

# **Proposals for the Future Development of Peace Education in Hiroshima City - Based on a Comparative Analysis of the Peace Education Curricula of Hiroshima and Dresden**

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## **Abstract**

Every year students in schools in Hiroshima City study a unique Peace Education curriculum that came about as a direct result of the unique historical experience of the city. During the Second World War, the city of Dresden in Germany suffered similar levels of destruction to Hiroshima. Due to the fact that the two cities endured similar historical experiences in this respect and also have other significant factors in common, an investigation was carried out to compare and contrast their respective Peace Education curricula.

Despite the fact that it was ascertained at an early stage that no directly comparable subject to that existing in Hiroshima was being taught in schools in Dresden, the investigation did identify several areas of commonality between the cases, including a strong commitment at both the city government and popular level towards issues relating to peace and international understanding. Furthermore, it also revealed areas where aspects of the teaching of the subjects of History and Political Science in Dresden schools could provide valuable suggestions for the future development of Peace Education in Hiroshima since the Japanese city has been contending with a complex political controversy over the subject for more than two decades.

As a result of comparing the curricula of the two cities, the following two main proposals were drawn up regarding means by which Peace Education in Hiroshima could be developed in future. In accordance with the strengths identified in the Dresden case, the author proposes that: 1) efforts are made to broaden the study of the historical background to the atomic bombing in Peace Education classes, both with regard to classroom study and the large-scale events that take place every year as parts of the curriculum; and 2) efforts are made to facilitate a greater degree of internationalisation within the subject, in order to give students an opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the events that led to the destruction of Hiroshima and to establish meaningful links with people of other nationalities who hold similar views with regard to issues relating to peace and nuclear weapons. To facilitate these proposals, the author suggests the introduction to Hiroshima's Peace Education classes of new teaching materials, more student-centred teaching strategies and the development of regular links with

foreign nationals who are resident in the city.

## 1. Introduction

The topic of this paper concerns proposals for the future development of Peace Education in the city of Hiroshima which have been drawn up on the basis of a comparative analysis carried out between the Peace Education curricula of the Japanese city and that of the German city of Dresden.

In many schools in the city of Hiroshima there exists a unique Peace Education curriculum that is not taught anywhere else in Japan. This curriculum came about as a direct result of the city's tragic experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is taught at all of the elementary, junior high and senior high schools administered by the Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education (the HMBE). In Peace Education classes, students study a variety of issues related to the atomic bombing, including material focusing on the bombs' destructive effects, the post-war legacy of the survivors - the Hibakusha, and the subsequent Cold War and nuclear arms race. As an employee of the HMBE between 1996-9, the author had the opportunity to observe classes of this curriculum in a number of schools and came to appreciate the strength of its geographically-specific message about the importance of peace and international understanding.<sup>1</sup>

During the Second World War the city of Dresden in eastern Germany suffered a similarly tragic experience to that of Hiroshima: the centre of the city was almost completely destroyed during the British air raids of the night of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February 1945. The historical experience of the city has much in common with that of Hiroshima, as does the deep appreciation of a significant number of its citizens of how people on the side of the initial aggressor in the Second World War ultimately came to become its victims. The experiences undergone by the two cities also represent important turning points in twentieth century history, which to this day provide the focus for much intellectual debate.

Due to the fact that the two cities share a comparable historical experience and also other common features in relation to the positions they now hold in the modern world, an investigation was initiated to compare their Peace Education curricula in order to identify areas of potential strength and weakness between them. As a result of this investigation, it was determined that despite the fact that no directly comparable curriculum to that existing in Hiroshima was being taught in Dresden schools, the situation in the German city with regard to the teaching of other curriculum subjects such as History and Political Science was in fact comparable to the Hiroshima case. Furthermore, with regard to the political controversy that has dogged the development of Peace Education in Hiroshima for many years, it was also determined that comparison with the Dresden case could reveal some significant insights which could potentially aid the future development of the subject in Hiroshima. The results and implications of this investigation will be elucidated in the following sections of this paper.

The paper consists of five sections: in the first section an explanation is given of the reasons behind the selection of the two cities for analysis, which rests on the author's contention that the cases have four significant factors in common. The second section provides an outline description of the teaching of Peace Education in the two cities; the third section describes the three-stage comparative analysis carried out with regard to the cases; the fourth section contains proposals for the future development of Peace Education in Hiroshima, drawn from the comparison with the Dresden case; the fifth section is the conclusion.

## **2. The Comparability of the Cases**

In the author's view, the cases of Hiroshima and Dresden have four significant factors in common which makes a comparison of their Peace Education curricula academically meritorious. These factors are as follows:

### **2.1. Destruction from the air**

Firstly, and most importantly, the two cities suffered terrible devastation as a result of air raids during the Second World War. Despite the difference in the weapons used and the number of war machines used to bring them, Hiroshima and Dresden share the fact that the cause of their destruction came from an air attack.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1945, the city of Hiroshima was almost wiped from the face of the Earth by the use of only one bomb: the 3.2 metre-long, gun-barrel atomic bomb, nicknamed 'Little Boy' dropped by the United States B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay. Just under four months earlier on the night of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February 1945, a force of 773 Avro Lancaster bombers of the British Royal Air Force attacked the city of Dresden in eastern Germany. In the two waves of the British attack, a devastating firestorm was created in the centre of Dresden due to the concerted use of thousands of incendiary bombs which engulfed much of the centre of the city. Both attacks caused devastating loss of life and terrible injuries to the survivors; in the Hiroshima case, survivors of the atomic bombing continue to suffer from the effects of the radiation they were exposed to in 1945.

### **2.2. Historical turning points**

A second significant factor relates to the fact that both attacks represent important turning points in the history of the twentieth century.

The February 1945 attack on Dresden marked the beginning of the end of the controversial RAF tactic of indiscriminately 'area bombing' German towns and cities. Previously, this tactic had been used to devastating effect on cities such as Hamburg and Cologne. However, following reception in March 1945 of first-hand reports of the destruction wrought by British bombers upon what had formerly been one of Europe's most beautiful cities, Prime Minister Winston Churchill ordered the head of RAF Bomber Command Air Marshall Harris to cease such operations and henceforth focus on more specific military targets.<sup>2</sup>

In the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the world witnessed the first terrifying episode of the nuclear age: it now required only one atomic bomb to reduce an entire city to ashes. The early experiments carried out by German scientists in the late 1930s, followed by the secret research of the Manhattan Project led to the first aggressive detonation of an atomic device above a major city on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945. Mankind now possessed the means to bring about his own destruction, the threat of which was only to deepen during the ensuing post-war nuclear arms race.

### **2.3. The wartime atrocity debate**

A third factor relates to the fact that since the end of the Second World War, much intellectual debate has centred on whether the attacks on Hiroshima and Dresden represented wartime atrocities.

During the war a number of particularly horrific events took place which have been subsequently recognised as amounting to wartime atrocities, two of the most infamous being the decimation of

Europe's Jewish population by the Nazis and the brutal treatment of prisoners of war by the Japanese armed forces. In the cases of Hiroshima and Dresden, due to the indiscriminate use of atomic weapons in one case and the intentional use of bombing strategies designed to produce a firestorm in the other, much post-war debate has focused on the rectitude of classifying either attack in a similar vein. Complex and emotive issues relating to Allied military imperatives and the contemporary political climate surrounding both events continue to arouse significant controversy to this day.

In this paper, it is not the author's intention to enter into the debate of whether or not the attacks amounted to wartime atrocities, but simply to draw attention to the fact that the debates surrounding these issues represent another factor that the cities have in common.

#### **2.4. Continued existence in the public mind**

A fourth factor relates to the fact that the names of the cities 'Hiroshima' and 'Dresden' continue to resonate in the minds of many people around the world in the modern era as symbols of great tragedy and suffering in the twentieth century.

Many of the conflicts that ravaged the twentieth century brought destruction to a large number of cities around the world: for example, Coventry, Rotterdam and Kiev during the Second World War, Hanoi during the Vietnam War and Sarajevo during the war in the former Yugoslavia. However, the author is of the opinion that with regard to Hiroshima (and equally so of course for Nagasaki), the mere mention of the word conjures up images of nuclear destruction in the minds of people around the world. As an illustration of this phenomenon, one can consider the case of the fire-bombing of Tokyo in March 1945. On the night of the 9-10<sup>th</sup> March 1945, the US air force launched a devastating attack on the city of Tokyo which claimed more than 80,000 lives and destroyed great swathes of the city; this represented a truly catastrophic event for the entire Japanese nation. However, over half a century later, by no means does this event continue to carry the dreadful notoriety of the fate that was to befall Hiroshima and Nagasaki five months later.

With regard to Dresden, despite not bearing the terrible weight of the nuclear issue, in European countries the name of the city remains for many people synonymous with the epitome of destruction brought about by conventional Allied air raids during the Second World War. Dresden represented the climax of the strategy of 'area bombing': within the city the RAF succeeded in producing "the perfect firestorm". However, it was also the attack that brought the greatest shame upon its perpetrators; it was "the one that could not be explained away"<sup>3</sup>. The almost total gutting of the picturesque heart of the 'Florence on the Elbe' remained a serious blemish on the war-record of the supposedly 'good' Allied side in the post-war era, which has only really begun to fade following the reunification of Germany in 1990.

Therefore the existence in the consciousness of many people throughout the world of the names of the cities in association with an historic event, and in both cases a truly tragic one, is another factor shared by Hiroshima and Dresden.<sup>4</sup>

### **3. Peace Education in Hiroshima and Dresden**

#### **3.1. Peace education in Hiroshima City**

The Peace Education curriculum that was to develop in Hiroshima came about as a direct result of the city's bitter post-war experience. In accordance with the wishes of the survivors of the atomic bombing,

the devastated city was to be reconstructed as an ‘international city of peace’. In 1949, this wish was written into governmental statute by means of the “Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law” which was passed unanimously by the Japanese Diet. General recognition of Hiroshima as the ‘city of peace’ provided the conceptual and institutional framework for a wide variety of city groups and organisations to put into effect the widely-held desire of Hiroshima people to work towards peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons, which was commonly expressed through the slogan ‘No More Hiroshimas’.

From the outset, the city’s educational establishment was heavily involved in efforts aimed at developing Hiroshima as a city of peace. Senior education officials participated in discussions about the future direction of city policy and students in schools learnt about the horrendous experience of the atomic bombing from the survivors, the Hibakusha. In 1968, the Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education (HMBE) distributed its first official guidelines for the teaching of the subject of Peace Education to elementary, junior high and senior high schools. Subsequently, these guidelines have been frequently revised and updated, with the fourteenth edition being distributed to schools in March 2004.

Today in elementary and junior high schools administered by the HMBE, classes of Peace Education take place every year towards the end of the first academic term, usually in late June and July. Prior to the major national educational reforms that came into effect in April 2001, students at these schools attended 1-2 classes of the subject per week for a cycle of approximately six weeks. Since the introduction of the reforms, Peace Education classes (in Japanese called *Heiwa Gakushu*) have been incorporated into the newly-created Integrated Studies lessons (*Sogo Gakushu*); this has in many cases caused a reduction in the study time allotted for the subject.<sup>5</sup> At high school level, individual school principals have had more freedom in recent years to arrange the scheduling of Peace Education classes for their own schools as they see fit; this is in part due to the ongoing political controversy surrounding the subject, about which more will be said below. This has led to a reduction in the number of specific classes of Peace Education *per se*, but also to an increase in the adoption of a whole-school education policy which seeks to bring aspects of the subject into many facets of school life. Under this policy, issues dealing with the suffering caused by war and the need for increased international reconciliation to facilitate world peace are being addressed in classes of Social Studies and Moral Education and more emphasis is being placed on creating an international outlook through student exchanges and charity campaigns.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.2. Peace education in Dresden

At an early stage of the investigation into Peace Education in Dresden it was ascertained that no specific subject of that name was being taught within the city’s standard school curriculum. This was not a wholly unexpected discovery since the two cities underwent greatly contrasting historical experiences in the post-war period which have directly affected the evolution of their school curricula. It was also ascertained however, that aspects of the teaching of Peace Education, for example, issues relating to the abolition of nuclear weapons and the facilitation of international understanding in the modern era, did come strongly into the teaching of the subjects of History, Political Science and Ethics in Dresden’s junior and senior high schools, and also to some extent into the teaching of German Literature and Religious Studies. This was due to the fact that learning about such issues has been regarded as a high priority by the city education department and city government since the reunification of Germany in 1990. Peter Gent, Director of History at the City of Dresden Education Authority explains:

Peace Education is an important part in our education and also in our curricula...What we feel

here in Germany and especially here in Dresden, is the responsibility for [facilitating] mutual understanding, the moral responsibility, between the different peoples and states and countries... Peace Education forms an important part of educational legislation but most importantly for us is that it forms a vivid part of the school life and isn't only in the curricula or in the constitution. There are a lot of projects going on and have been going on over the past years. This is the case across [the state of] Saxony but is most prominent in Dresden.<sup>7</sup>

This development has come about as a direct result of Dresden's unique twentieth century historical experience: in a similar respect to the situation in Hiroshima, where its historical experience led to the development of its position as an international centre for peace-related activities, Dresden's history has led to it becoming a growing centre for activities related to peace and international understanding in central Europe in the post-reunification era. Investigations carried out within the city revealed a strong spirit of cooperation existing between its educational community, city government and other important actors such as the Protestant and Catholic Churches over these issues. The generation of this phenomenon is directly related to Dresden's experience under the communist German Democratic Republic, (the GDR).

Prior to 1990, under the repressive policies of the GDR regime, discussions relating to the promotion of peace and international reconciliation (especially with regard to reconciliation with the West) were expressly forbidden. Despite the desire of the majority of the survivors of the Dresden firestorm for reconciliation with their former enemies and a renunciation of war in the years following 1945, (similar to their counterparts in Hiroshima), open expressions of such sentiment were actively repressed by the state.<sup>8</sup> This phenomenon was felt particularly strongly within the education system where, far from students being able to attend classes of subjects like Peace Education, classrooms in the GDR were used as platforms to expound the diametrically opposite doctrines of militarism and separation through a variety of means, including presentations of warlike dramatic performances and films to younger students and the forcing of their elder counterparts to perform military drills during school hours.

At that time, the only social bodies permitted to address issues related to peace and international reconciliation in a relatively open manner were the Protestant and Catholic Churches which were seeking to deliver an apolitical message of the hope for peace for all humankind. In the late 1980s in the run up to the collapse of the GDR system, these Churches became major focuses for opposition towards the communist government and in 1989 were the locations for mass demonstrations against the GDR government in the cities of Dresden and Leipzig. Following German reunification, the Churches became some of the principal supporters of activities aimed at fostering ties between former enemy nations, and today they continue to work in cooperation with a number of other actors toward this end.<sup>9</sup> Particularly active in this regard has been the organisation especially created to oversee the reconstruction of Dresden's Protestant cathedral the Frauenkirche, which, prior to 1990 had been left in its ruined state throughout the GDR era. Seen historically as a central symbol of the city of Dresden, it is now being rebuilt as an inter-denominational 'Temple of Peace'.

During the GDR era the message of Peace Education was protected within the churches by people who wanted to communicate the importance of peace. After German reunification, it became even more important for people here in Dresden - this situation was related to the end of the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. As a result of living through such dangerous times people were very interested in and sensitive towards issues that related to creating a stable peace. (Christoph Münchow)

With regard to the Frauenkirche, this special place, this wounded church, people are open to listening to world opinion. It is an authentic place to act as a centre for activities dedicated to peace and international understanding. (Jöst Hasselhorn)<sup>10</sup>

#### **4. Comparative Analysis - The Two Curricula and Their Surrounding Socio-political Contexts**

This section focuses on the areas of difference and similarity in the Peace Education curricula of Hiroshima and Dresden in terms of both educational and wider contextual aspects.

##### **4.1. Areas of Difference**

Aside from the obvious significant difference between the two cases in terms of there not being a specific subject entitled ‘Peace Education’ in the Dresden school system, there are three other differences which the author believes to be worthy of attention.

Firstly, in terms of duration: In Hiroshima, the year 1968 saw the first distribution to schools of official guidelines for the teaching of Peace Education by the Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education, but in reality classes focused on that theme had been taking place from well before that date. In the wake of Hiroshima being designated a city of peace in 1949, various commemorative events had been regularly held for the victims of the atomic bombing and Hibakusha had begun visiting schools to describe their experiences. In sharp contrast, in Dresden, due to the fact that most if not all reference to peace-related issues was banned in schools under the GDR, Peace Education in the form that now exists in the city can be accurately classified as being a very ‘young’ subject.

Secondly, in terms of curriculum objective: At first this may appear to be something of an incongruous proposition since, one would assume, the ultimate objective of the teaching of Peace Education would be the facilitation of learning designed to create a peaceful world. With that in mind, in terms of the final *goal* of the subject in Hiroshima and Dresden, the author is of the opinion that this is indeed the case. However, with regard to the actual *means* by which this goal could be achieved, there exists a subtle but significant difference between the two cities’ curricula. In the Hiroshima case, having suffered the first experience in human history of the terrible destruction wrought by an atomic bomb, the emphasis of its Peace Education is, quite understandably, centred on the hope for a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. This is stated in the opening lines of the “Official Guidelines for the Teaching of Peace Education” issued by the HMBE in 1994:

##### **4.2. Objectives**

Based on Hiroshima’s experience of being the first city in human history to suffer a nuclear attack, engendering an understanding of the dignity of human life, with awareness of oneself being a member of the International City of Peace and Culture, and fostering an attitude in which the individual desires to make his or her own contribution to the realization of everlasting peace, Peace Education in this city aims to:

1. Develop in students an understanding of the facts and significance of the city of Hiroshima which suffered the first instance of the catastrophe of an atomic bombing, engender an awareness both of Hiroshima’s mission and responsibility in the world, and also develop a sentiment and desire for peace.<sup>11</sup>

Contrastingly, in the Dresden case a broader historical view is offered which places the tragic event of the destruction of the city within the historical context of the Second World War which was instigated by Nazi Germany. Emphasis is placed on deepening levels of understanding between the peoples of different nations in order to avoid the disasters that befell Germany in the first half of the twentieth century.

The starting point of the discussion nevertheless is the German aggression. In fact it is widely understood that that aggression is why we have to be made responsible for the subsequent reactions from both sides. (Gent)

The attacks on Hiroshima and Dresden were catastrophes; we should do everything to prevent them from happening again... To do this...we draw on history again and again so as not to forget that it happened; this is the first step. If students are aware of what happened, and are aware of the reasons and the reactions and counter-reactions, they have some political and historical background. Then this is a sort of foundation for Peace Education. (Schmidt & Fronzek)<sup>12</sup>

Thirdly, in terms of the ongoing political controversy that exists in Hiroshima: with regard to the future development of Peace Education, this represents the most significant difference between the cases.

It is an unfortunate fact that for over two decades the Hiroshima educational community has been caught up in a serious controversy over the teaching of Peace Education. There has been considerable disagreement over the content and objectives of the subject between, on the one side, the city education authority, the HMBE, and on the other side, a group of the larger teacher's unions. The position of the former group, supported by the national Ministry of Education, *Monbukagakushou*, has been that classes of Peace Education should focus on the facts surrounding the effects of the atomic bombing and should steer clear from wider political discussions relating to the rectitude of the use of the bomb as a (partial) response to Japan's aggression in Asia. This somewhat apolitical position has been opposed by the latter group, which has held that Peace Education in Hiroshima's schools should represent one part of a wider, whole-city 'Citizen's Education' that is dedicated to passing on the experiences of the atomic bomb survivors to the next generation in order to further the campaign for the worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons. Much bitterness and discord has arisen over this controversy and it has undermined attempts at communicating a common message across the Hiroshima educational community through the teaching of Peace Education.<sup>13</sup>

In sharp contrast, no such controversy exists in Dresden. Following German reunification, many significant changes were made to the education system that was inherited from the GDR, not least of which was the creation of a more internationalised curriculum which created many opportunities for students to meet and study with their counterparts in other European countries. In Dresden the high degree of cooperation that has developed between the city government, educational community and other actors like the Churches has served to create a more unified approach towards issues relating to peace and international understanding. Two examples of this cooperation can be seen in the creation of the Jewish Cultural History and Art course at Marie Curie Gymnasium and the convening of the biennial 'Heimat Europa' or Motherland Europe international youth meetings at the Frauenkirche. The Marie Curie Gymnasium Jewish Culture course, which received official accreditation from the German Ministry of Education in 2000, was created through contact between the school and Dresden's re-emerging Jewish



community, which was coordinated by the city's International Relations Department. 'Heimat Europa' is a large-scale, two week long event, that was held for the first time in 2001, which brings young people from all of Dresden's twelve sister cities to the Frauenkirche to participate in workshops and discussions centred on themes related to peace and international understanding.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.3. Areas of Similarity

Three areas of similarity have been identified between the two cities' Peace Education curricula.

Firstly, in terms of the commitment of the survivors: It is clearly the case that Hiroshima's tragic experience provided the motivation for the creation of its Peace Education curriculum - there is a traceable chain of events leading from the catastrophe of August 6th 1945 to Hiroshima being designated a city of peace, to the distribution of the first official guidelines for the teaching of Peace Education in 1968.

In the case of Dresden, the author would argue that the same can also be said. In the years following the end of the Second World War, the increasing repression and militarization of the GDR stifled much of the opportunity for the survivors of the February 1945 firestorm to instigate peace-related activities. However, within the city's Churches, their convictions were kept alive and were given fresh impetus in the late 1980s when the totalitarian regime began to unravel. Following reunification, the free expression of these long-held convictions provided much of the philosophical basis for the policy strategy of international outreach subsequently pursued by the new city government. Since 1990, the city's role as a central European centre for activities related to peace and international understanding has been strengthened by successive city administrations, and this has had a positive influence on the development of peace-related curricula now being taught in its schools. Christina Schöger, Director of the city's International Relations Department, explains:

Supporting the sister city activity is a policy priority of the city government of Dresden. The mayor wants to focus more on the European network. He is focusing in all his speeches, in his ideas and aims very much on a more close cooperation with the eastern European neighbours, that is with the Czech Republic and with Poland, because we are one region. Our sister city Breslau is only 270 kilometres from here with the enlarged EU from next year [speaking in February 2003], more close cooperation will be possible. The central aims are programmes or projects with young people; they have always been the most important part of our work. If there is a conference we would support projects with young people more. Why? Because if you give this positive experience to young people, that they meet people from other cultures, they learn how enriching this can be, how interesting, they learn much more about their own culture through meeting people from other countries. Then they have more difficulty accepting the ideas of the extreme right wing parties. They get much more tolerance towards others in general, not by being taught that tolerance is a good thing but by experiencing it. This is the internationalised policy we are facilitating.<sup>15</sup>

Secondly, in terms of city policy: Viewed from a whole city perspective, this similarity leads directly from that above - the promotion of activities related to peace and international understanding represents a key policy priority for both city administrations. For Hiroshima, the position of mayor of the city carries with it the responsibility of assuming the presidency of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, the city's principal peace organisation. Through Hiroshima's membership of the World Conference of Mayors for Peace, the mayoral incumbent also becomes automati-

cally involved in peace-related activities taking place in the international arena. With regard to Peace Education itself, the central planning document produced by the city government “The General Plan of the City of Hiroshima” says the following:

...We will work to alleviate starvation and poverty, human rights abuses, exposure to radiation, environmental problems, and the many other problems that threaten the health or disrupt the lives of people anywhere. We will reinforce our information exchange functions and promote research and study with respect to peace. We will promote peace culture, arouse peace consciousness, and promote peace education for the generations that will carry responsibility in the ages to come. We will nurture the “spirit of peace” among our citizens to help them actively build peace into their daily lives, leading to the creation of a true peace city...<sup>16</sup>

Although not so clearly statutorily defined as Hiroshima, in Dresden a similar level of priority has been accorded to such activities by a succession of city leaders since 1990. The current mayor, Ingolf Rossberg, has pledged continued support to projects begun by his predecessors promoting international understanding among young people and the strengthening of Dresden’s sister city network.

Thirdly, in terms of public response to Peace Education: Again relating directly from the first point above, the teaching of Peace Education in schools in Hiroshima and Dresden enjoys considerable support from the wider populations of both cities. Despite the existence of the controversy surrounding the subject in Hiroshima, adherents to both sides in the dispute are in agreement over the importance of passing on the experiences of the Hibakusha to the younger generation both in Japan and around the world in order that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are not to be repeated. (The main focus of disagreement between them is *how* and *in what context* this should be achieved). In Hiroshima many Hibakusha are involved on a regular basis with activities relating to the subject - whether recounting their experiences at the city’s elementary, junior high and high schools, or giving lectures to other groups of adults and children within the Peace Memorial Museum and the city’s community centres. Other Hibakusha who are not involved in this regard tend to pass on their experiences privately to their relatives and friends, reflecting the desire of the city’s older generation that the experience of Hiroshima should not be forgotten.

In Dresden, both the survivors of the attacks of February 1945, those who campaigned against the militarism of the GDR in the 1970s and 80s, and the many who took to the streets in October 1989 calling for democracy share a common desire that the dreadful mistakes of the twentieth century should not be repeated in modern Germany. Finally having the freedom to travel internationally afforded by living in a democratic country, it is Schöger’s belief that the majority of Dresdeners are in favour of the international understanding projects being organised by the cooperative network of the city government, educational establishment and other societal groups.

Most Dresdeners have enthusiasm towards the activities organised by this department. On an individual level, most of them are happy that they can now travel where they want. They are learning through every project we are doing, they are learning about those [new] contacts in other countries. So many people are wanting to get also those contacts, people are coming here with their association and individuals are coming and they want to get more contacts. The support of the mayor and the vice-mayors will be continuing for this...No one can say that the international relations activity in the city of Dresden is not a very important thing.<sup>17</sup>

## **5. Developing Peace Education in Hiroshima City - Possible Lessons from the Dresden Case**

As a result of the curriculum comparison conducted in this investigation, a number of areas have come to light that may indicate means through which the impact of Peace Education in Hiroshima schools can be enhanced, and at the same time some of the issues relating to it that have aroused discord between the two sides in the controversy defused.

### **5.1. Specific problems**

A complex and multi-faceted issue that has influenced many aspects of peace work in the city, and which is not limited solely to the educational community, the Peace Education controversy has had a markedly detrimental effect on efforts made to generate and communicate a common message about peace from the world's first atomic-bombed city. With regard to schools, a number of problems related to the subject have emerged in the last two decades, including the following:

- Many Hiroshima teachers have found themselves under great pressure in the workplace, torn between the rival positions of the HMBE and the teacher's unions over the objectives and content of Peace Education classes.
- An increasing number of junior and senior high school students (both current and former) have begun to express discontent with the subject due to a feeling that they are constantly having to cover the same material and that they are being indoctrinated by a body of radical teachers.<sup>18</sup>
- Accusations have been levelled at other teachers that they have been too quick to reveal the full horrific effects of the atomic bombing to students who were yet to reach an intellectual level at which they could absorb and intellectually digest such information. As a result of viewing photographs of the dead and injured and listening to the testimonies of Hibakusha, several cases have been reported of elementary school students experiencing profound shock, resulting in recurrent nightmares and other emotional difficulties.

Further shocking proof of the emotive nature of Peace Education came as recently as 2001 when the offices of one teacher's union research organisation were actually shot at by extremist elements of its political opponents.<sup>19</sup>

### **5.2. Possible lessons from the Dresden case**

#### **a. Regarding teaching materials**

The first issue that has come to light as a result of the comparison with Dresden relates to the teaching materials used in Peace Education classes.

It is clearly to repeat the obvious to state that the Peace Education curricula of Hiroshima and Dresden are very different from each other. In terms of the contrasting methods emphasised for the achievement of the goal of creating a peaceful world, (the Hiroshima focus on nuclear weapon abolition and the Dresden focus on fostering deeper international understanding), considering the post-war historical experiences of the two cities, it is not difficult to establish why the two curricula have evolved in the ways that they have. However, in the Hiroshima case it is arguable whether there is not in fact another issue at work here. In recent years, much criticism has been levelled at the Japanese Ministry of Education over the content of its history textbooks.<sup>20</sup> Commentators from Asian countries, especially in

China and South Korea, have accused official textbook writers and reviewers of glossing over information relating to atrocities committed by the Japanese military during the Second World War. This, they contend, is both insulting to the memories of those who suffered at the time and has also left a significant proportion of graduates of the Japanese state school system unaware of the facts relating to a dark period of their own history.

Within the Hiroshima Peace Education controversy, adherents to the position promulgated by the teacher's unions hold similar views with regard to this issue. In addition, they state that the conservative position adopted by the Ministry of Education in relation to Japan's twentieth century history has also had a negative influence on the teaching of Peace Education in Hiroshima. They underline the fact that the guidelines issued by the HMBE advise teachers to teach about the effects of the atomic bombing and the importance of world peace, but fail to stipulate that teachers should engage students in discussions relating Japan's aggression in Asia to the fate that ultimately befell Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nobuo Takahashi of the Hiroshima Institute for Education explains this thinking:

In Peace Education classes in Hiroshima students learn about various matters relating to the atomic bombing: they listen to the stories of Hibakusha and read about their experiences; they carry out fieldwork visiting monuments and bombed relics in the Peace Memorial Museum. However, important other matters are not addressed...Children have no experience of the bombing themselves...and they are not learning in detail about the [contemporary] historical context. There is a lack of scientific understanding; wider questions are not being asked, such as: Why did it come to this? Could we have stopped this? What does the 1945 experience in Hiroshima mean for future international relations?<sup>21</sup>

In sharp contrast to this situation, that existing in classrooms in Dresden is far less contentious: in History or Political Science classes there is no question of studies relating to the Dresden firestorm taking place in anything resembling a contextual vacuum, due to the fact learning relating to the horrors perpetrated during the Nazi era is central to the teaching of twentieth century history in all of the city's schools, as is the case across the whole of Germany. Consequently students learn that it is an undisputed fact that the disaster that befell their city came about as a direct result of prior Nazi aggression.<sup>22</sup> Therefore when examining the two cities' curricula over this issue, it could be argued that the situation in Dresden compares favourably with that in Hiroshima since the historical context surrounding the events of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February 1945 is addressed in a far less equivocal manner in Dresden schools than that surrounding the dropping of the atomic bomb in their Hiroshima counterparts.

As a consequence of this finding, the author is of the opinion that a more thorough in-class examination of the events leading up to the catastrophe of August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945 could lend considerable weight to the teaching of Peace Education in schools in Hiroshima, especially at the junior high level, due to the fact that it would provide students with a deeper understanding of the interrelating processes of cause and effect that led to the ultimate destruction of their city. With regard to the means by which this could be achieved, one possible approach might involve the introduction of new teaching materials which deal more comprehensively with the subject of the atomic bombings. A possible model for this material might be provided by the highly-acclaimed United Kingdom Schools' History Project textbook entitled "Peace and War"; this textbook is currently widely used in UK schools at Key Stage 3, the academic level that is equivalent to the junior high level in Japan.<sup>23</sup> In this textbook, important and controversial events that took place during the First and Second World Wars, (including the bombing of Dresden and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki<sup>24</sup>), are addressed in a sophisticated and analytical man-

ner through the use of textual explanations and the reproduction of a variety of sometimes contradictory contemporary sources - thereby reflecting the many differing perspectives that exist about these events.<sup>25</sup> Recommended classroom activities aim to encourage students to approach the specific events in a critical manner and to generate their own conclusions about them based on group or whole class discussion of the sources. If a case were to be made in favour of the formal introduction of some similarly stimulating teaching material to Peace Education classes in Hiroshima, the author believes that it would be a strong one.

### **b. Regarding large-scale events**

A second issue relates to the large-scale events that take place as part of the Peace Education curriculum in Hiroshima.

The contextual disparity that can be discerned in the subject material addressed in the Peace Education curricula of Hiroshima and Dresden is also to some extent manifest in the classroom and extra-curricula activities that represent key elements of classes of this nature in the two cities. Students in Hiroshima learn about the specific details of the atomic bombing of their city in Peace Education classes, not History classes; this is an important distinction. During the course of these classes, they also participate in a variety of large-scale events (often together with parents and other community members), which include: whole-school peace assemblies, musical and dramatic presentations, excursions to the Peace Memorial Park and other sites of remembrance, lectures given by Hibakusha, speech contests and lantern processions.<sup>26</sup> Since 1996 the author has had the privilege of attending and participating in a number of these events and is of the opinion that they are extremely valuable activities which contribute significantly to the strengthening of the “peace consciousness” within Hiroshima.<sup>27</sup>

In the Dresden case, many schools also organise large-scale events based on similar themes.<sup>28</sup> However, a key difference exists here which is that the twentieth century history of Dresden is taught predominantly in History classes, in order to provide students with a general factual background about the key events that shaped their city during that period, whilst the large-scale events take place in a wider ‘whole-school’ or ‘whole-year group’ context. This means that they are not limited in affiliation to only one curriculum subject as it could be argued that the Hiroshima Peace Education events are. This suggests the existence of a more universal, cross-curricula approach to the organisation of large-scale activities related to peace and international understanding than that which exists in Hiroshima schools. This phenomenon is most clearly demonstrated in the ‘whole school peace ethos’ implemented at St. Benno Grammar School.<sup>29</sup> In this school, in addition to learning the about the events of the Nazi era in History classes, students are given many opportunities to apply what they have learned in terms of the importance of working to create peace and international understanding to other aspects of their school lives including: study of other curriculum subjects, special home-room class discussions, large-scale community service projects and excursions to other European countries. These activities constitute a concerted, whole-school policy that is intended to promote peace throughout all aspects of school life.

By means of this comparison, the author is under no circumstances seeking to criticise many of the excellent activities that take place during the cycle of Peace Education classes in Hiroshima schools. However, he is suggesting that were the background to these events to be more thoroughly developed through a more comprehensive study of the contemporary historical context, it would be a beneficial development.

### c. Regarding widening the scope of peace education

A third issue relates to the development of internationalisation within Peace Education classes in Hiroshima.

In continuation of the above discussion about the background contexts to the two cities' curricula, it is the author's opinion that there is a further lesson that could possibly be learned from the Dresden case which relates to the wide-ranging project work undertaken at many of its schools.

Emanating directly from the policy strategies promulgated by the Dresden Education Authority and the City Government, (as described above by Peter Gent and Christina Schöger in the quotations on pages 8 and 13 respectively), as an extension to the subjects in the standard curriculum, and with a particular regard to History, many schools in Dresden organise special projects that involve excursions to different parts of Europe and/or contact and cooperation with students from other countries. Notable examples of this are the St. Benno Gymnasium whole-year 11 excursion to the Theresenstadt concentration camp in the Czech Republic and the Marie Curie Gymnasium Anne Frank Project which is carried out in partnership with the Johann de Witt Gymnasium in Dordecht, in the Netherlands.<sup>30</sup> During the course of these projects and others<sup>31</sup> students in Dresden are given the opportunity to extend the knowledge they have gained in History and other classes through first-hand interaction with foreign people and places in a context of meaningful international exchange. St. Benno students experience the terrifying reality of the inside of a Nazi prison camp and their counterparts in Marie Curie are able to investigate subjects related to the Holocaust in partnership with Dutch students of their own age. This type of learning represents more than the mere acquisition of knowledge about historical events: it involves personal engagement with the events in a dynamic, modern context which is designed to foster deeper international understanding.

It is the author's opinion that Peace Education in Hiroshima could benefit from the adoption of some of these approaches being used in Dresden schools. Clearly in this discussion factors relating to educational feasibility come immediately to mind: it is quite apparent that a wholesale application of this project approach to the Hiroshima case would be extremely difficult, (considering, for example, difficulties relating to restricted lesson time and language barriers), and it might transpire that similar projects would prove inappropriate to the Hiroshima case. However, with regard to the way that international contacts have added depth and personal relevance to the History curriculum being taught in Dresden, the author believes that, to a certain extent, the same could well prove to be true for Peace Education in Hiroshima. As a consequence, the following proposals are offered with respect to the question of how a greater degree of internationalisation could be realistically and, equally importantly, *sympathetically* facilitated in the Hiroshima case:

1. It is beyond doubt that the tragedy of August 6<sup>th</sup> 1945 was principally a Japanese and a Hiroshima one. However, the victims of the atomic bombing were not only Japanese people as there were people from other nations living in the city who also suffered on that day and in the days after. With respect to this therefore, it is suggested that *in addition* to the indispensable first-hand testimonies of the Hibakusha, accounts of non-Japanese survivors of the atomic bombing are also incorporated into the formal Peace Education curriculum. If agreement regarding this were to be forthcoming from organisations representing the Hibakusha and from the HMBE, representatives of, for example, Hiroshima's Korean community could be approached to contribute personal accounts or use made of the experience of the German Catholic priest Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge

that is recounted in John Hersey's book "Hiroshima".

2. In a similar vein, in order to 'open up' and augment the tradition of large-scale commemorative events held every year as part of the Peace Education curriculum (especially at elementary schools), concerted efforts are also made to invite people of other nationalities to attend as a regular practice. The intention of this proposal would be to enable students and staff in Hiroshima's schools to share their feelings about the atomic bombing and peace with foreign people who may well feel very much the same way.
3. With regard to Peace Education at the junior high level, in order to counteract the recent disquieting trend of students losing interest in the subject, the author suggests the introduction of a more student-centred, investigative approach to classes, which is somewhat akin to the aforementioned Anne Frank Project:

In small groups (perhaps five or six members) students select a peace-related issue that interests them; they conduct some simple research via the internet or available reading material and finally present their findings visually (using other media if they wish) to the other members of the class. This mini-project activity could be arranged over a cycle of perhaps four class periods. Possible topics for investigation might include: the number and location of nuclear weapons in the world; current conflicts being fought around the world at this time; the effect of the atomic bomb on the school and its locality; the life stories of Hibakusha that the students know or who live locally; the current activities of specific peace groups in Hiroshima.

In a discussion relating to the means by which Peace Education in Hiroshima can be developed in future, the author believes that the above proposals may provide indicators of potentially beneficial and practicable directions in which to proceed.

## 6. Conclusion

The discussion in this paper has focused on an analysis of the differences and similarities in the Peace Education curricula of Hiroshima and Dresden and the implications for the future development of the subject in the former city that this analysis has brought to light. The author is of the opinion that the proposals presented in Section 4 offer a number of valid and feasible approaches that could be adopted in Hiroshima schools in order to strengthen the educational impact of the subject by means of a more comprehensive development of the historical context surrounding its subject material and through the incorporation of elements that facilitate a greater degree of internationalisation within it. In no respect are the above proposals offered as a would-be panacea for the Peace Education controversy in Hiroshima, but merely as a possible stimulus for future discussion in the important ongoing debate over these issues taking place within the world's first atomic-bombed city. It is clear that any adjustments made to this curriculum should only be initiated after extensive consultation between all of the concerned parties.

Some outstanding issues remain: with regard to the criticism levelled by current and former students that certain teachers have seemed to be taking advantage of the forum of Peace Education classes to advance their own political views, it seems hard to sympathise with a 'teaching method' that appears to have more in common with the approaches employed within the GDR than what one might reasonably expect to find in the classrooms of a democratic nation. Consequently, the author would like to call for

clear move away from such an approach in exchange for one that was directed towards presenting students with a sober explanation of the facts about the atomic bombing and giving them opportunities to draw their own conclusions about it. Similarly with regard to the instances of younger students experiencing shock after learning about the bomb's terrible impact: in this case it is clear that extra care should be taken in order to present students with material in Peace Education classes that is appropriate to their stage of intellectual development.

In conclusion, two of the similarities identified in the comparison of the cases of Peace Education in Hiroshima and Dresden refer to the considerable support given to the subject by the cities' administrative authorities and by a significant proportion of their populations. In the author's opinion, this represents a vital and enduring resource for the subject's future development in Hiroshima, from which assistance could well be drawn for many years to come. In the long term this would seem to bode well for the possible eventual resolution of the Peace Education controversy since future initiatives instigated with the aim of improving the overall situation would be likely to attract interest, one would hope, from a variety of bodies keen to see them succeed. Preventing the perpetuation of the controversy into the future represents a vital challenge facing the city of Hiroshima, not least due to the fact that the city will shortly be entering into the era when fewer and fewer Hibakusha will be able to relate their experiences to the younger generation in Japan and around the world face-to-face.

## Notes

- (1) In the city of Nagasaki there also exists a Peace Education curriculum which is unique to that location but which is possessed of a less formalised structure than that existing in Hiroshima. (See Note 5, below.)
- (2) Memorandum: Prime Minister [Churchill] to General Ismay (for Chiefs of Staff Committee) and the Chief of the Air Staff, 28 March 1945; Public Record Office, London, CAB 121/3, Bombing Policy in North-West Europe.
- (3) Taylor, Frederick. Dresden. Bloomsbury, 2004, pp. xi, 274.
- (4) In this discussion it is important not to overlook the fact that Hiroshima and Dresden were of course cities within the territories of the Axis powers - the powers who were the aggressors in the Second World War. In relation to this, an argument could be made that the experiences of the two cities, tragic as they were, ultimately came about as a result of initial Axis aggression, and that terrible weapons and devastating bombing strategies were brought to bear on the countries which were the instigators of worldwide conflict. Indeed, as has been stated above, by no means was the great urban destruction wrought during the Second World War restricted only to the conglomerations of Germany, Japan and its other Axis partner, Italy. With regard to this issue of the Axis powers actually bringing destruction upon themselves, in a famous remark uttered on the roof of the British Air Ministry while watching much of London burn around him, and later repeated in a speech to Bomber Command, Air Marshall Sir Arthur 'Bomber' Harris said: "The Nazis entered this war under the rather childish delusion that they were going to bomb everyone else, and nobody was going to bomb them. At Rotterdam, London, Warsaw, and half a dozen other places, they put their rather naïve theory into operation. They sowed the wind, and now they are going to reap the whirlwind." [Arthur Harris, quoted in "The Stokes Collection: World War Two Allied Aircraft", [www.littleaeroplanefactory.com](http://www.littleaeroplanefactory.com)] It was with full cognisance of this concept of reciprocity that this investigation was undertaken, and under no circumstances is the author suggesting that the many thousands who lost their lives or loved ones in other cities in Europe or Asia suffered any less terribly than did the people in Hiroshima or Dresden. However, due to the four common characteristics



outlined above, the author holds the conviction that a comparative investigation into the Peace Education curricula being taught in these cities represents a valid academic exercise.

- (5) In schools in Nagasaki City, Peace Education classes represent an obligation for students at the elementary and junior high levels, but individual school principals are able to exercise freedom over the scheduling and content of these classes which means that they do not take place at one specific time of the year. The situation at senior high school largely mirrors that of Hiroshima.
- (6) Information taken from interviews conducted with the head of the Funairi Senior High School International Education Department, Yasuharu Dohana, and former Principal, Kojiro Fukuhara, on May 30th and June 6th 2003. Full details can be found in: Short, James D. 2003: "A Comparative Analysis of Peace Education in Hiroshima and Dresden". Unpublished Master's Thesis for the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation, Hiroshima University.
- (7) Interviews conducted by the author with Peter Gent, Director of History at the City of Dresden Educational Authority, February 12th 2003; and with Christina Schöger, Director of the International Relations Department, City of Dresden, Feb. 21st 2003.
- (8) Interview with Dr. Christoph Münchow, Executive Director, the Lutheran Church of Saxony, Feb. 17th 2003.
- (9) Ibid.
- (10) Interviews with Münchow, and Jöst Hasselhorn, Pedagogical and Evangelical Administrator of the Dresden Frauenkirche, February 19th 2003.
- (11) Hiroshima Municipal Board of Education, "Official Guidelines for the Teaching of Peace Education", 1994.
- (12) Interviews with: Peter Gent, Feb. 12th 2003; Jürgen Leide, Vice-Principal of Saint Benno Grammar School, Feb. 12th 2003; Edgar Schmidt and Henrik Fronzek, Principal and Head of English, Marie Curie Grammar School, Feb. 18th 2003.
- (13) Information gleaned from interviews conducted with Tamio Nobori, Assistant Director of the Second Supervisory Division of the HMBE, May 22nd 2003; and Nobuo Takahashi, Director of the Hiroshima Institute for Education, May 28th 2003.
- (14) Schöger, Hasselhorn interviews; for details see Short, 2003 pp 75-6, 89.
- (15) Leide, Fronzek and Schmidt, Schöger interviews.
- (16) The City of Hiroshima. "The General Plan for the City of Hiroshima" 1999, English version, (emphasis added).
- (17) Schüger, Münchow interviews.
- (18) "Recently many graduates of the Hiroshima school system have said that they felt upset during Peace Education classes as they were often asked loaded or leading questions by teachers, and felt that they should answer in a way that pleased the teacher." Nobuo Takahashi, in "The Route to Liberation / Hiroshima Version" ("Kaiho no Michi / Hiroshima-Ban"), March 2003, No.90.
- (19) Takahashi interview.
- (20) Much recent controversy has arisen over the publication by the Fusousha company of "The New History Textbook" produced by the conservative-leaning 'Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform', which received official authorisation from Monbukagakushou in April 2001. Prior to and following the book's publication, significant criticism was levelled at both its content and its omissions by high-ranking Chinese and South Korean officials and other commentators, a number of Japanese historians and other educationalists, and also international scholars. Predating this dispute is another which has stretched back several decades related to a similar theme: in response to perceived censorship on the part of Monbukagakushou in relation to wartime atrocities committed by the Japanese military in official history textbooks, starting in 1965 the progressive historian Ienaga Saburo mounted a series of legal challenges to the Ministry's history textbook authorisation

process.

- (21) Takahashi interview.
- (22) In terms of History education in Germany, it would be inconceivable to suggest that graduates of the country's high schools could leave the formal education system without acquiring knowledge of the Holocaust. However, it is doubtful whether the same could be said of Japanese high school students with regard to events such as the 1937 'Rape of Nanking'.
- (23) UK Schools History Project textbook "Peace and War", John Murray, 1993.
- (24) *Ibid*, pp. 194-197 and 198-202.
- (25) The section in the textbook concerning Hiroshima and Nagasaki (pages 198-202) is entitled "Was the dropping of the atomic bombs justified?" It contains explanatory maps and photographic and written source material from, among others, survivors of the atomic bombings (including a quotation from John Hersey's 1946 book "Hiroshima"), Japanese Prime Minister Kantaro Suzuki, the United States military high command and former President Harry Truman.
- (26) Details given in Short, 2003, Chapter 2.
- (27) Quotation from the aforementioned "The General Plan for the City of Hiroshima"; (see note 17).
- (28) *Ibid*, Chapter 3.
- (29) *Ibid*, pp. 69-73; Leide interview.
- (30) Short, 2003, pp 71 and 76.
- (31) This includes, among others, the Marie Curie Gymnasium 'TraceFinder Drama Project'. In this project Marie Curie students meet with their counterparts from schools in Dresden's sister cities of Wroclaw, Poland and Ostrava in the Czech Republic during the summer vacation to create their own original drama productions on the themes of building international understanding and overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. Under professional instruction from a Polish dramatic troupe, they then perform their productions in theatres in Dresden, Krakow and Prague. (Short, 2003, p. 76-77).

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