

Back to the Sources
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Course book Research training
Back to the Sources
An introduction to researching the
History

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INTRODUCTION

1. *Reading history and researching history*

This skills training is meant as an introduction to researching history. It is important to realise from the very start that *researching* history is not the same as *reading* history. Reading history and researching history are as different from each other as reading a book on the history of the Eiger North Face climbs is different from climbing the Eiger North Face yourself. Of course, in contrast to those who climb the Eiger, you are not very likely to get killed by researching history. But you are quite likely to get *lost* if you set off without a guide. And this is what this skills training tries to be: an introductory guide to researching history.

Researching history means pursuing one's own enquiry into the past, instead of following another historian's argument about it. Above all, researching history implies not relying on 'second-hand' information. Instead, it involves going back to the primary historical sources as much as possible. However, this is not as simple and straightforward as it may sound. There are all sorts of difficulties involved, intellectual as well as practical.

We can sum up these difficulties in five general categories: first of all, relevant sources have to be *traced*; then they have to be *accessed* and (in most cases) *selected*; next, they have to be *understood* properly and finally, their information value has to be *assessed* critically.

To get an idea of these basic difficulties of researching historical sources, just imagine yourself inquiring why and how the Soviet Union collapsed after 1989. Your first suggestions for an answer would be based on descriptions and analyses of the process of Soviet disintegration in Western newspapers, magazines and books. But obviously, the most relevant and decisive information would have to come from primary sources in the former Soviet Union itself, not only in Russia but also in those Soviet Republics that broke away from the Union. So the first question to be answered would be: what governmental institutions in the former Soviet republics are likely to keep the most relevant records of what happened at the time? To make an informed guess about this, some prior knowledge of Soviet institutions and Soviet government is essential.

Having traced relevant government institutions that might hold valuable records, the next difficulty arises: you have to get *access* to these government records. In many countries, governments do not release their records before a certain period of time has passed, usually thirty years or even more; so this problem would pose, for the time being, insurmountable difficulties to your archival research in the former Soviet Union. But even when recent former Soviet records would be accessible to researchers there would still remain another practical difficulty. You would have to travel to Moscow, Riga, Kiev and other places to visit the local archives and stay in the neighbourhood for some time to study the records. This would require quite some time and money - and both can pose very real problems to the researcher.

Let us suppose that you have succeeded in overcoming all of these practical difficulties and that you are sitting there in a Moscow archive to study Soviet documents. Confronted with an overwhelming amount of documents, you will first have to make a reasonable *selection* of the documents you are going to study.

Next, an intellectual problem arises, which is *understanding* the records you are reading, which comes down to an understanding of the writing and the language of the documents. Surely, knowledge of the Russian alphabet and grammar would be indispensable. But understanding historical sources includes more than just being able to read the text: it also means that you understand what the text is all about. This is what historians call putting the text in a (significant) context. The only way to do this is by answering questions like: why was this specific source produced, by whom, to what other sources or phenomena was it related and how do these shed light upon this particular source? These questions are relevant to overcome a final and crucial difficulty: *assessing* the trustworthiness and information value of your source and assessing possible distortions of reality. Can all the information in the source be taken at face-value, or did the author have reasons to give a one-sided or distorted picture? How well was she informed about the things she was writing about? What information can the historian gather from this source? What can she accept as *facts* to use in order to reconstruct history?

This course is offering a first introduction to the ways historians deal with these difficulties. It will be a useful guide to those students who are keen on doing historical research in the future. But it will also prove to be of value to those with an interest in the European integration process: as our subject matter for this course we have chosen the beginnings of the process of European integration after World War II. Furthermore, by offering knowledge and insights on how the historian works, this course will mentally equip students to assess the strong and the weak aspects of the histories that they will be reading in the future (e.g. to inform themselves on the processes and problems involved in European integration).

2. The main objectives of the course

The difficulties of researching historical sources may be divided into two general categories: *heuristic* (tracing and accessing sources) and *critical* (understanding and assessing the information value of sources). Accordingly, this academic skills training has two main objectives: ¹

1. to familiarize students with important types of primary sources and the ways to find them (heuristic objective).
2. to stimulate a critical and methodical attitude towards historical sources (critical objective). Several more specific objectives belong to this second category. Students will be taught to:
 - differentiate between primary and secondary sources;
 - appreciate the importance of primary sources for the study of historical phenomena in general;

¹ 'heuristic', from Greek *heuriskein* = to find.

- recognize the different characteristics and pitfalls of the several types of primary sources.

3. Short description of the course

The course consists of four class meetings. In the meetings the specific characteristics of the following types of primary sources will be discussed: international legislation, political statements, public opinion sources, archival records. Also specific problems of tracing, accessing and assessing archival, internet and printed sources will be dealt with. In each of these meetings both heuristic and critical aspects of the specific source category at hand will be dealt with. In effect, in these meetings students will get:

<i>information:</i>	and	<i>training:</i>	
a general introduction to the use and pitfalls of a specific type of source for the historian	and	discuss one or more specific examples of this type of source	<i>critical aspect</i>
information on how this type of source can be found	and	find their own way to a specific example of this type of source	<i>heuristic aspect</i>

One central theme: the origins of the first European Community

The several specific sources that students will discuss during the course will all be related to one central theme: the origin of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the first European Community to be established (and the first that ceased to exist, in 2002). What were the reasons why the ECSC was established? is the recurring question in this course. This early episode in the history of European integration is well suited for an introduction to historical research because a variety of archival and other primary sources is available for students.

In effect, you will be studying:

as example(s) of:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| – the Schuman-declaration (May 9, 1950) | <i>political statements</i> |
| – (diplomatic) records on the Schuman Plan (1949-1950) | <i>archival records</i> |
| – public opinion polls and newspaper-articles (1940-1950) | <i>public opinion sources</i> |

Because all the sources you are going to read are related to the same theme, they can be viewed as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle somehow fitting together. From a historical point of view, the topic is not only interesting because a variety of sources is available, but also because it has led to controversy among historians. What was the role of the leading politicians and officials involved, especially Schuman and Monnet? To what extent did existing ideas about a supranational European unity play a role? Or was the initiative to the ECSC rather inspired by national self-interest of the states involved?

The assignments

You will have do heuristic and critical assignments during the course (amounting to 1200-1500 words per assignment). Each of the three assignments of this skills training is devoted to a specific type of historical sources. Discussing your written assignments will form the substance of each class meeting. All assignments have to be handed in in class en should be uploaded as safe assignment. **Please note, that you will need at least a whole day to do the research and the writing for each of these assignments properly.**

Please note:

- Always put your name, group number, tutor's name and ID-number on the title page of your assignments.
- It is advisable that you *do not work together at all* in writing your assignments.
- All assignments will be checked electronically to detect cases of plagiarism.
- Your assignments should be uploaded in time as SafeAssignment on Eleum.
- You can only participate in the resit, if you handed in at least two of the three assignments during the course
- If you miss more than one meeting, and therefore fail your attendance, it is not possible anymore to hand in the following assignments. You will then have to retake this research training next year, including the assignments.

Summary of the contents of assignments

1. The Schuman Declaration (1950). Looking for the original text. Basic questions to ask. Problems of online research and electronic evidence. This assignment is mainly devoted to the *critical analysis* of sources.
2. American and British responses to the Schuman Plan. This assignment is like an archive-simulation, dealing with *selecting* your sources and building a coherent 'picture' from archival documents.
3. Public opinion 1940-1950 as a force in European integration. Assessment of opinion polls and newspapers as historical sources. This assignment deals with the problems of *influence* and the *representativity* of sources.

4. Testing and formal characteristics

character: research training

level: undergraduate

duration: 7 weeks, 5 classes of 1-2 hours

testing:

- heuristic and critical assignments during the course

grading:

- The assignments will be graded on a scale from 0 to 10.
- To pass the course, all assignments should be handed in and at least two should have a Pass; not handing in an assignment will automatically lead to a resit.
- Your final grade will come from the average grade of the three assignments.
- *All* assignments should be completed in time en uploaded as SafeAssignment.
- All assignments should be an individual piece of work. In case of plagiarism you will receive no grade and you will have to appear in front of the Board of Examiners who will decide on further sanctions.

Absences:

- you may miss one session without repercussions (**however, even in this case you still have to hand in the assignment in time**), two absences or more mean you will have to follow the skills training again next year.

Resit:

- Two or more Failed assignments, or any assignment not handed in, mean that you will have to take the resit. The resit consists of rewriting the assignments that you Failed during the course.
The resit assignments will be graded on a scale from 0 to 10.

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7. Abbreviations

In this coursebook you will find references to the literature that you will have to study or that you may want to consult for further exploration of a certain topic.

After each title, an abbreviation [between square brackets] indicates the location of that specific text. They are as follows:

[R]: *reprinted in the Reader*;

[SL]: *available as a book in the Studielandschap (Reading Room) ES/CW at the UB*;

[UB]: *available in the Universiteitsbibliotheek (University Library)*;

[WWW]: *available on the Internet*.

ASSIGNMENTS

ASSIGNMENT 1

THE PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL SOURCE ANALYSIS (*POLITICAL SPEECHES*).

Part 1: Brainstorm (meeting 1)

Historians - especially political historians - are trained *sceptics*: they are not likely to believe at face-value what people say, until they have somehow checked it for themselves. Already the ancient Greek historian Thucydides (454-after 404 BC), one of the first Europeans to write contemporary political history, stated this in a famous passage from his classical work on the Peloponnesian War (I, 22):

‘...with regard to my factual reporting of the events of the war I have made it a principle not to write down the first story that came my way, and not even to be guided by my own general impressions; either I was present myself at the events which I have described or else I heard of them from eye-witnesses whose reports I have checked with as much thoroughness as possible. Not that even so the truth was easy to discover: different eye-witnesses give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories.’²

By way of a thought experiment, just for a moment put yourself in Thucydides’ place, trying to establish from conflicting or simply different reports what really happened. The situation is not very different from what you do when you are listening to different people informing you in different ways about an accident that happened the other day. What would you do to establish the truth with an acceptable measure of probability?

The most famous text in the history of European integration undoubtedly is the ‘Schuman Declaration’. Schuman was the French Minister of Foreign Affairs who on 9 May 1950 publicly announced the French plans for pooling the coal and steel production of France, Western-Germany and other Western-European countries. In 1985 the EC leaders assembled at the Milan Summit decided to celebrate this day in the future as ‘Europe Day’ - the day the European Community was born.

Back in 1950 however, even the French Foreign Minister himself seems to have been completely unaware of the things lying ahead. It was only on 28 April that the first proposals eventually leading to the ECSC were presented to him. The question arises: what made the French statesman launch this proposal? What was he aiming at?

The starting point for answering these questions is, obviously, the Schuman Declaration itself. In a much used collection of sources on the history and theory of European integration edited by Brent Nelsen and Alexander Stubb,

²Thucydides (1972), *History of the Peloponnesian War*, transl. Rex Warner. Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 48.

you can find the Schuman-declaration presented and introduced as on the following two pages.³ **In our first meeting we will brainstorm about how trustworthy this fragment is as a source for finding out the reasons that lay behind the Schuman Plan.**

2

The Schuman Declaration

ROBERT SCHUMAN

Efforts in the 1940s to realize Churchill's vision of a united Europe led to increased economic and political cooperation but did not yield anything like a United States of Europe. European leaders needed a new strategy to achieve such a goal. On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman (1886–1963), France's foreign minister, outlined a plan to unite under a single authority the coal and steel industries of Europe's bitterest enemies, France and Germany. The purpose of the plan, which was developed by Jean Monnet, was to begin building a peaceful, united Europe one step at a time. European governments would start with two industries essential to the making of war, coal and steel, then add other economic and political sectors until all major decisions were taken at a European level. This would create, in Schuman's words, a "de facto solidarity" that would ultimately make war between France and Germany "materially impossible." The practical approach of Schuman and Monnet won favor on the European continent; France, Germany, Italy, and the Benelux countries eventually responded by creating the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952.

World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.

The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.

³ Brent Nelsen and Alexander Stubb (eds.) (1994, 3rd ed. 2003). *The European Union. Readings on the theory and practice of European integration* (p. 11-12). Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries.

With this aim in view, the French government proposes that action be taken immediately on one limited but decisive point. It proposes that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.

The pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims.

The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. The setting up of this powerful productive unit, open to all countries willing to take part and bound ultimately to provide all the member countries with the basic elements of industrial production on the same terms, will lay a true foundation for their economic unification.

This production will be offered to the world as a whole without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to raising living standards and to promoting peaceful achievements.

In this way, there will be realized simply and speedily that fusion of interests which is indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system; it may be the leaven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions.

By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.

Part 2: the written assignment (meeting 2)

In European Studies the historical perspective is important, but doing ES is not the same as studying history. From a ES-point of view, the historical approach primarily serves to understand political developments in Europe, more specifically the history and problems of European political integration after 1945. This chronological, geographical and topical focus is putting a limit on the range of historical sources ES-students will be dealing with. Also, it determines the specific problems of tracing, accessing, understanding and assessing these sources.

For the most part, the primary sources you will be dealing with are documents produced by governments (including all government institutions), politicians, political parties, pressure groups and ngo's. These are the main players and forces that influence the political course of European history. In *Back to the sources* you will be introduced to some of the most important types of these sources and the ways of tracing, accessing and assessing them. We will be dealing with public and archival government documents (assignments 1 & 2), with public statements by politicians (assignment 1) and with public opinion sources (newspapers and opinion polls, assignment 3). It should be kept in mind that there are still other relevant historical sources which we will not be able to deal with in this course, especially sources on economical, social and cultural developments hardly less important for understanding the process of European integration.

Primary and secondary sources

When in the nineteenth century the writing of history developed into a well-established discipline at university, the thucydian attitude of methodic scepticism towards the sources became the hallmark of academic historical research. At the same time, archival government records were generally and systematically used to research history: they were considered to be the best historical equivalent to eye-witness reports. To analyse these sources the so-called 'historical-critical method' was developed. Basically, this method was meant to provide rules for the critical assessment of (1) the authenticity and (2) the trustworthiness of historical sources. Students tend to confuse these two, but it is important to distinguish them clearly.

Being able to judge the *authenticity* of historical sources and establish the correct time and place of their creation was particularly needed for older, classical and medieval sources and a whole range of auxiliary technical disciplines was developed to facilitate this. For contemporary history these techniques are less relevant and we will not elaborate on them in this course. There is one important exception, caused by the recent digital revolution: digitally produced texts and images can very easily and imperceptibly be turned into something *inauthentic*. We will pay some attention to this problem, especially as far as sources from the internet are concerned.

To assess the *trustworthiness* of a particular source, nineteenth century historians considered two criteria particularly relevant: first, its (*temporal*) *proximity* to the events it documented and second, the fact whether or not the source was *intended* to give a narrative of past events. If the source somehow was

the direct and contemporaneous (by-)product of the events it documented, it was supposed to be a relatively faithful witness of these events. If on the other hand, it was produced by somebody reporting afterwards what he had learned about the events, there would be – in principle – a higher risk of distortion and bias; hence, the source would be considered less trustworthy. Again, if a source was *not* specifically intended to give a narrative of the events for later use, but provided more or less *unwitting* or unintended testimony, the source was thought to be less subjective and therefore more trustworthy than in cases when it was written with the specific intention to give a narrative of the events. German historians called these two main categories of sources *Überreste* (traces, remains) and *Tradition*. Today, historians usually talk about primary sources and unwitting testimony on the one hand, and secondary or narrative sources and witting or intentional testimony on the other.⁴

The different status of primary and secondary sources vis-à-vis historical reality can be illustrated by the following diagram:



In order to clarify the difference, we will give some examples. Memoirs, (auto-) biographies, newspapers, reference works and - most important of all - other histories, are usually used as *secondary* sources by the historian. The most important *primary* sources historians use are laws and regulations, contracts and accounts, statistics, speeches, diaries, letters and minutes, but also archeological remains and material objects. In the diagram below the characteristics of both categories of sources are put together.

<i>primary sources</i> (überreste)	<i>secondary sources</i> (Tradition)
contemporaneous with documented events	produced some time after the documented events
direct by-product of the events	created at some distance from the events
non-narrative character	narrative character
unwitting testimony	witting, intended testimony
<i>examples</i> : laws, regulations, contracts, accounts, speeches, diaries, letters, minutes, archeological remains and artefacts, statistics	<i>examples</i> : histories, memoirs, (auto-) biographies, newspapers, reference works

⁴ See Marwick, A. (1989). *The nature of history* (3rd ed.). Houndmills, New York: Palgrave, p. 208-228 [UB].

It should be noted right away that the diagram is slightly misleading. In fact, not all of the characteristics of one category can be found in all the examples mentioned in the last row. For instance, unintentionality – an important criterium to distinguish primary from secondary sources – can not always be found in the types of sources historians ordinarily list as primary sources. Minutes, speeches and letters may be contemporaneous with the events, but cannot be said to provide strictly unintentional, ‘objective’ testimonies. Newspapers, usually listed as secondary sources, may well be considered primary sources for the historian of public opinion. Memoirs should be considered as secondary sources as far as the events related in it are concerned, but they can also be read as primary sources, providing first hand information on the ideas and character of the writer. *Etcetera*.

In general, it is important to realise that *the distinction between primary and secondary sources is an analytical one, depending fundamentally on the specific question and the perspective of the historian using them*. In other words: for each *specific* historical question the distinction between primary and secondary sources (or, for that matter, between *Überreste* and *Tradition*) can convincingly be made. Indeed, it is essential to proper historical research. As Arthur Marwick puts it: ‘Study of primary sources alone does not make history; but without the study of primary sources there is no history’.⁵ The reason for this is obvious: researching the primary sources, the remains of the past, is as close to empirical research as the historian can get.

Secondary sources

The fundamental value of primary sources for historical research does not mean that secondary sources – such as reference works, historical articles and monographs – are irrelevant. On the contrary: they usually are the starting point for research. More often than not historical research begins with questions raised by (secondary) historical literature. Furthermore, secondary sources contain useful information about the general context of a specific historical phenomenon and summarize accepted knowledge. Finally, although primary sources are fundamental to researching history, this does not mean that they are always and necessarily more trustworthy than secondary sources.

Therefore, although primary sources are always at the basis of historical knowledge, it would be foolish to ignore secondary sources. Although this skills training is focusing on primary sources, there are quite a lot of secondary sources on the origins of the European Coal and Steel Community that may be helpful for putting things into perspective. How can this literature be found? A first method could be to start with the literature mentioned in your main course and look for more references; this is called the *snowball-method* of bibliographic research. Another way is to start looking for specific *bibliographies* (list of books and articles) on your subject. Finally, and most efficiently, you can consult internet-sources to find books and articles about your subject by searching for specific

⁵ Marwick, A. (1989). *The nature of history* (3rd ed.). Houndmills, New York: Palgrave, p. 199.

words or combinations of words in the title (e.g. ECSC, coal, steel, European community, origins, history).

The seven basic questions

Historical sources do not have a self-evident, fixed meaning. Historians should always be aware of the fact that sources shed light on the past only in a certain way and from a specific perspective. This is due to the fact that sources inevitably document only a part of the past, but it may also be the result of intentional (e.g. ideological) one-sidedness or misrepresentation. Before using a source, it is therefore imperative to assume a critical and analytical attitude and try to understand its contemporary meaning.

This attitude may be created by asking systematically the following **Seven Basic Questions**:⁶

1. Is the source authentic or are you dealing with a forgery? Are you dealing with the original source or with a copy of some sort? Do you have reasons to doubt the correctness of the copy? Is it possible to check the correctness of the copy? Is the source - or the copy of it - complete?
2. What category of source is it? Primary or secondary? Is it a speech, a law, a letter, a memoir, a public record? Since each genre has its own conventions, each type of source conveys its particular type of information. Does the source provide witting or unwitting answers to your question?
3. What person or group of persons produced the source? State exactly when, where and for whom.
4. For what express purpose was the source produced? For what audience was it intended? How does this affect the credibility of the information it contains?
5. What is the position of the person (or group of persons) who created the source? In what way were they involved in the reported facts? To what extent is the author of the source in a position to provide first-hand information on the particular topic you are interested in? In case he or she was not directly involved, what does this imply for the credibility of the source? What basic attitudes, prejudices and vested interests is he likely to have had? In what way can he be said to be representative of something more than his own particular position?
6. What is the historical context of the source? What historical questions or circumstances are relevant to understand the source? Does the source constitute a reaction to another contemporary phenomenon of some sort?
7. (in conclusion:) what is the credibility of the source for your particular question?

It is important to see the logic behind these questions. They are all meant to establish, in the end, the credibility of the sources (Q. 7). This depends on two things: the authenticity of the text (Q. 1) and the trustworthiness of the contents (Q. 2-6, don't confuse the two). To judge the trustworthiness of a source, you need information on the function of the text (Q. 2 and 4) and on the position of author

⁶ This list was initially conceived by Pieter Caljé. Use was also made of Marwick, A. (1989). *The nature of history* (3rd ed.). Houndmills, New York: Palgrave, pp. 221-228.

(Q. 3 and 5). And to assess both function of the text and position of the author you need information on the historical context (Q. 6).

Questions

Answer the following questions in ca. 1500 words. Be as concise as you can in answering the first question – the emphasis in this assignment is on the second question.

1. Read the text by Barlow (1998) on electronic evidence. In what ways are 'electronic sources' less trustworthy than 'printed sources'? How do YOU counter these disadvantages of internet sources?
2. a. Compare several versions of the Schuman-declaration on the Internet with the Nelsen & Stubb version in the Course Book. Are there any differences? Choose the best versions one for answering the next questions. Describe your search and selection strategy and write down the exact address of the text-version you prefer.
 b. What are the different *explicit* reasons mentioned by Schuman for his Plan?
 c. Present an argument in which you try to establish to what degree the explicit reasons mentioned by Schuman can be trusted; use Readman (2009) and answer **the seven basic questions** to help you build your argument. *To answer basic question 6, it is important that you search, select and consult secondary sources to inform yourself as best as possible on the contemporary context of the French plan and describe this context in detail.* To give an indication: you should be able to explain why Schuman issued his Declaration on May 9, 1950 and not, for instance, one week later.

Quote and give correct references in all your answers!

Reading

Barlow, J. G.

(1998). Historical research and electronic evidence. In D. A. Trinkle (Ed.), *Writing, teaching, and researching history in the electronic age: historians and computers* (pp. 205-212, 217-221). Armonk, London: Sharpe. [R]

Readman, Paul

(2009). Speeches. In Miriam Dobson and Benjamin Ziemann (eds.), *Reading primary sources: the interpretation of texts from nineteenth- and twentieth-century history* (pp. 209-225) London [etc.] : Routledge [SL]

Schuman-declaration

(1950): to be found by you.

Secondary sources on the context of the Schuman Declaration:

To be found by you.

3) objectif : offrir à l'A. une
place parmi les nations
démocr. et pacifiques ;
lui reconnaître le droit
à l'indépendance et à
sa libre reconstruction
dans le cadre européen
que rs. rs. soumettent assise
à rs. - mêmes.

suppose chez les dirigeants et le
gros de la population une
égale bonne volonté et com-
pétence. Existait-elle ?

On rs. en donne l'assurance.
Je suis convaincu que le chancelier
est sincère dans son affirma-
tion qu'il désire l'entente avec
les alliés, en partic. avec la Fr.
Je ne me dissimule pas, d'autre
part, ses difficultés d'ordre
intérieur.

Mais, qu'on veuille bien reconnaître
à nous aussi notre sincérité
et nos difficultés.

Above: Part of the notes Robert Schuman wrote down in preparation of his press conference of May 9th, 1950, announcing the 'Schuman Plan'. From: Beyer, H. (1986). *Robert Schuman: l'Europe par la réconciliation franco-allemande*. Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, p. 166.

ASSIGNMENT 2

THE PROBLEMS OF SELECTION AND INTERPRETATION (ARCHIVE SIMULATION)

Introduction

In the previous session we have been dealing with the critical analysis of sources. However, there are other pressing problems when dealing with sources. One is the abundance of sources: how do you select the right sources and how do you build a coherent argument from this selection? It is difficult to provide general answers to these questions; the best thing is to make you experience the problem through an archive simulation, in which you have to find out how the British reacted to the Schuman plan.

A recent book by Christopher Lord on the history of the British response to the Schuman Plan is entitled *Absent at the Creation*. The explanation of this title is simple: in 1950, the British decided not to participate in the negotiations leading to the establishment of the ECSC and were thus absent at the creation of the (first) European Community – it was the beginning of a tenacious tradition of British absenteeism in European Community matters.

Presumably, Lord's title was inspired by Dean Acheson, American Secretary of State in 1950, who had called his memoirs *Present at the creation*. With this title, Acheson seems to have been hinting at the creation of a new, postwar world; he was not referring to the first European Community in particular. Still, the contrast between the British and the American involvement in establishing the ECSC is aptly expressed by the two booktitles.

There was, however, a similarity between American and British responses to the Schuman Plan. Both American and British government records related to the Schuman Plan clearly show that first and foremost, national interests were involved. At the time, European idealism as such seems to have played only a minor role.

Question

Consult Bullen & Pelly (1986), containing archival records on the British reactions to the Schuman Plan. To get an idea of their contents, have a look at the list of contents (reprinted below). Write a small report (using ca. 1500 words), based on a selection of 12 to 15 sources, on the British perception of the Schuman Plan, answering the following questions:

- a. What were, according to the British, the French motivations behind the plan?
- b. How did the British themselves evaluate the Plan? What positive and negative aspects did they see in the plan?

Start your report with explaining your individual selection of sources. What sources did you select and why?

Quote and give correct references!

Reading

Bullen, R., & Pelly, M. E. (Eds.).

(1986). *Documents on British Policy Overseas II, 1: The Schuman Plan, the Council of Europe and Western European Integration, 1950-1952*. London. [on Eleum]

To write this assignment it may be helpful to read first the relevant sections from the following guide, available at the Studylandscape of the University Library:

Storey, W. K.

(1999). *Writing history. A guide for students*, (Ch. 3+4, esp. pp. 25-36, 43-57). New York, Oxford: Oxford UP. [SL]

Suggestions for further reading

Cox, Nicholas

(1988). 'Public Records.' In: *Contemporary history: practice and method*, Anthony Seldon (Ed.). Oxford, New York: Blackwell, pp. 70-88. [SL]

Raspin, Angela,

(1988) 'Private papers.' In: *Contemporary history: practice and method*, Anthony Seldon (Ed.). Oxford, New York: Blackwell, pp. 89-100. [SL]

Printed guides and inventories

- Bergh, V. v. d., & Strasser, L. (Eds.). (1998). *Euroarchievangids: archievangids van Nederlandse particuliere instellingen en personen die zich ingezet hebben voor de Europese eenwording en samenwerking vanaf 1945*. Den Haag: Algemeen Rijksarchief. [SL]

- Lipgens, W. (Ed.). (1980). *Sources for the history of European integration (1945-1955): a guide to archives in the countries of the Community*. Leiden: Sijthoff. [UB] Published by the EUI, contains guides to the archives in nine European countries, some NGO's and the first governmental European institutions. Though rather out of date, still useful. For more recent guides, see Griffiths, Richard T, EU History-Archives, see: <http://www.hum.leiden.edu/history/eu-history/archives/archives-1.html>
Site maintained by the Leiden University History Department. Contains links to European and US archives.



Keep on smiling, Ernest... Ernest Bevin, the British foreign minister, caught in the middle between the American Secretary of State Dean Acheson (left) and his French colleague Robert Schuman (right), at Lancaster House, London, between May, 9th and May 19th, 1950. From: Dean Acheson (1969). *Present at the creation. My years at the state department*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Even if one is not convinced by the conventional wisdom of biologists that smiling, i.e. the act of (almost) baring the teeth of the upper jaw, is connected with feelings of fear and suppressed aggression, there are good reasons not to take this picture at face value. What you see, is not always what you get. Visual sources should be treated by the historian with equal circumspection as other sources. Especially public photo-sessions have a strongly ritualized character and photographs taken at these occasions usually only reproduce ritual behavior. The picture above shows one of the strongest and clearest forms of ritual behavior in modern diplomacy and politics: smiling. As archival documents reveal, however, Ernest Bevin did not feel like smiling at all when meeting his American and French colleagues directly after the announcement of the Schuman Plan.

List of British documents on the Schuman Plan in the e-reader

From: Bullen, R., & Pelly, M.E. (eds.). (1986). *Documents on British Policy Overseas Series II volume I: The Schuman Plan, the Council of Europe and Western European Integration, 1950-1952*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

The rejection of the Schuman Plan 9 May – 5 June 1950

1	To Sir O. Harvey Paris No.525	9 May	Message from M. Schuman: proposal for Western European coal and steel community (The Schuman Plan).
2	M. Massigli London	9 May	Transmits text of communiqué announcing Schuman Plan.
3	U.K. Ministerial Meeting London	10 May	Reactions to French proposal for coal and steel community.
4	Third Bipartite Ministerial Meeting London	10 May	(2) European economic and political integration: (3) Germany. <i>Calendar: i</i> O.E.E.C.
5	Mr. Steel Wahnerheide Tel.No. 722	10 May	German reactions to Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i>
6	Sir E. Hall Patch Paris Tel.No. 217	10 May	M. Stikker's reactions to Schuman Plan
7	Mr. Stevens Foreign Office	10 May	Memo. Assessing motives and implications of French Proposal: effect on I.A.R. and German industry. <i>Calendar: i</i> German steel level.
8	Mr. Warner Düsseldorf	10 May	Letter to Mr. Wilson: further information on Schuman Plan from M. Humbert.
9	Sir R. Makins Foreign Office	10 May	Minute to Sir W. Strang: arrangements for U.K. study of French proposal.
10	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 124	11 May	Represents need for encouraging U.K. response to Schuman Plan.
11	Sir V. Mallet Rome Tel.No. 354	11 may	Italian reactions to Schuman Plan
12	Conv. between Mr. Bevin, Mr. Acheson and Mr. Schuman London	11 May	Explanations from M. Schuman on timing and form of his proposals: desire for 'psychological shock'.
13	Mr. Hall Cabinet Office	11 May	Minute on broad economic implications of French Proposal: 'no option but to welcome the move'.
14	Sir R. Makins Foreign Office	11 May	Minute to Sir W. Strang: French views on procedure to implement their proposal.
15	U.K. Ministerial Meeting House of Commons GEN 322/1 st Meeting	11 May	Implications of Plan and procedure for further study.
16	Mr. Shinwell Ministry of Defense GEN 322/1	11 May	Circulates C.O.S. note on strategic implications of Schuman Plan and note by M.O.D. on dangers of industrial cartels.
17	Sir. I. Kirkpatrick Foreign Office	11 May	Memo. On long term political considerations of Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i> M. Monnet on cartel.
18	Sir N. Brook	11 May	Circulates Treasury paper on economic

	Cabinet Office GEN 322/3		implications of French Proposal (incorporating F.O. note on historical background).
19	Tripartite Ministerial Talks Lancaster House Min/Tri/Dec/3	12 May	(1) (1) Policy towards Germany; (2) (2) Germany and Schuman Plan.
20	Mr. Hayter Paris No.312	15 May	French reactions – political parties and press – to Schuman Plan.
21	Sir V. Berry Düsseldorf	15 May	Letter to Mr. Stevens reporting conv. with Vice-Chancellor Blücher: Germany and Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i> I.A.R.
22	F.G. Committee 1 st Meeting Treasury	15 May	Conv. with M. Monnet reported by Sir E. Plowden on French intentions and U.K. participation.
23	Mr. Rickham Foreign Office	15 May	Minute to Mr. Lincoln: implications of Schuman Plan for controls on German industry.
24	Sir. R. Makins Foreign Office	15 May	Record of conv. between M. Monnet and Sir S. Cripps: Chancellor favours early U.K. collaboration with Schuman Plan.
25	Meeting with M. Monnet London	16 May	French intend to negotiate treaty with Federal Government. More information on form and functions of proposed High Authority.
26	Economic Policy Committee 13 th Meeting 10 Downing St.	16 May	Agreement that U.K. should associate with international study group on Schuman Plan.
27	Sir V. Berry Düsseldorf	16 May	Letter to Mr. Stevens reporting convs. with MM. Poher and Kaeckenbeek: origins of Schuman Plan and future of I.A.R.
28	F.G. Committee 2 nd Meeting Treasury	17 May	Possibilities of U.K. association with Schuman Plan: need for more information.
29	Gen.Sir B. Robertson Wahnerheide Tel.No. 756	17 May	Federal Cabinet approve Schuman Plan.
30	Gen.Sir B. Robertson Wahnerheide Tel.No. 767	18 May	Preparations for study of Schuman Plan by German industrialists.
31	Sir. R. Makins Foreign Office	18 May	Minute to Mr. Bevin attaching at Annex A interim report by F.G. Committee on U.K. and Schuman Plan (later circulated as E.P.C. Annex B: briefing note on progress of Schuman Plan.
32	Sir E. Plowden Treasury	19 May	Note recording telephone conv. with M. Monnet: requests more information on Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i> M. Monnet's delegation in London.
33	Sir O. Harvey Paris No. 324	19 May	Reflections on wider implications of Schuman Plan and political consequences of acceptance or rejection.
34	Mr. Stevens Foreign Office	20 May	Letter to Lt.-Gen. Sir G. Macready summarizing latest events on Schuman Plan.
35	Mr. Stevens Foreign Office	22 May	Minute to Mr. Bevin supporting F.G. recommendation for U.K. association with Franco-German discussions on Schuman

36	Economic Policy Committee 14 th Meeting 10 Downing Street	23 May	Plan. Discussion of E.P.C. Instructions to F.G. Committee for assurances from French Govt. and further study of proposals.
37	Sir D. Ferguson Ministry of Fuel & Power	23 May	Letters to Sir. E. Bridges (Treasury) enclosing N.C.B. preliminary observations on Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i>
38	Sir J. Le Rougetel Brussels No.235	23 May	Belgian views on Schuman Plan.
39	Gen.Sir B. Robertson Wahnerheide Tel.No 803	24 May	Statement to Allied High Commission from M. Monnet of basic principles underlying the Schuman Plan.
40	F.G. Committee 3 rd Meeting Treasury	24 May	Agree message to M. Schuman and terms of reference for Working Party.
41	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 464	25 May	Transmits message for M. Schuman: U.K. wish to participate, but without commitment, in Franco-German discussions on Schuman Plan.
42	M. Massigli London	25 May	Memo. Inviting U.K. to participate in discussions on Schuman Plan, but pre-conditions set out in attached communiqué.
43	Sir E. Hall-Patch Paris Tel.No. 248	25 May	Franco-Benelux discussions on Schuman Plan: Benelux concern at nebulous nature of Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i>
44	Mr. Berthoud Foreign Office	25 May	Minute to Sir R. Makins: information on lack of prior consultation over Schuman Plan.
45	M. Monnet Paris	25 May	Letter to Sir E. Plowden outlining functions and objectives of High Authority.
46	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 129	26 May	Reactions of MM. Parodi and Clappier to No. 41.
47	Sir E. Hall-Patch Paris Tel.No. 251	26 May	Conv. with M. Stikker: Netherlands Cabinet likely to be wary of commitment on Schuman Plan.
48	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 472	26 May	Instructions for informing French Govt. that H.M.G. cannot accept pre-conditions for participating in discussions on Schuman Plan.
49	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 473	26 May	Further instructions to No. 48.
50	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 131	26 May	Conv. with M. Clappier: French intention of publishing communiqué announcing discussions on Plan: desirability of U.K. acceptance.
51	Sir J. Le Rougetel Brussels Tel.No. 124	27 May	Belgian Govt. to accept French invitation for talks on Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar: i</i>
52	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 132	27 May	Netherlands M. Parodi informed that H.M.G. unable to subscribe to French communiqué on discussions.
53	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 481	29 May	French Ambassador informed of U.K. position on communiqué: redraft. <i>Calendar: i</i> Crossman Proposal.

54	Sir O. Franks Washington Tel.No. 1547	29 May	American interest in Schuman Plan: desirability of positive U.K. attitude.
55	Sir E. Plowden Treasury	29 May	Telephone conv. with M. Monnet: risk of failure of Plan: desirability of further Monnet-Plowden talks.
56	To Sir O. Franks Washington Tel.No. 2559	30 May	Criticisms of U.K. attitude in French press. <i>Calendar</i> : i U.S. press.
57	Sir R. Makins Foreign Office	30 May	Reviews position on Plan and likely developments.
58	M. Schuman Paris	30 May	Memo. Handed to Sir O. Harvey French formula for U.K. participation in discussions on Plan.
59	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 134	31 May	Discussion with M. Schuman of his memo. above.
60	Sir R. Makins Foreign Office	31 May	Minute to Mr. Younger submitting draft reply to No.58.
61	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 489	31 May	Instructions for reply to No.58.
62	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 490	31 May	Text of U.K. memo. To French Govt. replying to No.58: new formula for U.K. participation in discussions.
63	To Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 491	31 May	Text of proposed addition to French communiqué to cover U.K. position of wishing to participate, but without commitment.
64	Sir O. Franks Washington Tel.No. 1560	31 May	State Dept. informed of Anglo-French correspondence on Schuman Plan: U.S. support for Plan.
65	Mr. Wilson Foreign Office F.G. (W.P.) (50)	31 May	Note on background to French policy on Schuman Plan. <i>Calendar</i> : i I.A.R.
66	Mr. Allchin Luxembourg Tel.No. 61	1 June	Luxembourg to participate in Schuman Plan discussions.
67	Sir P. Nichols The Hague Tel.No. 110	1 June	Netherlands reservation on participation in Schuman discussions. <i>Calendar</i> : i
68	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 138	1 June	Rejection by M. Schuman of U.K. formula for participation in discussions.
69	Sir W. Strang Foreign Office	1 June	Efforts by French Ambassador at mediation.
70	Sir O. Franks Washington Tel.No. 1570	1 June	State Dept. concern for speedy settlement of Anglo-French dispute.
71	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 139	1 June	Conv. with M. Schuman: new French communiqué for decision by 2 June.
72	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 140	1 June	Text of French memo. Explaining new formula.
73	Sir O. Harvey Paris Tel.No. 141	1 June	Text of French communiqué.
74	Sir V. Mallet	1 June	Conv. With Count Sforza: criticisms of U.K.

	Rome		attitude.
	Tel.No. 141		
75	Sir W. Strang	2 June	Minute to Mr. Younger against accepting new French communiqué.
	Foreign Office		
76	Meeting with Mr. Bevin	2 June	Decision to reject French formula.
	London clinic		
77	F.G. Committee Treasury	2 June	Report on Schuman Plan with annexed draft communiqué.
	C.P. 120		
78	Cabinet Meeting	2 June	Rejection of new French formula. Approval of U.K. communiqué.
	10 Downing Street		
	C.M. 34 th Conclusions		
79	To Sir O. Harvey	2 June	Instructions for informing French Govt. of decisions above.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 502		
80	To Sir O. Harvey	2 June	Text of U.K. memo. Rejecting French communiqué.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 504		
81	To Sir O. Harvey	2 June	Text of U.K. communiqué.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 504		
82	Mr. Younger	2 June	Minute to Sir W. Strang covering notes on risks involved in accepting of rejecting French formula for participation.
	Foreign Office		
83	Sir O. Harvey	3 June	MM. Schuman and Parodi informed of U.K. position: separate communiqués suggested.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 143		
84	To Sir O. Harvey	3 June	Agreement to M. Schuman's suggestions in No. 83 for issue of communiqués and revision of U.K. communiqué.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 506		
85	Sir O. Harvey	3 June	Conv. with M. Schuman: arrangements for communiqués. French rejection of ministerial meeting.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 145		
86	Sir W. Strang	3 June	Conv. with U.S. Embassy: suggestion for omitting reference to ministerial meeting in U.K. communiqué.
	Foreign Office		
87	To Sir O. Harvey	3 June	Regrets procedural wrangle with French Govt. but unlikely to affect Anglo-French relations.
	Paris		
	Tel.No. 514		
88	To Sir O. Franks	5 June	Message from Mr. Bevin to Mr. Acheson on Schuman Plan: 'cannot buy a pig in a poke' but does not think Anglo-French relations will suffer.
	Washington		
	Tel.No. 2634		

ASSIGNMENT 3

THE PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTATIVITY AND INFLUENCE (*THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION SOURCES*)

Introduction

Apart from political statements by politicians, media and public opinion sources are much used in researching political history. These categories of sources present, however, their own problems to the analyst. In general, one can say that these problems fall into two big categories: the problem of representativity and the problem of influence.

Convinced of the fact that public opinion is something to take into serious account when explaining the beginning of the process of European integration, the German historian Walter Lipgens started in the 1960s to collect and research documents (pamphlets, newspaper articles) expressing European-minded public opinion during World War II and in the period directly following the War. Lipgens found a lot of texts defending the idea of a European federation, many published by resistance movements during World War II. In the years immediately following the War, similar ideas were put forward by several Europe-minded pressure groups. Lipgens therefore claimed to have discovered ‘a sweeping change in the political thought of a European elite, without which the entire history of Europe since 1945 cannot be understood’.⁷

Thanks to Lipgens a massive collection of sources on the history of the ‘European idea’ between 1939 and 1950 is now available. The question remains, however, was he right in suggesting that this idea was inescapably conquering the hearts and minds of people in Western Europe? Some historians, like Alan Milward, doubt that the European federalist movement had a lot of influence in establishing the ECSC. To be sure, public opinion is something to take very seriously: every politician working in a democratic context is aware of that fact, and the 2005 referenda on the European Constitution in France and the Netherlands only strengthened this awareness. For very good reasons, the European Union decided to set up its own research of ‘European Public Opinion’ (see WWW below). However: what, exactly, is ‘public opinion’? Where should it be located, and how can it be known? Just like politicians, historians try to trace it through opinion polls and the public media. Both sources, however, have their own setbacks.

⁷ Lipgens, W. (1968). European federation in the political thought of resistance movements during World War II. *Central European History*, 1(1), 5-19, esp. p. 19.

Question

For this assignment you will have to write a small report (ca. 1500 words) about the role of public opinion in the period 1940-1950 in bringing about the ECSC. In doing so you are required to select and critically evaluate the information value of at least three opinion polls and at least three narrative sources (from the press) taken from the collections of Lipgens (1985-1991) and Vielemeier (1991) in the Reader. You can choose to concentrate on a single country. Quote and give correct references.

To familiarise yourself with the problems of using public opinion sources, you should read the article by Boyce (1978). Read Milward (2000) to find one radical argument on the role of public opinion in the beginning of the process of European integration.

Quote and give correct references.

Reading

Boyce, D. G.

(1978). Public opinion and historians. *History*, 63, 214-228. [R]

Lipgens, W. (Ed.).

(1985-1991). *Documents on the history of European integration*. Berlin [etc.]: De Gruyter. [UB, R]

Milward, A.

(2000). *The European rescue of the nation-state* (fragment from Ch. 1, pp. 15-17). London: Routledge. [R]

Vielemeier, L.

(1991). European Union in public opinion polls, 1945-50. In W. Lipgens & W. Loth (Eds.), *Documents on the history of European integration*, 4, *Transnational organizations of political parties and pressure groups in the struggle for European union, 1945-1950* (pp. 585-595 and 606-614). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. [R]

Suggestions for further reading

Kaul, Chandrika,

(1996). 'The press.' In: Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and A. Seldon (eds.). *The contemporary history handbook* (pp. 298-310). Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press. [SL]

Nossiter, Tom,

(1996/1988). 'Survey and opinion polls.' In: Brian Brivati, Julia Buxton and A. Seldon (eds.). *The contemporary history handbook* (pp. 326-341). Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press. (= Nossiter, T., (1988). 'Survey and opinion polls.' In: A. Seldon (ed.). *Contemporary history: practice and method* (pp. 55-69) Oxford, New York: Blackwell.) [SL]