your child? What subjects shouldn’t he teach? Why?” – answers to this question were as follow: Christians think that subjects should be taught by good teachers, their faith does not matter, however religious education should be taught by representatives of each church group.
Two Protestants think that teacher’s faith is not important in teaching, one person did not answer the question, one person’s answer was not clear and one person, the same one who answered “no” to the previous questions, also said “no”. The Catholic person was not sure about the answer.

To the seventh question “What role do integrated schools play in the relations between Protestants and Catholic?” and eight “What do you think about the future of Northern Ireland?” Christians’, Protestants’ and Catholics’ answers were very similar. All people taking part in my research said that integrated schools help children in understanding different religions and have a positive role in integrating communities “they are breaking down old barriers of prejudice created by separation and ignorance of different Christian traditions”. They have also optimistic feelings towards the future of Northern Ireland.

On the basis of the results of this survey we could conclude that all Christians and most Protestants (Catholics cannot be taken into consideration because only one person took part in the research) appreciate the role of integrated schools. They would like more tolerance and mutual understanding between people having different Weltanschauung; however I have to admit that I met two Protestants (a man and woman in middle age) who were against integrated education. They strongly disagreed with the idea of a shared school, but unfortunately did not want to explain the reasons. Moreover, there was a 30-year-old woman (also Protestant) who said, that the questions I asked were very political and she did not want to have any unpleasantness from the authorities, although my researches were anonymous.

For this reason the results of my survey can be treated as preliminary, studies should be continuated and carried out on a bigger number of people.
References:

1. Blakeman M., Cross M., Currie C., Minford S., Turkington O., Murphy E., What `s What in Integrated Education.. a guide for teachers, published by NICIE
2. Wilson D., Dunn S. INTEGRATED SCHOOLS Information for Parents, Coleraine 1989
3. A Background to the Development of Integrated Education in Northern Ireland, published by NICIE, Belfast 2007
Tolerance is one of the most popular term in modern social-political, cultural, and jurisprudence literature. Accordingly with Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by the member states of UNESCO on 16 November 1995 “tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human... Tolerance is harmony in difference...Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace”. There are a lot of human approaches to define and investigate tolerance. But the quantity of psychological studies of tolerance is not enough yet.

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To understand the psychological aspects of tolerance it is necessary to see into the history of its origin and to bring in light the conditions which led to arising of this problem.

It is important to underline that the ideas of tolerance appear when the real intensive interaction among people of different cultures and religions begins. The result of such interaction is the increase of the level of tension, hostility, and intolerance what could lead up to wars in the society. The example of it is religious wars in XVII century in England. It is interesting that the idea of tolerance as readiness to recognize and accept behavior and beliefs of other people which are different from their own ones and are disapproved by them appeared namely in England at first.

Speaking about the psychological aspects of tolerance we consider it as both: a specific inner attitude and real behavior of a human being to anybody who does not share his/her views. The cases are not to be considered as tolerant ones, when an external behavior of anyone looks like tolerance but inside he/she does not respect another person’s views. Such behavior can be defined as “patient”. In these cases he or she controls him-herself with an effort in order not to express their true attitude to other people as a rule negative one.

To understand the essence of tolerance we have to describe the phenomena of human beings behavior which are marked by the word “tolerance”. A tolerant human being can be described as possessing such qualities as friendliness, quietness, sincerity. He or she is able to listen to somebody, to see the grain of truth in other persons’ views. He or she aspires to the consent with other people and to the development of the positive relationships, notwithstanding appeared contradictions and so on. Love as an aspiration to revealing of potential perfection in a beloved person can be called as an ideal sample of tolerance.
The opposite of tolerance is hostility, aggression, anger, irritability, enmity, condemnation and so on. Unfortunately, such negative interactions happen much more often. Such relationships can arise from very different foundations. Usually the cultural, religion and ethnic bases are discussed, but there are a lot of other causes of intolerance. For example, the everyday-life intolerance is extended very extensively in Belarus.

To understand the psychological nature of tolerance one can research the peculiarities of tolerant and intolerant people and the conditions of transition from hostility, aggression, anger, enmity to the mutual understanding.

Two different studies were carried out in order to research how people perceive and understand other people in the conflict situations. To achieve this goal, first, in the process of counseling we studied the critical situations which appeared in the close relationships (Lysiuk L.G.). Under life critical situations we mean such situations when a person comes across with the impossibility of realization of inner necessities of his/her life i.e. motives, strivings, and values. Second, we researched how young people perceive and interpret of moral conflicts and how they assess the behavior of the participants of such conflicts (Lysiuk L.G.).

The results of studying how a human being copes with critical situations have shown the following. During the process of counseling people mainly speak about the unacceptable behavior of their relatives (wife, husband, child, mother and so on). For example, a married woman constantly suffers from her mother’s reproofs and teaching how to live. Or another woman thinks that her co-worker views her as a competitor and that’s why she avoids socializing with the rest ones. Thus, we can see that these people feel themselves as offended. They are full of malice, anxiety, and tension.
As these clients think that the reason of their difficulties lie in their close people's behavior they try to change the behavior of their close people. For example, “I want to change the attitude of my husband to me”, “I would like just to be loved by my mom for nothing but just for I am”, “I set the goal, and I’ll achieve it”. All attempts to influence another person don’t solve their conflicts, but even more they make them deeper.

As a rule a person doesn’t analyze his own psychological states. These states are perceived as provoked by another person’s behavior and, consequently, they are rightful and true. Accordingly, a person doesn’t want to change himself. He/she believes if the behavior of other person changes the attitude to this person will be changed too. That’s why the activity of clients directs to search the ways to influence other people.

Although the scale of such kind of situations is incomparable with ones of religious, ethical and ethnical intolerance, but it is clear that the behavior and the psychological state of people in both types of situations are very alike.

The same peculiarities of perception and coping with critical situations were revealed while studying of solving of moral conflicts by young people whom we proposed to read some moral stories from books of Lev Tolstoy. Some parts of those stories were missed. The young people were to say what was written by the author in these places about the heroes’ actions, feelings, and thoughts. Then they estimated the heroes. First, the young people were to define the following concepts “kind”, “ill-natured”, “altruist”, “egoist”, “justified”, and “unjustified”. Then to clear the moral appreciation of the hero’s behavior young people were asked to estimate this behavior using the scales “kind – ill-natured”, “altruist – egoist”, “justified – unjustified” and, finally, they estimated themselves by these scales too.

The received data showed the following: most of the young people don’t attribute the moral way of overcoming of conflict situations to the
heroes. The following kind of behavior predominated in their answers: standing up for own interests (“It is my place and I sat and I will sit!”, “I was the first to take this place” and so on) and the indignation (“What does he want from me!?”, “He thinks a lot of himself!?”). Among the emotional reactions the negative ones predominated which, on the one hand, were directed to other people (the indignation, anger, irritability and so on) and on the other hand these emotions characterized the state of the hero’s person (resentment, annoyance).

The analysis of estimating of the moral concepts showed that the notions “kind” (75 % of all students) and “egoist” (85 % of the students) were exactly defined by most young people. However more than a half of them had the difficulties when they defined the notions “justified” (65 % of all students), “unjustified” (60 %), and “altruist” (42, 5 %). The accuracy of the definitions was estimated by comparing the answers with the universally recognized definitions.

It was interesting to note that the young people gave the moral appreciation to the heroes of the novels with partiality. They estimated one hero obviously negative and the other hero obviously positive although the heroes’ behavior described in the novel can not be estimated very unequivocally. So the young people perceived the heroes’ behavior inaccurately and attributed them the actions which they didn’t perform. When they tried to substantiate their moral appreciations to the heroes these grounds didn’t correspondent to the definitions of the moral concepts which were given by the young people. It means that the moral concepts are only known but they cannot be used equivocally in the situations which are very significant and emotional for people.

Then the young people gave the moral appreciations themselves the most of them were inclined to perceive themselves as the altruists and the kind and right people. Thus their self-appreciations correspond with the
appreciations by which one of the heroes of the novel was characterized. This fact is a sign of somebody’s identification with the hero.

These data allow to make the supposition that the young people have tendencies to behave themselves like the hero whom they like. As often there is no clear understanding of the moral concepts in the young people they defend themselves and perceive their own behavior as the moral one.

Having compared the answers of the young people about the heroes of the novel and the appreciations of themselves we revealed that there were 3 groups of the students. The first group consisting of 20 % of all participants is characterized by the equivocal definitions of moral concepts and these students exactly use these concepts for the appreciations and the self-appreciations. 27, 5 % of the young people belonging to the second group define the moral concepts correctly but they cannot use them for estimating heroes’ behavior and theirs. The students of the third group (52, 5 % of the participants) don’t define the moral concepts and use them equivocally.

So the results of both studies have showed that the participants of the studies mainly have tendencies in the conflict situations to perceive the behavior of another human being. They estimate another human being’s thoughts, feelings and intentions rather negative than neutral or positive. Such distortion of the perception of themselves and the others is connected with the absence of the clear ideas about moral concepts. The received data can be considered as the intolerance and the prepossession towards the people who are unlikable and with whom someone is in difficult relationships.

Further we will consider the conditions which are necessary for the transition from intolerance to tolerance.

First, it was revealed that the changes began when a human being recognizes impossibility and inability to live and to act from sheer force of
habit: “I get quite mixed up”. When a human being used all ways of coping with a crisis situation and didn’t find any ways of settling it he/she felt bewildered. Just at this time he/she has a possibility to turn to his/her inner world. Thinking about him/herself a human being begins to doubt whether his position is correct. For example, “I live in a permanent struggle with myself. I am always trying to solve my problem. But nothing helps me”.

It becomes evident for a human being that there are incompatible contents in his consciousness. For example, “I take offence and I am angry with my mother-in-law. I understand that she is mother of my husband. I see my husband loves her. I know it is correct, but my heart tells me the other. Such facts are the indicators of transforming the external conflicts into the inner ones. The human being begins to realize the incompatibility of two different contents of his/her consciousness: the known content (“I understand”, “I see”) and the emotional one (“My heart tells me the other”).

The overcoming of this inner conflict can occur through two ways. The first way can be characterized as “to follow the voice of heart”. On this way someone tips his/her negative feeling out, acquires allies to strengthen his/her own position (“I set my husband against his mother”), breaks off relationships (“I didn’t meet any more”) and so on. It is clear that such ways of the behavior make the situation worse.

The second way consists of the following of one’s duty or „inspiring other thoughts to him/herself” “although it is difficult and there is no trust”. These ways lead to some changes of the interactions and smooth over contradictions but they don’t give the chance “to overcome malice and injury finally”.

When somebody takes the third way he or she appeals to his/her own feelings and thoughts without connecting them with the actions of other people and life circumstances. In these cases the human being
begins to have doubts about the rightness of his/her own position and to think about what happens and about him/herself (“I live always in the struggle with myself. All time I am trying to solve my problem. None of tasted means by me is radical for solving my problem”). Conversion to one’s feelings and thoughts modifies the purposes. Instead of changing close people a client sets the purpose to change him/herself. As our research show it is possible when someone converses to one’s own values.

Thus, the second condition of the transition from intolerance to tolerance is the realizing personal values. These values form the system of coordinates to analyze the actual thoughts and feelings. In counseling the client realizes the personal value with the help of the psychologist.

Our research has shown that people who cope with their problems can consider the morals as very important values ("I didn’t know that the adultery is a sin"). They view another human being as an unconditional value ("I have understood that it was painful for him") and they value their own person too ("It is impermissibly to treat me").

In one of our research we found that the desire to develop oneself, and especially the type of tasks of one’s self-development, correlates with peculiarities of the world of view (Birukevich H.A.). People with an egocentric position usually don’t see the necessity of self-development. They reveal some self-satisfaction. They think that they have already achieved almost all purposes in the development of their personality. Even if they set some tasks of self-development they want to increase the qualities which are the source of their well-being and achievements.

Extremely different facts were found while investigating people with spiritual world of view. These subjects admit having achieved some good results of their self development, and still they don’t want to stop their development. They have desires to raise their capacities to understand other people and God’s will.
The beliefs of that people whose world of view are defined as humanistic one lie between ones marked as an egocentric world of view and spiritual one. These subjects clearly realize the tasks of self-knowing and self-development. They say about their striving for taking on such qualities which are necessary for their self-realization and improving of their social interactions (“purposefulness”, “patience” and so on). The motives of desirable changes are well-being and success especially in social relationships.

Thus, it’s clear that overcoming of enmity demands an appeal to one’s own values. And this appeal is possible when a human being possesses the values of definite content, i.e. moral and spiritual values.

Third, our research shows that the interactions begin to change when one understands another person not as a source of problems and negative feelings but as an unconditional value. We can illustrate these changes with the help of the following woman-client’s statements: “Now I understand, that he doesn’t like the thought that I loved somebody besides him...I was always thinking how it was difficult for me...And now I have understood how it’s difficult for him”.

The problem of the mutual understanding is extremely evident in the relationships among opposite genders. The success of these relationships is determined by the ability to recognize the differences between the gender’s roles and the mutual expectations.

The content of the gender role ideals of one’s own and the opposite sex in men’s and women’s samples were researched (H. Birukevich). We assumed that women’s ideals of their own and opposite sex were more similar to each other than men’s ones. Such tendencies were named as convergence and divergence accordingly. It was revealed that the degree of resemblance of an ideal woman and ideal man’s character was greatly different for women and men’s samples. The coefficient of correlation between man and woman’s ideals for men’s samples was $r_s = +0.36$ and
for women’s one’s was $r_s = + 0.65$. The results show that female’s gender ideal is sooner accepted by themselves as analogues to male’s one. On the contrary men imagine their gender ideal sooner as contrasting with women’s one.

It’s necessary to take into consideration the revealed difference and resemblance between gender ideals to understand men and woman’s mutual expectations. The level of convergence or divergence of somebody’s representation about ideal woman and ideal man’s character shows his/her attitudes to the relationship with persons of the opposite sex.

Forth, during the real interactions it’s necessary to compare appearing here and now feelings and thoughts with the one’s own values. Among these values there is an unconditional value of another person as a bearer of God’s image.

In the process of overcoming the critical situations such comparing takes place as a result of the mutual activity of a psychologist and a suffering man. The purpose of such activity is to overcome the contradictions among different contents of a human being’s soul. A psychologist helps a client to discover, build and hold his/her value system of coordinates. With the help of this system the strong feelings and emotions become definite and acquire a new meaning. For example, “I viewed my Mom from the other side...Now I don’t think that Mom continues to bring me up, she really worries about me... I feel my Mom wishes me good”. The people who are ready to change their attitude to close people consider the faith in God as the source of their hope and assurance.

Overcoming the contradictions among the different contents of a human being’s soul and integrating them in a new value whole makes a person free from the previous mistakes, offenses, anger; opens the future
which is not quite clear; and attracts with the possibility of changes accordingly with eternal truths at the same time.

In conclusion we want to recall the words of the famous defender of tolerance in Cromwell’s times. Many years ago John Saltmarsh said: “Your arguments will be as obscure for me as my arguments for you till the Lord doesn’t open our eyes”
Introduction

The reflections contained in this paper concern the way the notion of tolerance is constructed in everyday discourse in Canada, in particular in a minority discourse. They are based on research done among members of the Polish Canadian community in Montreal.

Canada is a multicultural state with a great diversity of ethnic groups that have all contributed to the development of the country and society. This diversity became institutionalized by the Canadian State, in the process that started with the introduction of the Multiculturalism Policy in 1971 and culminated with passage of the Multiculturalism Act in 1988. The Act stipulates that ethnic diversity is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and ethnic cultures are constituent parts of the Canadian
culture and national identity. This approach is reflected in an oft-repeated Canadian slogan “Unity in Diversity” (Canadian Heritage, 2007; House of Commons Debates, 1971: 8545-6; Laczko, 1994; McLellan and Richmond, 1994).

It is usually taken for granted that the discourse of inter-ethnic tolerance stems from the idea of multiculturalism that is supposed to be shared by all Canadians. However, a closer look at the way Polish Canadians construct the notion of tolerance in their everyday conversations puts in question the ideals of multiculturalism and the position of ethnic minorities as legitimate constituents of Canadian society. If Polish Canadian notions of inter-ethnic tolerance in Canada in any way correspond to the Canadian public opinion and attitudes, than a question arises whether tolerance is the best thing for social integrity and harmony in the area of ethnic relations.

Conceptualizations of Tolerance

The notion of tolerance today seems to be conceptualized in two ways. The traditional concept developed by early liberal philosophers such as Locke (1990) [1689] speaks of the passive recognition of the rights, beliefs and practices of “others”. It propagates non-interference – resignation from discrimination and bearing, or putting up with people, behaviours and ideas that we do not share or even like. This form of tolerance is referred to today as “classical”, “negative”, or “passive tolerance” (cf. Apel, 1997; Hayden et al. 2002: 205; Walzer, 1997; Zolo 1997).

Modern liberals, on the other hand, favour Mill's (1975 [1859]) and later conceptualisations of tolerance, which postulate openness and recognition of “other” people, ideas and behaviours as equal with “ours”. These new notions of tolerance, also called “positive”, or “active” tolerance
are stressed by the postmodernist scholars and activists who the point out to the positive benefits of pluralism and diversity. Some authors extend the meaning of active/positive tolerance to the activity of embracing of the “other”. (Galeotti, 1997; Hayden et al. ibid.; Mendus, 1989).

The observations contained in this paper indicate that the public common sense in Canada – at least its fraction represented by Polish Canadians – still uses the traditional “negative” concept of tolerance when applied to ethnic relations. Furthermore, this common sense discourse contains features that contradict the principles of Canada’s Multiculturalism Act and policy.

The Study in Context

The observations presented here have been made within the framework of an on-going research into Polish immigrant discourse of ethnicity in Montreal (cf. Domanski, 2004)\(^5\).

Montreal offers a complex multiethnic environment as a city with two linguistic majorities: Francophones, also referred to as French-Canadians who are the dominant group in the city today and Anglophones, also referred as English-Canadians who dominated the city for almost two hundred years and who remain the dominant cultural and linguistic category in most of Canada. “Francophones” are members of the French-speaking population who are mostly descended of the early French settlers, plus some assimilated French-speaking immigrants. The term “Anglophones” denotes a wider section of Canada’s population. Most of them are the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon settlers, but that category also includes other immigrants from the British Isles, such as, the Scots, the Irish, and the Welsh. In addition, there are quite a few other

\(^5\) Samples were collected in Ottawa in order to maintain a measure of control over the variables of political, social and linguistic contexts.
immigrants and their descendants who are called “Anglophones”, because they got assimilated into the Anglo-Saxon culture and language in Canada (cf. Anctil, 1982; Linteau, 1984).

Simultaneously, there are two dominant national identities present in the Montreal context. These are Canadians and Quebecois (cf. Breton, 1984). While belonging to the Anglophone group is generally tied-up with the Canadian identity, the Francophones generally identify themselves as Quebecois (Quebeckers), and not all of them identify themselves as Canadians (see Anctil, 1984; Linteau, 1982; Meintel, 1991).

In addition, approximately 27% of Montreal’s population consists of people belonging to other ethnic groups, among them a small (15, 310 people in 2001) but thriving Polish community. Those ethnic minorities have increasingly been recognized as the “third power” in the city. Many of the second and third-generation descendants of immigrants display multiple identities, a fact that adds to the complexity of the city’s social environment (Meintel, 1992; Piché, 2002; Symons, 2002).

Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

The study relies on combined methods of social anthropology with those of Critical Discourse Analysis. The main focus of this branch of discourse analysis is on the functions of language that go beyond communication alone and into the sphere of social construction of reality (see Potter and Wetherell 1987, 1988; Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

Data collection has been focused on everyday language use, as it takes place in private conversations and other forms of semi-formal and informal talk. It has involved participant observation and open-ended interviews with members of the Polish community in Montreal and Ottawa. Participant observation has taken place in the context of volunteer work for Polish organizations and participation in formal and informal
community events. A selected range of themes was explored in open-ended, unstructured interviews with twenty Polish individuals, first-generation immigrants found through snowball sampling\(^53\). All except two had college or university education. The sample was fairly balanced with regard to gender, age, length of residence in Canada, language competence and employment status. The interviews, were tape-recorded, transcribed and coded for the themes related to the subject of the study\(^54\). To this date, the recorded data consists of over 25hrs of interviews, plus 5hrs of informal conversations that are subject to an ongoing analysis.

Analysis involves looking for systematic patterns of discourse – to see how certain features of discourse repeat themselves throughout the accounts and in what contexts. The next step in analysis consists of identifying the functions and effects of the identified discursive acts and the larger patterns of discourse in the accounts (cf. Potter and Wetherell, 1987). The accuracy of the analysis is conditional on the ethnographic understanding of the Polish community and the issues it faces in Canada as well as in the global context.

The analytic claims are validated through field experiments where selected topics are introduced in conversations and some of the assumptions made by the interlocutors are challenged. The goal is to provoke people to talk on particular topics using their full range of rhetorical skills. Using this method, it has been possible to confirm that all discursive patterns found through the analysis of interviews are dominant in the Polish community in Montreal.

\(^53\) Sixteen interviewees were residing in Montreal and four in Ottawa. At the time of the interviews, five participants were employed by various institutions and companies, three were self-employed, four were retired, four were students, three were temporarily unemployed and one was a welfare recipient.

\(^54\) All the interviews were conducted in Polish. The extracts used in this paper have been translated into English as accurately as possible. For the sake of confidentiality, the speakers have been given fictitious names. The explanatory notes are given in square brackets.
Results and Discussion: Polish immigrants talk about inter-ethnic tolerance

Polish immigrants, probably like other minorities appreciate inter-ethnic tolerance in Canada, which in their opinion alleviates the assimilatory pressures that they would be subject of in the less ethnically diversified environments. Explicit norm of tolerance in the context of ethnic diversity is part of the discourse of cultural pluralism, which provides the ideational foundations of Canadian multiculturalism. Cultural pluralism is pronounced in a similar way in several other Western societies with substantial minority populations, such as Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., and the Netherlands (Laczko, 1994). However, Essed argues that the discourse of cultural pluralism in those societies implicitly reinforces a hierarchy of cultures: it is based on the presupposition that tolerance is possible as long as the minorities accept and internalize the norms and values of the majorities (1991: 17). Failing to do so, which often happens with immigrant minorities, leads to accusations of social inadequacy and to marginalization (Fortier, 1992; Oriol, 1979; see also McLellan and Richmond 1994).

The analysis of Polish-Canadian discourse shows that the notions of interethnic tolerance in Canada are based on the same presuppositions. Polish-Canadian discourse of tolerance is constructed around the notions of the dominant status of the French and English cultures in Canada, and the essentialist notions of uniformity of culture as the basis of national identity. More specifically, the cultural characteristics of the French and English Canadians are taken for granted as the only norm and positive standard. Cultural differences, such as those brought by other ethnic groups are treated implicitly and explicitly as a form of deviance from that norm and/or signs of cultural incompetence.
The way the concept of inter-ethnic tolerance is constructed in Polish discourse in Montreal can be summarized as follows:

• The tolerating subjects or the people who are presented as tolerant are almost invariably the majority groups, i.e. the English and French Canadians. As the “legitimate” Canadians or Quebecois, they are assumed to be the only people who are entitled to possess and display this attitude.

• The subject matter of tolerance is cultural differences which are presented as cultural incompetence.

• The objects of tolerance – people who are being “tolerated” – are almost invariably members of ethnic minorities who lack cultural competence in the local context.

• Tolerance in this discourse means enduring, bearing or putting up with cultural difference that “legitimate” Canadians do not necessarily like or approve of. The meaning thus produced is not equivalent to acceptance, respect, or embracing the “other”. It is more akin to the original Latin usage tolerantia, meaning “enduring”, “suffering”. Similar usages still exist in English and in other languages, e.g. in Polish where the synonym for tolerować (i.e. “to tolerate”) is cierpieć or in Hebrew where the word for tolerance sovlanut is derived from sevel – “suffering”.

• Tolerance towards ethnic minorities in Montreal is presented as an inadvertent result of ethnic diversity, rather than as a virtue or magnanimous attitude resulting from open-mindedness or even educated indifference. The usual explanation for the existing tolerance is that people in Canada have no choice but to tolerate cultural difference, given the overwhelming presence of different ethnic groups. The implication is that given a lesser diversity, the tolerance would be lower as well.
Another related explanation attributes tolerance to cases of “mistaken identity” that arise in a double-majority environment where individuals who display a cultural difference (i.e. minorities) are able to “pass” as members of one or the other majority.

It is not within the scope of this paper to run detailed analyses here, but the following two examples display some of the major features of Polish-Canadian discourse that are listed above. The focus in these extracts is on tolerance to foreign accent in Canada:

(... ) what struck me from the very beginning was the diversity. There are different nationalities here. I had lived in England for a long time and, despite my rather good English, whenever I started talking to anyone they always pointed out to me, oh, you are not English. Ha! Ha! They recognized that I was a foreigner. While here, I met with a saying that, well, "You don’t worry about your accent, because everybody here speaks with a foreign accent” [Engl.] Ha! Ha! This goes to prove that there are many different nationalities here and anyone can have a different accent and it doesn’t bother anybody in Canada.

Konrad, age 77, retired navy officer, veteran of World War Two, Montreal resident for 40 years.

It doesn’t bother anyone in Montreal that you have an accent. You speak with an accent and everyone thinks, “he must be an Anglophone” – when you speak French, or “he must be a Francophone” – when you speak English. It’s normal to speak with an accent. Uh, you have the biculturalism.
Marta, age 55, civil servant, resident of Montreal for 17 years.

These two pieces of discourse present an explicitly optimistic and favorable image of the social environment in Canada. They are examples of the discourse of cultural pluralism. Tolerance is associated here with ethnic diversity – the basis of cultural pluralism in Canada (see Laczko, 1994). Both speakers argue more or less explicitly that speaking with a “foreign” accent is tolerated in Canada. Yet, as always with everyday discourse, a number of other, different messages are constructed here by implication.

We can learn from these extracts about the linguistic norm in the local context: The supremacy of two linguistic expressions is clearly implied and taken for granted – English and French are what everyone is supposed to speak. We also hear that speaking with a “foreign” accent (i.e. neither English nor French) represents a deviation from the norm – it is implicitly assumed to be a potential problem. Both speakers also present two of the most popular explanations for why that deviation is tolerated in Canada: Tolerance in this discourse is presented as a necessity or (specifically in Montreal) a question of mistake, rather than a choice.

Finally, we can induct from examples of such discourse what kind of interethnic tolerance we are dealing with in Canada. This is not the kind of tolerance that one would expect in a multicultural environment – tolerance between parties on an equal footing, between people who choose to accept each other’s differences. This is a kind of tolerance that one finds in an environment dominated by one cultural community (in this case two cultural communities – hence the reference to “biculturalism”) and where the minorities are only happy to blend in.

Conclusion
Constructed in the way described above, the discourse of tolerance puts in question the position of ethnic minorities as legitimate constituents of Canadian society and as such contradicts the principles of Canada’s Multiculturalism Act and policy.

This is of course the way tolerance is constructed by one community in Canada. Further research is needed to see whether similar notions could be found in other sections of Canada’s population. However, if Polish-Canadian notions of inter-ethnic tolerance partake of the general public opinion and attitudes about social minorities in Canada, than we still have a long way before us until we reach the goals of multiculturalism.

This calls for a question whether interethnic tolerance should even be a goal in multicultural states. No matter whether negative or positive, forced or educated, tolerance involves some degree of rejection and exclusion of the “other”. It is also demanding on the tolerating subjects – it implies some fault or imperfection in the “other” that those who do the tolerating have to endure.

Tolerance in social relations is in fact the grey zone between a complete disapproval and a complete approval, a complete resistance and a complete acceptance – much in the same way as tolerance is conceptualized in mechanics (e.g. tolerance to fracture). The “suffering” stops the moment we “give way” and accept the “pressures” created by the “other”. Only when we learn to truly accept the others, we do not need to tolerate them anymore.

The ultimate goal in multicultural states should not be tolerance – incidentally (or not?) that word is not even spelled once in Canada’s Multiculturalism Act (cf. Canadian Heritage, 2007). The goal is a full integration of all the ethnic constituents of Canadians society and a harmony in ethnic relations. In order to reach it, we should learn and teach others to appreciate diversity and to approve social and cultural difference
as a normal and most of all legitimate aspect of our reality. If we
succeeded, we would not have to tolerate or “suffer” our differences,
anymore.

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A survivor of Auschwitz, hearing about the conference and the subject of my lecture said, with a cynical voice in German: “Gideon, von Auschwitz kann man nichts lernen”. “You can learn nothing from Auschwitz”.

After considering that she may be right, I thought I consequently had to cancel my flight to Gdansk.

But later, reconsidering the ideas I have collected, I came to the conclusion that we are nevertheless able to learn something from events in history, and the Holocaust after all, is history as well.

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But dealing with this delicate and painful field, we should never forget about the 6 (according to a recent evaluation even 7 million) million murdered Jews and other numerous millions of innocent people, who were murdered, or died because of Nazi Germany’s crimes, and the murderous actions of the Germans and their helpers.

Those millions suffered and were murdered not for the purpose, that the next generations will be able to learn something. They died because the Germans wanted to kill them and because the Germans were cruel, barbaric and inhuman. To learn something, you actually can use several kinds of sources and need no victims to be murdered for achieving this educational goal.

On the other hand, perhaps we can still learn from the surviving Jews, and all other participators in the historical events which happened between 1933 –1945, how to avoid and refrain from repeating some of the mistakes made during the Holocaust. The non-repetition of the catastrophe that is the Holocaust has to be the goal which so far has not been completely achieved. For such learning, I guess, the murdered Jews and all other victims of the vicious Germans would agree.

We should start this discussion by citing Primo Levi’s statement, from his book "The Drowned and the Saved": "We must be listened to: above and

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beyond our personal experiences, we have collectively witnessed a fundamental, unexpected event, fundamental precisely because unexpected, not foreseen by anyone. It took place in the teeth of all forecasts; it happened in Europe; incredibly, it happened that an entire civilised people, just issued from the fervid cultural flowering of Weimar, followed a buffoon whose figure today inspires laughter, an yet Adolf Hitler was obeyed and his praises were sung right up to the catastrophe. It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say.”

Let me go a step forward: the process of learning and self-ameliorating is only then possible, when there is an interest to abandon bad habits or evil tendencies - and improve oneself or a whole society. It seems, that the human society even today, 65 years after Auschwitz, does not want to improve. Atrocities against humanity are constantly repeated everywhere. This means, that even today there is still a lot to do.

Allow me therefore to mention several points which are essential for reconsideration, teaching and learning from Auschwitz for ours and the following generations. By this we will save the lives of millions of humans, let them be Jews, Christians, Moslems or of any other religion or ethnicity. This moral obligation does certainly not contradict the last will of the humiliated, tormented and murdered people of the German regime which was in power between 1933 and 1945.

57 ibid, pp. 199.
1. The Power of words
Words and ideas have a destructive often even murderous power. A self-
proclaimed close friend of Hitler, Hermann Rauschning, the chairman of
the Danzig (Gdansk) Senat documented the "Round-table ideas" of his
friend, the Führer. 58 The ideas, which Hitler expressed openly and clearly
in his written works and speeches from the early nineteen-twenties, were
later translated by him and his followers into acts, exactly and accurately
as depicted in his written works and sometimes even more drastically.
Auschwitz stands as the most symbolic example for them.
Had anyone cared to read or listen more carefully, one could have easily
recognized the ring and smell of danger at an early stage as our human
experience teaches us, that most catastrophes have early warning signals:
sometimes very obvious and clear, sometimes more hidden and vague. It
should have been easy to see Hitler’s murderous tendencies from his
approval to the implementation of the "Euthanasia" Programme, which
had been part of his writings and theories since 1929. 59

Rauschning published the text before the catastrophe began, but his
warnings as well as many others were simply ignored or willingly
overlooked. The lesson: our society has to be more sensitive and careful to
warning signs expressed in theories, speeches, written materials or any
other form. The seeds of crimes against humanity might be found there
early, thus allowing us to destroy the potential danger before it grows into

58 This book is, after the emergence of more trustworthy documents not any longer accepted as historical correct,
even though Rauschning sums up some of Hitler’s ideas very well. His claim to be one of Hitler’s close friends
has been shown to be untrue as he met him only four times and never one-on-one. In: Richard J. Evans, 'New
59 Gudrun Schwarz, Die nationalsozialistischen Lager, Frankfurt/Main; New York: Campus Verlag, 1990, pp. 50f.
a destructive reality. Ideas and words, even the most destructive and pathological - criminal, have a power and become destructive, when the person behind them gains the resources to implement and realize them. Even though Hermann Rauschning is not undisputed nowadays, he nonetheless documented Hitler's very early ideas, dreams and plans when they were still just a theory. Nobody paid attention to his warnings, and Auschwitz could be translated from theory into practice.

2: Dangers of Tyranny

Dictatorship and tyranny can be identified in very early stages and should be replaced quickly, before it manages to do harm and destroy the lives of many innocent people. Auschwitz was the ideal and a dream-come-true for Hitler and his accomplices. The existence of Auschwitz and that of the other extermination camps is hard to imagine without the destructive visions of the National Socialist leaders. Would have one of several attempts to assassinate Hitler been successful - History could be different. The patterns are always the same, only with local variations and nuances. In many cases, the Jews are the first to be persecuted and haunted. Only recently (2008) we have heard news from Venezuela about the emotions of fear and concern spread among the Jews of this country about their personal security and economical future under their current president Hugo Chávez, who follows step- by -step the full pattern of a "tyrant" or

"dictator". His "enemies" are not only the Jews in Venezuela, but all parts of society who might oppose his policies and decisions.

3: The Limits of Cruelty

Auschwitz has shown us, that the cruelty of man has no limits. The testimonies of the Holocaust Survivors document the special cruelty of the Germans, which was unlimited. The variety of methods of tortures they used in Auschwitz and other camps was endless. Almost all the Germans who were active in Auschwitz, with very few exceptions, shared this unlimited cruelty and were never really punished, except those few who were convicted during trials either in Nuremberg, Warsaw or Frankfurt/Main. The Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai by God the Almighty were desecrated and destroyed in Auschwitz: "You shall not murder" was replaced by: "It's your duty to murder". This can also be seen is the lack of religious affiliation among SS members in Auschwitz. Killing became a daily, routine activity within the camp’s bureaucracy and was seen by many as a necessary, simple, uncomplicated duty.

63 Deuteronomy 5:17.
4: The effective power of evil

Auschwitz has proven the easiness of getting infected by vicious intentions and acts of cruelty. In the camp itself, as well as in all countries occupied by Nazi Germany, the anti-Jewish sentiments, the feelings of hatred and evil were spread, praised, accepted and implemented into a loud cacophony of evil. Feelings of mercy, love, compassion and humanity were despised and mocked. Instead, those who acted in a brutal, sadistic, aggressive and murderous manner were appreciated, respected and honoured.66 Auschwitz was built as a laboratory for the evil of mankind. Together with scientists, geneticists and physicians, the Germans tried to change the world and rebuilt it under new regulations, principles, rules and basics.67

Point 5: The nature of mankind

Auschwitz has demonstrated and proven, that the proverb included in the Old Testament, reading “And the man’s heart-intention is evil”, seems to be true. But does it mean, that we are all naturally evil? This would be a wrong interpretation. The proverb expresses, that the potential of being bad and cruel exists in everyone since the minute of his birth, But if one is

66 On the political psychology of us vs. them by denying the victims their humanity: “The most general condition for guilt-free massacre is the denial of humanity to the victim. You call the victims names like gooks, dinks, niggers, pinkos, and japs. The more you can get high officials in government to use these names and others like yellow dwarfs with daggers and rotten apples, the more your success. […]” in: Ervin Staub, “The Psychology of Perpetrators and Bystanders”, Political Psychology, Vol. 6, Nr. 1 (Mar., 1985), pp. 66.
67 One part of the new world order was to create a Europe without Jews see Heinrich Himmler, October 4, 1943, Poznan, Poland in: Documents on the Holocaust., Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union, Document No. 161, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981, pp. 344 - 345.
able to ignore this streak and instead use the other positive parts of ones personality, which are good-hearted and human\textsuperscript{68} - he can do it successfully. It is up to each person to decide. We have an option to decide which road to choose - the road which leads to the Holocaust and Auschwitz or the opposite which leads to Gods Temple.

**Point 6: Education, Culture – and Criminality**

Auschwitz has clearly shown, that there is absolutely no relation or connection between culture, education, civilized manners, talents- and criminal behaviour. The Germans, who planned, built and managed Auschwitz, were not illiterates. Especially among the commanders were many highly educated, cultural, polite and good- mannered people. Despite all this, they were cruel murderers, sadistic guards and hangmen, including the women who served in Auschwitz and other camps. Some of the worst hangmen held and Doctoral titles. \textsuperscript{69} On the other hand, among those people who continued to be human, as the “Righteous among the Nations”, who saved Jews, we can find many simple, uneducated people.

**Point 7: Breakable boundaries**

\textsuperscript{68} Aleksander Lasik, 2000, pp. 317-321.
Auschwitz shows us, how delicate and breakable the non-written limitations, boundaries and rules of the normative social structures and behaviour are. The existing prevailing rules, which protect the society from anarchy and total chaos, can easily be abandoned, neglected and replaced by a different system of rules. Such phenomenon happened in the “Kingdom of Auschwitz”, defined by author and survivor of Auschwitz, Yechiel Dinnur, (pseudonym of K. Tzetnik), “The other Planet, the place which functions under different, unknown-to-us rules”.70

We therefore have to be alert in order to prevent structures, traditions and rules of our civilisation, which can easily be broken by a destructive power.

**Point 8: Auschwitz and the Free World**

Auschwitz was a test case for the reaction of the free, still humane world outside the borders of horrified and terrorized Europe. This world failed shamefully in its moral obligation to stop the death camp Auschwitz to function, by destroying the four big gas chambers and crematories by air raids.

From a military stand point such an operation was possible without much risk and a little effort only. The Allies under the leadership of the United State of America were reluctant to act decisively against the Nazi regime's concentration camps, considering victory on the war fronts more

This lack of response made it impossible to save the condemned Hungarian Jews from dying in the gas chambers in Birkenau. The governments, which stood apathetic vis-à-vis the realities of suppression, slavery and barbarism thus turned themselves into the position of collaborators and helpers, even though they themselves did not initiate the crimes. The decision not to bomb Auschwitz during the year 1944, a year in which such an operation was military feasible, is an eternal sign- of- shame for America and its allies. A possible bombing of Auschwitz- Birkenau in the summer of 1944 could have saved the lives of about 250 000 Hungarian Jews, as well as the lives of the Jews from the Ghetto of Lodz and from Theresienstadt. The most effective response to an evil, as the one demonstrated in Auschwitz, is counter- attack. This is the only language aggressors and criminals are able to understand.

Aggression and injustice can be reduced or stopped, but the condition for an effective answer is unity within the positive powers instead of apathy, weakness and double standards.

**Point 9: Solidarity injured**

An effective response to the evil of aggressors, as it climaxed in Auschwitz, exists not only within the external powers, but also within the victims themselves. It is sad to recognize and admit, that even in Auschwitz there

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was no complete solidarity among the victims. Neither between the Jews, who were considered by the Germans the main enemies, nor among the non-Jewish prisoners. It is normal and understandable that under harsh conditions of suffering a person becomes extremely egocentric and egoistic. But in Auschwitz such phenomenon should have been reduced to the minimum in order to fight back the common enemy - the Germans. Unfortunately, a unity and solidarity between the victims was never reached, although many attempts were made in this direction. Among the functionaries, even Jewish ones, we find a relatively large number of cases of identification with the perpetrators, and acts brutally and cruelly committed acts against the prisoners.

The Germans were aware of this tendencies in their prisoners and used it for their own benefit. Nevertheless, the percentage of turncoats and collaborators among the prisoners was not very high; in any case the most significant lesson for us is that these collaborators were mostly killed in the end. Most of them paid with their life for their betrayal and were not remunerated, not in money or spoils and not as they had hoped with life for their families.

72 "How was I able to survive in Auschwitz? My principle is: I come first, second, and third, Then nothing, then again I: and then all the others." by Ella Lingens-Reiner cited in: Primo Levi, 1989, pg. 79.

73 See one example in the diary of Calel Perechodnik, who worked as a ghetto policemen in order to save his wife and child, but even though he collaborated, his family was sent to death in Treblinka. Calel Perechodnik, *Am I a Murderer?*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1996, pg. 44f.
We have to point out also the positive aspects:

Auschwitz, which was planned as a laboratory for the ultimate battle against the unwanted "Untermenschen", the undesirable peoples, Jews and others - did not last forever. It existed for less than 5 years before it collapsed. However, the price paid was enormous. Nevertheless, Auschwitz failed to finish its designated goal - and was destroyed before the program was fulfilled. Moreover: shortly before the evacuation of the camp, on October 7, 1944 an uprising broke out which was planned, managed and implemented by the Sonderkommando members. They destroyed Crematory IV, killed several German SS members and wounded others. In the end they were overwhelmed by SS- units, stationed close by in Katowice: The story of Auschwitz, from the German side, is after all not a story of success.

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**Point 11:**

*Appeasement and its dangers*

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74 Czech, 1990, pg. 725f.
Ciechanower, Mordechai, Interview with Gideon Greif on March 8, 1996 in Ramat Gan/Israel, in: Gideon Greif’s Private Archive.
Sobolewski, Siegmund, Interview given to the Roza Robota Foundation on October 7, 1994, in: Gideon Greif’s Private Archive.
Pliszko, Lemke, Interview with Gideon Greif on May 9, 2003 in Givat Hashlosha, in: Gideon Greif’s Private Archive.
Aggressors and dictators do not understand the language of appeasement and quiet diplomacy. Would have the Munich conference have a different result, and given a different impulse to Hitler, Auschwitz would not have become reality. If Churchill had been in Chamberlains position in 1938-1939, it is not certain, but a possibility that the war and the Holocaust could have been spared from our generation or at least been shortened.\textsuperscript{75}

\textit{Point 12: A safe island for the Jewish People}

In the case of the Jews, Auschwitz was the ultimate proof to the instable, easily breakable and uncertain status of Jews in Europe. When the earth was trembling under their feet - nobody came to protect them. The Jews of Europe were completely abandoned. No government, no army, no organisation and no society came to rescue them. Few Gentiles, the so-called "Righteous Among the Nations", were ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Jews. Everyone else looked the other way and ignored their plight. The destiny of the Jews did not interest the others, leaving the Jews defenceless, easy targets for the Germans to deport the Jews on cattle wagons and then be taken to the Ramp in Auschwitz.

\textsuperscript{75} Churchill warned foreign minister Eden in July 1944, that the mass murder of the Jews in Europe was the worst crime in history in: Danuta Czech, 1990, pp. Xviii.
The Jews have been the eternal scapegoat, and will most probably remain like this forever. I am always asked, if Anti-Semitism is going to disappear sometime, and my answer is: Anti-Semitism has already existed for three thousand years and will continue to exist forever.

What lesson can be drawn for the Jews? The most important lesson is not to be dependent on anybody, never again become so helpless and vulnerable, and most importantly - to be able to defend themselves by all necessary means. Auschwitz proved irrevocably, that when the idea of killing all Jews is raised, there are a lot of supporters who will enthusiastically follow the most extreme ideas and plans. The Jews, this ancient people, if they wish to survive, have to learn the lessons from Auschwitz intensively and permanently.

**Point 13: The necessity of an independent Jewish State**

The Diaspora has been exposed during the Holocaust as a death trap for Jews. The Diaspora was not able to protect their lives in times of danger and left them vulnerable and defenceless. The creation of the Jewish state, although it was designed much before Auschwitz happened\textsuperscript{76}, is a certain answer and response to this challenge. Unfortunately, as the events in the Middle East during the last 60 years have shown, even a Jewish State

cannot offer an absolute protection to the Jews. Nowadays not all 13 Million Jews live in the tiny, almost invisible land called Israel, because there would not be enough space.

As mentioned, the 1.3 million Jews and other thousands of non-Jews, who where murdered in Auschwitz, did not die in order to teach us anything. They died, because the Germans wanted them to die, and had the means, machinery, power and possibilities to do so.

Nevertheless we can try to analyse the catastrophe that happened in order to define the mistakes that were made, and try to avoid them in the future.

People are used to repeat their patterns of behaviour and repeat their own mistakes. It is a part of being human and the human character does not change within 60 or 70 years.

Point 14: Aspects for future research

The concentration camp Auschwitz raises a lot of questions, possible consequences and challenges for the present and future. There are human fields and behaviour tendencies, demonstrated in Auschwitz, which are still unknown to us and will have to be part of future researches. The most important aspects in this context are the psychological and psychiatric ones. The Germans will be the ones who primarily have to cope with them

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77 Genocides in different countries e.g.: Cambodia 1975-1979, Rwanda 1994 and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992-1995 among others have shown, that human nature even after the experiences of the Holocaust has not changed. Holocaust Survivor Elie Wiesel referred to it: "If the world had listened, we may have prevented Darfur, Cambodia, Bosnia and naturally Rwanda." [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/4205319.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/4205319.stm) (accessed 21/07/2008).
on the side of the perpetrators. For instance, research will have to find out how people can turn from normative citizens, who grew up in a civilized country, and turn so easily into brutal murderers within days, and then return to their former law abiding and normative behaviour as soon as Auschwitz was closed and abandoned.  

78

**Point 15: The Bystanders**

We will have to find out, how it was possible for so many decent neighbours, associates, relatives, friends and partners of Jews, to look aside, remain silent and ignore the crimes that were perpetrated before their own eyes.  

79

The most relevant questions and consequences concerning Auschwitz, for the present as well as the future, are in the field of moral and behavioural theories. They have to be discussed, analyzed and researched urgently, until a satisfactory learning emerges, which can be used for the teaching of our children and grandchildren.

The lessons and consequences we can draw from Auschwitz are different for each party involved. The lesson for the Germans will be a different one than those learnt by their victims. We should never lump all sides together. In the case of Auschwitz, it is even more important because the Germans tried to erase the natural border existing between perpetrators and victims. The most obvious and extreme example of this was the

78 Among many others, who committed crimes in Auschwitz, is Dr. Victor Capesius who returned until he was arrested in 1959 to a very well ordered existence as a model citizen in: Irmtrud Wojak (ed.), *Auschwitz-Prozess 4Ks 2/63 Frankfurt am Main*, Berlin: Vice Versa, 2004, pgs. 338ff. Further information in: Dieter Schlesak, *Capesius, der Auschwitzapotheker*, Bonn: Dietz, 2006.

Sonderkommando squad, a unit where Jews were forced to become part of the killing process. In the creation of the Sonderkommando, defined by Primo Levi "... [as] National Socialism’s most demonic crime"\footnote{Primo Levi, 1989, pp. 53.}, there was a hidden agenda besides the obvious one: to eliminate and cover the difference between the real murderers, the Germans, and their victims, the Jews. The victims themselves would then be filled with sentiments of guilt as those who took part in the killing process.

The Germans did this in order to destroy the soul of the Jews and fill it with eternal feelings of shame and guilt: "I must add. That many (including me) experienced `shame,` that is, a feeling of guilt during the imprisonment and afterwards, is an ascertained fact confirmed by numerous testimonies. It may seem absurd, but it is a fact. [...]"\footnote{Ibid, pp. 73.}

The attempt to make the Jews feel as accomplices - failed. Most Sonderkommando men, except rare cases, did not forget who they were and to which side they belong to. One fact should be emphasized: they witnessed the real murderers, who were pouring Cyclon B into the crowded gas chambers. Those where the Germans, not the Sonderkommando men. Even this sophisticatedly and cruelly designed plan to make the Jews feel guilty about the death of their own people, failed in the end.
Point 16: A warning sign

Auschwitz has been a warning sign to our generation in the context of the individual strength and power to resist evil powers. It is however necessary for the human society to strengthen the “civil courage”, for the sake of creating a solid resistance power against evil regimes. A strong, meaningful collective response to evil can be very effective and destroy any potential renewal of evil. Some courageous women demonstrated on the Rosenstraße in 1943 opposite the prison building where their Jewish husbands were arrested, shortly before their planned deportation to the Death Camps. Some of the victims which had already been sent on their way to Auschwitz were even returned to Berlin. As a result to their brave resistance and civil disobedience, contrary to all expectations, their husbands were released. In this episode the Third Reich was shown to be a frightened, uncertain and fearful regime, hesitant and weak, as soon as it was confronted with an unexpected opposition. I am confident, that learning and remembering this example of the Rosentraße episode is extremely important for following generations.

The strengthening of civil courage and the power of individuality is, according to my belief, the most challenging lesson of the Holocaust and Auschwitz. A challenge for the world which saw, knew and witnessed the

crimes and remained passive. In many cases the silence was triggered by greed and an economical benefit for the individual. This economic advantage was an indirect result of the murder of the Jews in Auschwitz and other death camps. As in the case of the deportation of the German Jews to Auschwitz in 1943, according to many sources, including photographic evidence, many neighbours of the deported Jews did not wait until the Jews had left the town on trains, before taking hold of their apartments, properties and jobs.³³

Auschwitz is a warning to mankind also in the principle, that even though it started with Jews it does not stop there. Simultaneously, Poles, Russians and other innocent people were murdered as well as thousands of German citizens with disabilities or mental diseases in the framework of the “Euthanasia” program: A criminal regime and its criminal leaders often kill their own people brutally, when they think that it serves their interests. In Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Uganda, Cambodia, Argentine, Greece and many other countries on all continents, thousands of local citizens are murdered by their own governments, even today, after having witnessed Auschwitz. Therefore vicious regimes should be removed from power before they accomplish their plans. Often Jews are the main target at the beginning, the convenient scapegoat, but it does not mean that the regime will stop after having killed the Jews. A murderous, criminal regime will go on until it satisfies his murderous temptations and has consolidated its power.

³³ Hilberg, Raul, 1996 pp. 236f.
A criminal regime needs the silence of its own people, and cannot afford inner opposition. Besides the Rosenstrasse episode⁸⁴, there was also the vehemently expressed public opposition to the Euthanasia Operation.⁸⁵ This surprising, unexpected spontaneous reaction of some courageous Germans to the "Euthanasia" plan, forced the Regime to limit their operation and to stop it officially - although not completely - in 1941, after hundreds of thousands had been tortured and murdered, Jews among them (not many).⁸⁶

The Rosenstrasse episode plus the popular opposition to the "Euthanasia" plan are proof, that there was a chance of sabotaging and disturbing the existence of the Nazi regime and put a stop to its prevailing terror policies, and by this limit crimes against humanity.