

rather good, despite the existence of many flaws in other areas of their society.

**RJ** *How will the ideology and status of the 21st century university differ from those of the 20th century? Will they become more politicised institutions than it is currently the case? What do you think are the factors that will affect the development of the university as an institution in the near future?*

Universities will definitely become an important force in the society in the 21st century. However, they will have to compete for influence with other forces that currently have a greater influence on society, namely the Internet and its most important segments (e.g. Google, Wikipedia). Nowadays, the students do not use crib sheets or cue cards to find the answers they need to answer their exam questions; instead, they search online for the information they need to answer these questions on. New technologies are taking on greater weight in the information balance. The importance of reading books is declining, while the use of other informational sources is increasing. Thus, **it appears that universities are not the only source of knowledge and that they are no longer the force that they used to be.**

The university's position as a social force is threatened by the mass media and by video games, which are an important part of the life of the young people. Today's youth tend to be good with computers and new technologies, and this is probably the most important driver of social change in recent years. ■

*Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie was speaking with Yulia Netesova*



## TITLE: TEACHING CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM RESEARCH



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Exclusively for RJ

There has never been widespread acceptance in the USA of the notion that research institutes should somehow be separated from teaching institutions. In America, there is nothing similar to the Max Planck Institute or France's Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). Most of researchers in the US must also teach students and, in my opinion, that remains a strength of the American educational system (an exception must be made for the Princeton Institute of Advanced Study or the RAND Corporation — but I don't necessarily think that they perform their functions better than universities as such.)

The old socialist bloc countries, including the republics of the former Soviet Union, had separate research institutions that often resolved collaborative tasks. I do not believe that this is the best use of skilled academics. I also think that a professor tends to play a more useful role in society than an academician. **If I were at liberty to determine the education policy in one of those countries where similar academic institutions exist, I would seek to integrate them more closely with the process of teaching students.**

Admittedly, in the USA, the private sector activity carries out a great deal of

research. For the most part, this usually takes the form of financing university research programs, but some corporations also have their own laboratories. Among such companies are Bell Labs, IBM, Microsoft, Intel, and Google, for instance. Grants from the NSF go towards funding a huge amount of developments in the sphere of medicine and the natural sciences, in addition to some research in the social sciences.

Universities certainly will be different in the future. There will be much more decentralisation in the teaching process through internet offerings (through distance learning programmes). Major central libraries will become less important with the emergence of and access to a greater amount of digital information. I think that, as universities mature they will most likely become less active politically. However, in some countries, universities will retain the function of being an implicit oppositional element to the powers that be. In recent years, this has not been so much the case in the USA (with the exception of the 1960s), compared to universities in Latin America, France, Italy and perhaps some Asian societies. Perhaps universities will continue to play this role in the future. ■