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**Using History in ELT: Teaching Lower Secondary School
Students about the Nicholas Winton Story and the
Holocaust Era**

Diplomová práce

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Anglický jazyk se zaměřením na vzdělávání

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů literatury.

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Abstract

This master's thesis deals with the usage of history in ELT, concretely with the Nicholas Winton story and the holocaust era in the times of WWII.

The thesis is divided into two main parts - the theoretical one and the practical one.

In the theoretical part, there are the following subchapters to be found:

- Introduction
- The Holocaust during WWII
- Heroism before the Holocaust
- Heroism during the Holocaust

The practical part of this thesis introduces two potential lesson plans which may be implemented in ELT, focusing on holocaust and heroic acts before and during the holocaust period. The author draws on authentic, trustworthy and relevant sources for the theoretical part, including books, articles or documentaries. The practical part offers two lesson plans and provides the SWOT analysis for each lesson plan.

1 Introduction

As the title suggests, this master's thesis concerns the infamous period in the first half of the 20th century within WWII known as the holocaust. However it also deals with heroism during these darksome times – the Nicholas Winton story and other heroes are presented who contributed to helping or saving Jews from the Nazis.

The thesis aims to research the background of the events which eventually led to the massive extermination of the Jews as well as to present Nicholas Winton, among other individuals, who did not hesitate to risk their lives in order to help innocent people. Another aim of this thesis is to outline, with the help of two lesson plans, the potential way of how to teach lower secondary school students about this horrific, yet significant era in our history. Among the most used methods in the thesis are books, articles, videos and documentaries.

The first chapter (The Holocaust during WWII) gives a brief overview of what the holocaust means, who Adolf Hitler and the Nazis were, what anti-semitism means as well as what events triggered it, what the so-called final solution was about and last but not least it offers an explanation of the concept of concentration and extermination camps.

The second chapter (Heroism before the Holocaust) provides the readers with knowledge about individuals who contributed to saving Jews from horrors of the holocaust, mainly focusing on Nicholas Winton, whose life story is described.

The third chapter (Heroism during the Holocaust) presents other heroes or rescuers who were despite the danger willing to help Jews, such as the world-famous Oskar Schindler.

The practical part of this thesis, called Practical usage of the Holocaust and the Nicholas Winton Story in ELT, provides the readers with two potential lesson plans related to the topic that could be used in the ELT. The SWOT analysis for each lesson plan is processed.

2 The Holocaust during WWII

2.1 The Meaning of the Holocaust

The Holocaust has remained entirely unique historical event that cannot be compared to any other political crime of the past. The Holocaust (from Greek: *a burnt offering*) was the systematic murder of 6 million European Jews in Nazi extermination and concentration camps in the years 1941-1944. (Emmert, 2018, p.9) This massacre is also known as the Shoah. While “Holocaust“ is the English term derived from the Greek, “Shoah“ is a Hebrew word with its biblical root, meaning “desolation“ or “a whirlwind of destruction.“ (URL1) Logically speaking, both terms are used to describe the same thing - the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis during WWII. It is understood as a combination of the Greek word “genos,“ meaning “race,“ with the Latin word “cide,“ meaning “to kill.“ (URL2) The genocide is defined as a mass and systematic extermination of a particular group of people because of their religion, race, or nationality. (Strahinich, 2015, p.1)

The persecution and oppression of Jews in Germany began after the Nazi Party seized power, in 1933. However, the very systematic liquidation of Jews resulted in 1941-1944, during World War II as the Nazis decided, based on a mere racial hatred, to exterminate all European Jews without exception, including the smallest children as well. As already mentioned, the killings were conducted neither due to religious nor political affiliation, but purely as a result of the race of the victims. All full and half Jews were destined for extermination. (Emmert, 2018, p.9) What is interesting to note here is that before the Holocaust period, a population of 9 million Jews lived in about twenty European countries, however only a third of them survived the end of the World War II. (Strahinich, 2015, p.1)

Obviously, while the separation and disenfranchisement of Jews took place publicly and openly, the systematic liquidation occurred in strict secrecy with the intention of concealing an extensive organization devoted to mass killing. The only thing that was supposed to be talk about in public was that Jews were being locked up in order to be sent to forced labor. Therefore their actual fate remained hidden, not only from the world, but even from the Jews themselves. It is safe to say that despite visible hatred towards the Jews, which has been evident since the

Nazis came to power, nobody could ever imagine what horrible acts they could eventually commit. (Färber, 2005, p.332) There is no doubt the massive crime was organized in detail by the highest-ranking masterminds of Nazi Germany – RSHA (Reich Security Main Office) officers, SS guards, camp commanders and countless others. These people perceived this hateful mass murder only as a performance of duties. Even though it is no secret that not everyone shared the same views and attitudes. Part of those involved considered the given task a mission, whereas the other part was just following orders that could not be refused. Anyway, the monstrous crime was to remain hidden forever from the German and world public. (Emmert, 2018, p.9)

Since 1933 Nazi Germany set up over twenty thousand camps in order to imprison, and later even to exterminate “enemies of the German Reich,” predominantly Jews. These overpopulated camps were undoubtedly a place with unacceptable sanitary conditions where prisoners were being constantly starved and tortured. (URL3) As Emmert states (2018, p.9), in death factories, which were established in 1941, the mass killing proceeded according to a clearly defined and pre-approved plan. Special train transports from all over Nazi-controlled Europe were sent daily to Poland with the sole purpose of eliminating victims in the so-called gas chambers, which were built intentionally so that the extermination of the prisoners could be carried out as efficiently and discreetly as possible. Originally, the firing squad were executing mass murders, the victims were shot en masse at the bottom of ravines or were liquidated in mobile gas chambers, however, this method of killing soon proved to be ineffective in terms of time requirements and the elimination of a lower number of people. And for this reason it was determined by the SS that gassing would become a much more efficient way. Carbon monoxide was being used in some camps, while in others, such as in Auschwitz, the largest concentration camp built, a well-known Zyklon B was being utilized. (URL1)

The whole pre-war persecution of Jews in Germany and later persecution throughout occupied Europe became an integral part of the holocaust. More specifically, the victims were humiliated, robbed, publicly labeled (required to wear a yellow badge), and last but not least, they had to emigrate. It is general knowledge that the Jews were gathered and subsequently imprisoned in overcrowded ghettos, where, due to the catastrophic conditions, almost a fifth of the Jewish population did not survive. Part of this genocide was also the merciless killing of Jews in ghettos or camps, where they attempted heroic uprisings several times, and, at the same

time, the suffering of Jews and millions of other nationalities who were slowly dying of destructive labor. (Emmert, 2018, p.9)

Nonetheless, Jews were not the only sufferers. Approximately 5 to 6 million Roma, communists, Slavic people, political prisoners, prisoners of war, people with handicaps, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and labor unionists were murdered by the Nazis within World War II. What is interesting to note is that even before the establishment of the extermination camps in 1941, one million Jews were murdered by the Nazis on Soviet territory. Not only the Nazis themselves, but also German businesspeople, scientists, industrialists and many more contributed to the most infamous crime and one of the most tragic chapters in modern human history. (Strahinich, 2015, p.1)

2.2 Adolf Hitler and the Nazis

Adolf Hitler, known as the most evil and powerful genius of the twentieth century, was the Nazi leader and the initiator of the Second World War. Hitler's absolute power began on January 30 in 1933 as he was elected chancellor of Germany. Having acquired the title "führer" (leader), he led his country for twelve years, influencing millions of people through his brilliant abilities as a hypnotic speaker and manipulator. The German dictator's rule caused the outbreak of the war, the death of millions of innocent people, as well as gaining a reputation for being ruthless and one of the most despised figures in history. (URL4)

2.2.1 Childhood and time in Vienna

Even though Hitler had been born an Austrian, he considered himself predominantly a German. He was born on April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, which is a small town near the border with Germany. However, he spent most of his childhood in Linz where he attended the so called Realschule (a type of secondary school). (Rees, 2017, p.10) He came from a family of five siblings and two half-siblings from his father's previous marriage, he was the son of Alois Schickelgruber Hitler and Klara Poelzl, who was actually his third wife.

Hitler's relationship with his strict father was not ideal at all, it was tense and characterized by frequent arguments based mainly on the fact that Adolf refused to pursue his

father's career of a civil servant and instead desired to become an artist. Other disagreements also stemmed from Hitler's inadequate behavior, he was extremely unstable, lazy and always dissatisfied, as well as poor performances at school, which eventually caused him to be dropped out of school, at the age of 16. On the contrary, he had a loving relationship with his strongly Catholic mother, whose death from cancer in 1907 affected the young Hitler greatly. His father died four years earlier, in 1903. After that, Adolf moved to Vienna, where he decided to follow his dream of becoming a painter. Nonetheless, since his drawings were considered of not good quality, he was unfortunately rejected by Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts. During Hitler's time in Austrian capital, he was leading a miserable, lonely and bohemian life. Hitler became interested in politics and being affected by a few racial theorists such as Liebenfels or Schoenerer, he started to develop many of the Anti-semitic ideas and visions of a Greater Germany, which strongly influenced his subsequent actions in his carrier. (URL5)

2.2.2 World War I

During the Great War, Hitler joined the Bavarian army and served as a dispatch runner. What is interesting to note here is that although he was wounded twice (firstly being hit in his leg during the Battle of the Somme and secondly the British gas caused him a temporary blindness near Ypres in 1918), Hitler proved himself a brave and capable soldier, even receiving the Iron Cross for bravery, more specifically the Iron Cross First Class, which is rare. The final humiliating defeat of Germany in the war meant for Hitler, as for many others, the insufficient patriotism of the German soldiers, allowing the Allies to win. (URL6)

2.2.3 Nazi Party

In Munich 1919, Hitler entered the small, marginal German Worker's Party (DAP), later renamed National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP), shortly Nazi Party, and was active in the gradually growing party until 1921, when he assumed leadership by becoming a chairman. This idealistic party focused on uniting the German working class under the influence of strong nationalism. It is general knowledge that the ambitious Hitler was a brilliantly gifted speaker. Being recognized as Führer of a movement, his oratory skills significantly helped him to manipulate a huge number of people, managing to win an audience with his demagogic ideas. (URL5) As Strahinich states (2015, p.2), Hitler used fear, hate, lies, and violence to grab and

hold attention and power. He understood the value of propaganda, the use of lies and half-truths to get people to go along with certain ideas or attitudes. To build support, Hitler held huge parades and rallies. Nazi party members waved giant swastikas, the Nazi emblem, which actually was an adopted version of the ancient symbol of the hooked cross (hakenkreuz), printed in a white circle on a red background. The Nazis were convinced that this symbol linked them to their predecessors. They also raised their right arms in a greeting while shouting “Hail Hitler“ (Heil Hitler).

Hitler’s propaganda was focused primarily against the enemies of the state – the Jews, but also against the Marxists and the entire Versailles Treaty dealing with the post-war organization of Europe as well as determining the terms of the defeated ones. There is no doubt about the fact that the angry and bitter Hitler was looking for someone to blame for all of Germany’s problems. (URL6) According to Rees (2017, p.1), in September 1919 Adolf Hitler wrote a letter of immense historical importance. But at the time no one realized its significance. He was 30 years old, all he had to look back on was a life filled with crushed dreams. He had wanted to become a famous artist but he had been rejected by the artistic establishment, he had longed to play a part in German victory over the Allies during the First World War, only to witness the humiliating defeat of German forces in November 1918. In this letter, he addressed a fellow soldier called Adolf Gemlich, Hitler stated unequivocally who was responsible not only for his personal predicament, but for the suffering of the whole German nation. The adversary Hitler had identified was “the Jew.“ And he added that the “final aim“ of any German government had to be “the uncompromising removal of the Jews altogether.“ It allows us an insight into the thinking in 1919 of the man who would later instigate the Holocaust, but also because it is the first irrefutable evidence of Hitler’s own anti-Semitic beliefs.

2.2.4 Beer Hall Putsch

On the night of November 8th to 9th, 1923, an unsuccessful, yet significant event occurred, the so called Beer Hall Putsch (or the Munich Putsch), evolving into power’s expansion of the nationalists and founding of the Nazi movement. Adolf Hitler together with General Ludendorff and many dedicated nationalists, such as Himmler, Göring or Streicher, intended to seize power by overthrowing the Munich’s Bavarian government. They forced their way into a beer hall where Adolf declared, accompanied by the firing of his revolver, that this

was meant to be the beginning of a needed national revolution. This was followed by a failed march through the center of Munich where a gun battle with police took place, causing the death of fourteen Nazis. Despite the Putsch's failure, it enabled Hitler to become a national hero standing at the head of right-wing nationalism. (URL6)

2.2.5 Mein Kampf

In the aftermath of a coup that went wrong, Hitler was arrested and convicted of high treason. Although sentenced to five years in Landsberg Prison, Hitler was released after only nine months. A certain fact contributes to the leniency of the court, namely that the judge happened to be one of the many Bavarian supporters who sympathized with the actions of the Nazis. (Rees, 2017, p.28) It is worth mentioning here that during his stay behind bars in 1924 he wrote a magnificent work called "Mein Kampf" (or "My Struggle"), which was published in 1925 and which offers valuable insights into Hitler's worldview. (URL4) As Emmert states (2018, p.23), it was the basic work of Nazism, in which Hitler presented his vision of a racially pure (Nordic) Great Germanic leadership state. He placed "world Jewry" in the role of main enemies of Germany and all Aryan (Indo-European) nations. In his book, he defined the basic ideas of Nazi ideology and quite openly described his political plans, including the eradication of Jews from "German national life" and the expansion of the German new living space (Lebensraum) towards the east. The book contains, among others, one exaggerated sentence, namely that the Jew „is and remains the typical parasite, a sponger who like a noxious bacillus keeps spreading as soon as a favourable medium invites him.“ (Rees, 2017, p.31,32) The idea of racial purity was undoubtedly something he was obsessed with. As stated previously, he developed his anti-Semitic thoughts already in Vienna while making a living as a painter. As Hitler's power grew, Mein Kampf became the best-selling book after the Bible. It should be noted at this point that initially many people at the time thought that this was nonsense and thus did not take Hitler's plans seriously.

After Hitler's release from prison, he was banned from public speaking, which, however, changed in January 1925, when the ban was lifted and permission to speak publicly was regained.

Although most people believed that Nazism had no future and throughout the 1920s they remained only on the fringes of the political scene and did not achieve very significant results in the Reich elections (in 1924 the Nazi party won just under a million votes), it gradually began to become an increasingly large party, gaining in popularity. This is evidenced by the fact that in 1930, the Nazis became, by winning some 13,7 million votes, the second-largest political party in the Reichstag (the Parliament). It was also slightly helped by the worldwide Great Depression beginning in 1929, which was having devastating effects on the middle classes and threatened the Weimar Republic's stability as well. Between 1929 and 1930 the German unemployment more than doubled from 1,3 million to 3 million, therefore a large part of Germany found itself in an existential crisis. Thanks to this fact, Hitler began to gain more supporters and the popularity of the Nazis skyrocketed then. With the help of very well thought-out demagogic propaganda, which enabled him to convince the mass of people, Hitler presented himself as a person capable of strong leadership and also the necessary savior of the German nation in these miserable times, being considered the promising protector of economic existence. (URL6) Even the future Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, found Hitler „liberating because of his completely upright and honest personality“ and concluded that the Nazi leader could be the saviour that Germany needed. (Rees, 2017, p.41)

2.2.6 Sturmabteilung and Schutzstaffel

Hitler formed a group of men, *Sturmabteilung* or shortly *SA* (“storm troopers“), otherwise known as the "Brownshirts," because of the color of their uniform. However, he later formed another group, the *Schutzstaffel* or *SS*, intended to be a sort of more reliable alternative to the SA. (Strahinich, 2015, p.3)

As Emmert states (2018, p.30,31), the SA was originally established as a hall protection and orderly service at NSDAP meetings. By the early 1930s, they had grown to an organization with one million members. Uniformed members of the SA, wearing brown shirts with swastikas on their sleeves, organised parades with red party flags in the streets of German cities, evening marches with drums and torches, and often committed street violence. Many of them, including the commander Ernst Röhm, believed that after Hitler came to power there would be a "revolution" and the SA would replace the traditional army. However, during the so-called

“Night of the Long Knives,” on 30 June 1934, Hitler had Röhm and the other commanders murdered. The organisation continued to operate as an auxiliary formation.

On the other hand, the SS troops originally served as security for Hitler and the NSDAP leadership. After the Nazis came to power, they became a strictly selective organisation, overshadowing the previously dominant SA and becoming a rival to the army. It was headed by the Reichsführer of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, who reported to the Supreme Commander, Adolf Hitler. SS members, in their famous black uniforms, became a terror during the war. The organisation was transformed into a 'state within a state' and became the mainstay of the Nazi regime, especially in the implementation of its racist policies. The majority of SS members served in the frontline Waffen-SS formations, with only a small number serving in the Totenkopf units that guarded the concentration camps. In 1945 the SS was banned and declared a criminal organisation. (Emmert, 2018, p.30,31)

2.2.7 1933 and onwards

By 1932, the Nazi Party had become Germany's largest party in the Reichstag, and in January 1933, the then president Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor, giving birth to the Nazis' so-called Third Reich or “Thousand-Year Reich.” On 24 March 1933, the Enabling Act was finally passed giving Hitler dictatorial powers to rule without the Reichstag. (Rees, 2017, p.58) From that moment on, the Nazi regime gained all legislative power and within months all non-Nazi parties ceased to exist, which meant the Nazi Party becoming the only official party allowed in the German Reich. NSDAP (the National Socialist German Workers' Party) also declared a state of emergency, which remained in force in Germany until May 1945. (URL5)

A month later, in February 1933, the Reichstag building was deliberately set on fire. As Emmert notes (2018, p.19,20), the blame was attributed to a Dutch communist, although to this day it is not certain who the real culprit was. Evidence later suggested that the Nazis themselves had set fire to the building, but the participation of the Nazis in the crime has never been proved conclusively. However, what is certain is that this act of arson was of immense benefit to the Nazis who naturally used this event as an excuse to ban the Communist Party of Germany and skilfully seized control of the security apparatus. The fire heralded the end of parliamentary

democracy in Germany. That same year, Hitler's Germany withdrew from the League of Nations and on March 13th, as part of the anti-Jewish campaign, the government called for a general boycott of Jewish merchants and businesses, which was intended to cause the economic isolation of the Jewish population.

At the beginning of August 1934, the president Paul von Hindenburg died, making Hitler not only Chancellor but also head of the German Empire, thus becoming the unquestionable ruler of Germany. (Rees, 2017, p.84)

In 1935, Germany reinstated universal conscription and a year later marched into the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland, a neutral area which Germany was prohibited to occupy, as the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 stated.

The year 1938 is considered a turning point. On March 12, the German troops entered Austria without any fighting and took over the leadership of the country that showed no resistance at all. This event is known as the Anschluss. (Strahinich, 2015, p.5) According to Rees (2017, p.113), millions of ordinary Austrians welcomed the Wehrmacht (the German army), garlanding them with flowers. Many Austrians thought the arrival of the Nazis offered hope of a new, stronger Austria no longer beset by economic problems. As already stated, Hitler was received with enthusiasm by many Austrian citizens. In fact, Nazi troops marched into Austria in the morning and the Führer himself crossed the border in the afternoon. He even crossed the river Inn, on which his hometown Braunau am Inn lies, so his invasion carried a certain symbolism. It is not necessary to point out that the union of Austria with the German Empire was a great achievement for Hitler's government.

The next step in Hitler's plan to expand the territory was the Munich Agreement, which took place on the night of 29-30 September and was signed by the prime ministers of England – Neville Chamberlaine, France – Édouard Daladier, Italy – Benito Mussolini, and last but not least, of course, by Adolf Hitler. In a desperate effort to maintain peace and prevent war in Europe, England and France decided to sign the treaty with Germany, although the consent of Czechoslovakia itself was lacking. The treaty meant that Czechoslovakia lost part of its area, the so-called Sudetenland (the mostly German-speaking part of the country located on the border of Germany), which subsequently fell to Germany. It is of importance to stress here that Hitler assured everyone that he did not intend to start a war on the condition of gaining the

Sudetenland. Nevertheless, he broke his promise a year later, when on March 15 he occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia and established the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

With the aim of gaining as much territory as possible and thus gradually implementing his plan, Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, which triggered the World War Second. (Strahinich, 2015, p.6) At this point, it must not be forgotten to underline the fact that on the one hand the Nazis were waging a visible war on the battlefields, on the water and in the air, but at the same time there was a secret war in death camps against the main enemies, the Jews, who were to be liquidated without the outside world knowing about it.

2.2.8 Hitler's death

Shortly before his death, on the night of April 29, 1945, Hitler, at the age of 56, married his long-time mistress Eva Braun, a saleswoman from Munich.

As it became apparent that the Soviets were closing in on Berlin and that the war was heading towards the very end, and therefore the defeat of the German Reich, Hitler retreated to his bunker in Berlin, from which he continued to issue orders. Fearing that he would meet the same fate as the Italian leader Benito Mussolini, who was shot and then hanged by his feet in the square in Milan on 28 April, Hitler decided to commit suicide. On April 30, 1945, he shot himself, Eva Braun poisoned herself with cyanide. After their bodies were removed from the bunker, they were doused with petrol and eventually burned. (URL 5)

2.3 Antisemitism and its origins

2.3.1 The roots of Jews

Although originally from the Middle East, Jews have lived in Europe for almost two thousand years and are one of the oldest peoples in the world. It is necessary to realize that intolerance towards Jews is not a matter of the first half of the 20th century, but even much earlier they were the object of persecution and hostility. The Jewish faith is the oldest monotheistic religion based on the belief in one God. Christianity and Islam also emerged later from Jewish roots. The life of Orthodox Jews takes place around the synagogue, with rabbis leading Jewish communities.

The Jewish people settled in their own state in what is now Israel; they considered the territory they inhabited to be “the promised land,” given to them by the God they believed in. During the 10th to 6th centuries BC, the Jews built a temple in Jerusalem, which was later burned by the Romans and only the western side of the courtyard, known as the Wailing Wall, remains today. From time immemorial, the Jews have had to compete with surrounding tribes and powerful empires who have tried to convince them that Christianity is the only true religion, forcing them to abandon their faith. The Jews were defeated several times and collectively sent into exile. (Emmert, 2018, p.11) As Rees states (2017, p.2), even though Jesus was born Jewish himself, passages in the Bible emphasize that the Jews were antagonistic to him.

In Europe, the first Jewish centre was Spain, where Jewish culture reached its peak during the 11th-15th centuries. However, in 1492 the Jews were expelled from Spain, subsequently moving to Thessaloniki in Greece. It is important to note that there are two main branches of European Jewry, namely Sephardic (Spanish) Jews and Ashkenazi Jews. (Emmert, 2018, p.12,13)

As already mentioned, Jews have been subject to oppression in the past. Especially in medieval Europe, when Christian culture dominated, persecution of Jews was not uncommon. The Christians burned the Talmud (a collection of writings on Jewish civil and religious laws) and many other holy books, further the Jews were forbidden from building temples where they could pray, they were exiled into another country, and in some places they were even crucified

as guilty of practicing their faith. (Strahinich, 2015, p.9) According to Rees (2017, p.2), in many countries Jews were banned from owning land, from practising certain professions and from living wherever they chose. At various periods, in a number of cities across Europe, the Jews were forced to live in ghettos and wear a special mark of identification on their clothing. In medieval Europe, Jews were thus perceived as an alien non-Christian religious community. The lies that were spread about the Jews were very common and helped to create as much hatred as possible. For example, the Jews were accused of spreading diseases and causing the plague, polluting the water, and generally being descendants of the devil. There were also rumours about Jews committing ritual murders, killing the babies of Christians. The main cause of all this aversion was undoubtedly the fact that they had not accepted faith in Christ. Jews were thus marginalised and not entitled to the same rights as the rest of the population. (Strahinich, 2015, p.9) A permanent and general improvement in their situation did not occur until the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the emancipation of Jews in the majority society began to take place. The “Declaration of the Rights of Man“ in France in 1789, when Jews became free and equal under the law, undoubtedly contributed to this. Later, in Germany, some prohibitions against Jews were even lifted, allowing them to practice hitherto unauthorised professions. (Rees, 2017, p.3)

During the second half of the 19th century in Germany, the concept of the so-called “Volk“ became widespread, which was supposed to represent not just a "population," but rather a kind of spiritual grouping of people united by the things they have in common - the same language, cultural heritage, and native land. However, Jews were excluded from this concept because many of them lived in cities instead of countryside, and thus were not connected to the soil and therefore were unable to fulfill the ideals of the “Volk.“ Nonetheless, everything was based on prejudice against Jews. For centuries they were forbidden to own land, so logically they could not practice “völkisch“ professions in the countryside. (Rees, 2017, p.3,4,5) Moreover, many people still believed the lies that had been spread about the Jews for centuries.

2.3.2 Antisemitism

„The word antisemitism means prejudice against or hatred of Jews. In 1879, German journalist Wilhelm Marr originated the term antisemitism, denoting the hatred of Jews, and also hatred of various liberal, cosmopolitan, and international political trends of the 18th and

19th centuries often associated with Jews. The trends under attack included equal civil rights, constitutional democracy, free trade, socialism, finance capitalism, and pacifism. (URL 7)

Anti-Semitism established itself along with racism. Towards the end of the 19th century the cult of the so-called Aryan race, which is supposedly superior to all others, was growing especially in the German environment. As Rees notes (2017, p.7), the writer Houston Stewart Chamberlain argued that while the Aryans represented the ultimate ideal, the Jew embodied precisely the reverse. In general, anti-Semites considered the Jews a hostile yet extremely intelligent element that must be destroyed in order to purify Europe.

According to Emmert (2018, p.17), the term Zionism can be explained as a Jewish national movement advocating the return of the Jews to their ancient homeland in Palestine and the restoration of a Jewish state. This movement, whose founder is considered to be Theodor Herzl, arose as a reaction to the aggressive anti-Semitism in Europe in the late 19th century. The main tenets of this movement were proclaimed at the First Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897.

A notorious document is the anti-Semitic forgery, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which was allegedly produced at the aforementioned Zionist Congress. Although it is a work of fiction, and the so-called Elders of Zion and their conspiracy never existed, it is the most widely used anti-Semitic publication in modern times, with Jew-hatred at its core. Supposedly, the Jewish elders planned the eradication of Christianity, the assimilation of all peoples except the Jews, and the achievement of world domination. (URL 8)

The Jews, as has been mentioned many times, were the target of conspiracies and all the bad things that happened in society were attributed to them. For example, they were also held collectively responsible for the Bolshevik Revolution, which took place in Russia in 1917. It should also be mentioned here that it was in Russia that the so-called anti-Jewish pogroms took place, meaning anti-Jewish violence, mob persecution, killings and burning of houses. During the period from the 1880s until World War I, approximately two million Russian Jews were forced to flee to the U.S. However, tens of thousands more Jews became victims of these pogroms in Czarist Russia. (Rees, 2017, p. 9,10)

However, anti-Semitism reached its greatest peak in Germany in the 1920s, when the Nazi Party, which made no secret of its hatred of Jews, gradually came to power. Among the main points of the NSDAP programme was the removal of Jews from public life. (Emmert, 2018, p.16) As Rees states (2017, p.12), the Jews were not just blamed for trying to instigate a Communist revolution in Germany. They were also blamed for the loss of the war, the destruction of the old political regime based on the Kaiser, agreeing to the terms of the hated Versailles peace treaty, and participating in the Weimar government which presided over the hyperinflation of the early 1920s.

Immediately after the Nazis gained power in 1933, a boycott of Jewish shops and businesses began, which was taken up by the SA. Jewish businesses were plastered with anti-Semitic posters, Stars of David and signs urging residents not to shop with Jews. Since the majority of the population did not respect this appeal and therefore the attempt to elementally exclude Jews from society failed, violence and terror began to occur. The Nazis' next step was to purge and sanitize German culture by publicly burning thousands of "non-German" books authored by Jews in Berlin's Opernplatz on May 10, 1933. The whole process was overseen by the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels. (Strahinich, 2015, p.10,11)

What made a significant impact on the German society was, among other things, a Nazi newspaper called *Der Stürmer*, published by the fanatic Julius Streicher. This radically anti-Semitic weekly newspaper began appearing in 1923 and was initially limited to the Nuremberg area, but by 1933 the paper had expanded to become a mass circulation magazine portraying German Jews as Marxists and bloodthirsty beasts. (URL 9)

It is also worth explaining the notion of eugenics, which was one of the other items on the Nazi agenda. The word eugenics, or racial hygiene, comes from the Greek, literally meaning "good race". The term was first coined by the English scientist Francis Galton. (URL 10) As Rees states (2017, p. 8), in 1869 in *Hereditary Genius* he (*Galton*) argued that the key question that society had to address was simple – who was permitted to breed? He wrote that by 'careful selection' it would be possible 'to produce a highly gifted race of men by judicious marriages during several consecutive generations.' It should also be mentioned here that „euthanasia“ of the incurably physically and mentally ill was very often and secretly carried out. The secret project T4: euthanasia of the mentally ill, which the public was not allowed to know anything about, was launched in the autumn of 1939. Hitler himself despised the disabled, logically these

people did not meet the Nazi points and ideals, therefore they were to be put to death. Patients, especially children, were murdered with lethal injections, and false reports were sent to families with fabricated causes of death. (Emmert, 2018, p.75) The Nazis set up six centers where euthanasia was performed. Five were located in Germany (Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Bernburg, Hadamar, Sonnenstein) and one in Austria (Hartheim). Very soon, small gas chambers were also used for euthanasia. The first place where the gassing experiment was implemented was Brandenburg. It was personally supervised by Dr. Karl Brandt, Hitler's personal doctor. (Rees, 2017, p.166,168) As the mass deaths in the institutions became suspicious, the Nazis stopped the killings, although they denied everything. Nearly 90,000 patients were murdered by injection and gassing by September 1941.

2.3.3 Nuremberg Laws

The Nuremberg Laws became the focal point of the ongoing NSDAP congress in September 1935 in Nuremberg, and for this reason they have entered history as the so-called Nuremberg or racial/anti-Jewish laws.

As Emmert states (2018, p.37), the Reich Citizenship Law stipulated that only a tribal member of a nation of German or related blood could be a Reich citizen. The law defined Jews only as citizens without Reich citizenship and deprived them of a number of civil rights, especially political rights. It should be noted here that the law also affected Germans themselves, since they had to carefully prove their racial origin if they applied for certain selected jobs or political positions, the new legislation invaded the private sphere of every German citizen. The second law, the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, prohibited all further marriages as well as extramarital sexual relations between Germans and Jews. Violation of this prohibition was to be severely punished as racial dishonour.

2.3.4 Kristallnacht

On the night of 9-10 November 1938, the most extensive pre-war violent action against Jews took place. During the Kristallnacht, also known as the "Night of the Long Knives," the Nazis carried out a German-wide pogrom. SA troops attacked Jewish communities, burning

hundreds of Jewish synagogues and other buildings, destroying Jewish hospitals, cemeteries, schools, homes, and storefronts were beaten or painted over, the Jews themselves were beaten up. The alleged pretext for this brutal violence was the murder of the German secretary in Paris by a Jewish emigre. This pogrom lasted until November 11, 1938, and 96 Jews lost their lives during this persecution, while another 30,000 were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Moreover, all material responsibility was attributed to the Jews. The damage caused during the pogrom, including the anti-Semitic graffiti on the walls, had to be removed by the Jews themselves in the following days under the supervision of the SA. In addition, they were collectively fined one billion Reichsmarks. After this event, life became even more unbearable for the Jews, many of whom committed suicide or emigrated. (Strahinich, 2015, p.12)

2.3.5 Emigration

After Kristallnacht, racial laws became even stricter. The Nazi authorities gradually began to mark the identity papers of Jews with the letter J (“Jude“ meaning Jew). They were herded into ghettos to isolate them from the rest of the German population.

The second option for Jews was emigration, in exchange for their property. Germany was inhabited by about half a million German Jews, however after Hitler came to power in 1933, about 37,000 of them left the country. Subsequently, around 360,000 Jews emigrated by 1941. (Rees, 2017, p.63) At first, they left rather voluntarily, but only from 1938, when the position of the Jews worsened, were they forced to emigrate. It is also worth mentioning that a number of important personalities, such as Albert Einstein or Erich Maria Remarque, left Germany before the war. On October 23rd, 1941, legal emigration of the Jews was stopped and since then even strictly forbidden. (Emmert, 2018, p.47)

Not only German Jews, but also Czechoslovak and Austrian Jews were enforced to move out. According to Rees (2017, p.110), by the time the Nazis entered Austria in March 1938 there were more than 180,000 Jews in Vienna alone, perhaps as many as 200,000 – while in the whole of Germany there were now fewer than twice that number. Thus for the Nazis the Jewish ‘problem’ in Austria was proportionately even bigger than it was in Germany. In total, about 537,000 Jews from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia went abroad by October 1941. Although not all of them made it there, and many ended up in neighboring countries of

Germany, such as Holland, France or Switzerland, the dream destination of most Jewish immigrants became the "Promised Land," biblical Palestine. The situation was not easy for the emigrants because the democratic countries did not want to accept Jews in large numbers, and Jews were sometimes imprisoned in French internment camps or deported to Australia by the British government. Immigrant visas to Palestine could only be obtained by relatives of those already living there, specially trained peasants, or businessmen with sufficient capital. (Emmert, 2018, p.48,49,51)

2.3.6 Ghettos

Given the fact that the greatest concentration of Jews was in Poland, which was invaded by the Germans on 1 September 1939, it was logical that ghettos and camps began to spring up particularly in that country. The decision was made to establish heavily guarded Jewish ghettos in the major Polish cities. Placing Jews in these ghettos, which preceded the establishment of the extermination camps themselves and were intended to serve as a gathering place for Jews before they were transported to the extermination camps, became part of the so-called *Final solution to the Jewish question*. The ghettos were established during 1940 and 1941, guarded by the SS and isolated from the outside world. (Emmert, 2018, p.85) In these cramped ghettos, which were enclosed by walls, fences or barbed wire, and which no one was allowed to leave, the imprisoned inhabitants faced enormous shortages of food and drink, space, fuel and medicine. It is not surprising, then, that about one-fifth of the integrated population there died from starvation, untreated diseases and disastrous sanitary conditions. The Nazis ordered that within each ghetto, the Jews should elect their own self-government, a Jewish Council (Judenrat), to take care of administration, food distribution, housing, relocation of the prisoners and other things. Obviously, each council was accountable to the SS commandant's office. (Strahinich, 2015, p.13)

Among the largest ghettos were Warsaw, Lodz, Lvov, Terezin and Minsk, with the first ghetto to be built being established on February 8, 1940 in the Polish city of Lodz. Before the Second World War, the largest Jewish community in the world was located in the Polish capital Warsaw, about 30 percent of the population was Jewish, making it the largest. (Rees, 2017, p.194) In this ghetto, the death rate began to rise sharply, especially during 1941. Thousands of people died of hunger and untreated diseases. It is a general knowledge that many attempts and

resistance in ghettos took place, nevertheless the Warsaw ghetto was the only one that succeeded in armed rebellion, namely during April and May 1943. The prisoners started attacking the German troops, throwing handmade bombs and blowing up mines. After a roughly three-week uprising, this desperate effort to revolt ended since the Nazis brought in tanks and machine guns, they were shooting from rooftops, setting fire to buildings, destroying nearly everything. Those Jews who survived the German offensive and failed to escape were eventually sent to extermination camps. (Strahinich, 2015, p.18)

One of the largest ghettos was also the Czech fortress town located near Prague, Terezín, whose construction began in November 1941. Originally it was intended to serve as an assembly and transit camp for Jews from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, but later Jews from many other European countries were also deported there. During the war, about 140,000 Jews passed through the ghetto. As in the other ghettos, transports from this one were also sent to various extermination camps, and from October 1941 almost all trains from Terezín were bound for Auschwitz. (Emmert, 2018, p.97)

2.4 Final Solution

The Final Solution to the Jewish Question, or “Endlösung der Judenfrage,” was the Nazi leaders' deliberately euphemistic term for the systematic and mass murder of European Jews that took place between 1941 and 1945. Historians, however, are not unanimous as to when Hitler decided to physically exterminate the Jews. In the pre-war period, Jews were severely persecuted, but there was no strong evidence or clear indication that they would soon be exterminated. The first discussions and preliminary organizational preparations for the final solution must have taken place in the closest Nazi leadership sometime in 1938 and 1939. (URL11)

On January 30, 1939, Hitler made a speech in front of the Reichstag building that has gone down in history as a "prophecy." He declared that if a new world war broke out, the Jewish race in Europe would be destroyed. The moment World War II began after the German army invaded Poland, on September 1, 1939, the Jews were immediately labeled by Nazi propaganda as the main culprits of the war and therefore hostile. Two and a half to three million Jews fell into the hands of the Nazis on the territory of defeated Poland. Subsequently, the treatment of the Jews began to tighten. As of 1 December 1939, all Polish Jews over the age of ten were the first in Europe to wear an armband with a yellow star on it. (Emmert, 2018, p.59,63) Later, the regulation was modified and the tape was replaced by a cut-out six-pointed yellow star at least 10 cm in size with the word "Jew" in German or the local language. All Jews over the age of six had to pin it on the left side of their upper chest on the outside of their clothing.

In addition, in most public places there were humiliating signs and notices announcing Jews were forbidden to enter. It is also necessary to explain the concept of arization. It was the expropriation of Jewish property, a process that was completed on 25 November 1941. The millions of evacuated Jews were left with considerable property, most of it private, which was automatically forfeited to the German state. The movable property was in turn allocated to deserving Nazis and war homeless people. (Emmert, 2018, p.83)

What is interesting to note here is that at the beginning of the war there were other plans to deal with the Jewish population without mass murder, such as a mass deportation to the African island of Madagascar (Operation Sealion), which was eventually abandoned because

only 60,000 Jews could supposedly survive on the island, while the intention was to settle 4 million Jews there. At the same time, transporting all the Jews to the island would have been very complicated. (Rees, 2017, p.175)

2.4.1 Wannsee Conference

The plan for the so-called Final solution of the Jewish question was prepared by the head of the RSHA (Reich Security Main Office), Reinhard Heydrich. On January 20, 1942, an organizational conference on the extermination program was convened and held at Wannsee in a stylish villa on the outskirts of Berlin. This was the meeting place for the leaders of the Reich authorities, such as Adolf Eichmann (Head of the Jewish Department at the RSHA), Reinhard Heydrich or Heinrich Müller (head of the Gestapo, Secret State Police). Hitler himself did not attend the meeting. (URL12) At the conference it was calculated that some 11 million European Jews would be murdered from a territory "from Ireland to the Urals." The main stage of the Final Solution was scheduled to take place immediately in 1942 and 1943. This action was even named Operation Reinhard after Heydrich's death in June 1942. All full and half-Jews were to be exterminated without exception and regardless of religion, including the smallest children. Interestingly, a written order for this killing program was never issued by Hitler. It is safe to say that history was not allowed to know anything about the extermination. The Nazis' murderous intent was camouflaged with phrases like "special handling," "evacuation," "projected attrition" or "send to the east." The instruction to annihilate by means of gas chambers was conveyed orally from the highest levels. (Emmert, 2018, p.64,65) As Rees (2017, p.230) states, Hitler remarked in October 1941, 'it's much better to meet than to write, at least when some matter of capital importance is at issue.'

In the autumn of 1941, before the Wannsee Conference, deportations from Nazi-occupied Europe began to the overcrowded ghettos of the East, and in January 1942 directly to the extermination camps in occupied Poland. In September 1941, the first test gas chamber with the poison gas Zyklon B was tested on nine hundred Soviet prisoners at Auschwitz, and in December of that year the murder of Jews in gas vans began at the Chelmno camp. At the same time, orders were issued to build new camps to serve a purely exterminationist function. It was assumed that the extermination operation would end in 1944, and at the latest in 1947. Already in the first half of 1942 it was clear that the killing would take longer. The deportations to the

ghettos and the dispatch of death transports involved a demanding and extensive official agenda. The so-called "Jewish Department" of the RSHA, headed by Adolf Eichmann, was entrusted with the organisation of the large-scale operation. Schedules were drawn up for the transports from individual cities and countries, the numbers of deportees and the destination camps were determined. Each Jewish family had to register itself before the actual deportation, after which it received a call to the transport. Subsequently, the Jews were taken to a makeshift assembly camp and from there they were sent on trains to occupied Poland. The journey was mostly in cattle cars. As a result of cold, heat, lack of air, thirst or hunger, thousands of Jews died during the journey. (Rees, 2017, p.271,272)

2.4.2 Einsatzgruppen

On June 22, 1941, an action called Barbarossa took place in which the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union. It was in this territory that the first direct and systematic extermination of the Jews began. For this purpose, four special SS units that followed the German army, known as Einsatzgruppen, or referred to as "task forces" or "mobile killing units" were created to search for Jews and communists in the occupied territory. (URL13) They were then either shot on the spot by firing squads or herded to so-called assembly points, where they were first separated by sex, robbed, sometimes even forced to strip naked, and finally shot with a machine gun. Quite often, they had to first bury victims from previous massacred groups before they themselves were also shot. These mass shooting executions took place mostly at the bottom of ravines or in anti-tank trenches. Thousands of Jews fell victim to these massacres. One infamous place was Babi Yar, located near Kiev, where in late September 1941 the Einsatzgruppen allegedly murdered more than 35,000 people in a few days.

The Einsatzgruppen also used mobile gas chambers to kill on Soviet territory. These were special gas trucks that had a sealed, covered cargo compartment into which the poisonous exhaust fumes from the engine were vented. Victims died of suffocation, one hundred to one hundred and fifty people could be murdered in fifteen to thirty minutes. In total, about thirty vehicles were produced, with mobile killing units having 20 vehicles. It is estimated that the Einsatzgruppen murdered more than 700,000 people in gas vans by the end of 1942. Due to the fact that the massacres carried out by the Einsatzgruppen in the gas vans were too public, too bloody, the vans broke down in bad weather, and last but not least quite often the killing units

had severe headaches, nervous breakdowns when emptying the vans, and therefore sawed too much, there was a need to come up with a better and faster solution to kill. (Strahinich, 2015, p.15)

2.4.3 Concentration Camps

The first concentration camps were established in Germany almost immediately after the Nazis came to power in the first half of 1933. In spite of the harsh conditions, these camps were not liquidation camps in the pre-war period, but this deteriorated drastically after the invasion of Poland in 1939, and they did not turn into real death factories until 1941. In the first period, the concentration camps were guarded by members of the "Brown Shirts." In 1934, the SS took over the administration. The conditions in the camps initially shocked even members of the Gestapo, the German secret state police. The majority of prisoners at that time were of German nationality, which was mainly due to the fact that Nazi Germany did not occupy any other country until March 1938. The guards treated the detained political prisoners very harshly, and many of the prisoners died in the camp as a result of beatings and the absence of food. The prisoners had to sleep on wooden bunk beds in low-rise crowded barracks, where they suffered mainly from the cold. (Emmert, 2018, p.53) According to Strahinich (2015, p.23), *by 1941, Hitler had decided to carry out his "final solution," the murder of all European Jews. Concentration camps provided one way to carry out Hitler's scheme – by working Jewish inmates to death. The Nazis called this method "extermination through labor." But it proved to be a slow way to get rid of the Jews, too slow for the Nazis' liking.*

The first concentration camp was established by the Nazis on 22 March 1933 in the town of Dachau, west of Munich, six years before the outbreak of World War II. Dachau became not only the first, but also the longest serving concentration camp, operating until April 1945. During that time, more than 35,000 prisoners died there. The first prisoners to be concentrated there were political opponents, German Communists and Social Democrats, the so-called enemies of the state, while Jews as a collective group first arrived at Dachau in November 1938 after Kristallnacht. Dachau became a model for other camps that served as a so-called training centre where a large number of later commanders from other camps were trained and received their first experience. It is worth mentioning that although there was a gas chamber in Dachau, it was not used for the liquidation of Jews, as the death transports were not

directed there. Despite the harsh conditions, Dachau remained only a labour and concentration camp. (URL14)

After the outbreak of the Second World War, the network of concentration camps began to grow rapidly, especially in the occupied territories. Additional camps were Sachsenhausen (founded 1936), Buchenwald (founded 1937), in 1938 Mauthausen and Flossenburg were founded, and in 1939 Ravensbrück. Large concentration camps were mostly established only on the territory of the Great German Reich and the General Government (Poland), and there were also many smaller branches. Prisoners in the camps were used as slaves for the arms industry, many companies profited from slave labor such as BMW, Krupps or I.G. Farben. The concentration camps fell directly under the administration of the SS throughout the war. The SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler was responsible for their existence and operation. (Emmert, 2018, p.134)

The first concentration camp outside Germany proper was established in August 1938 in Nazi-occupied Austria. It was called Mauthausen. Although it was very close to a liquidation camp, historians classify it as a concentration camp, not an extermination one. The most numerous national group here were not Jews, but Poles, Spaniards and Soviet prisoners of war. The transports were sent to Mauthausen not for gassing, but for the purpose of destruction by labour. The so-called "stairs of death" in the quarry became notorious, into which prisoners had to carry heavy stone blocks every day to be thrown down again from the top. It was a total of 186 steep steps. Those who stumbled or fell from exhaustion were usually kicked or beaten with a stick on the spot. The overall number of prisoners in Mauthausen is estimated at almost 200 000, of whom about 120 000 died. They included 38 120 Jews. (URL15)

It is general knowledge that the lack of hygiene and inadequate food supply led to various diseases. Prisoners also had to endure cruel guards who humiliated and tortured them. All kinds of disgusting medical experiments were also carried out in the camps, even on children, without anaesthetic. (Strahinich, 2015, p.22)

2.4.4 Death Camps

Nazi officials established more than 44,000 incarceration sites during the time of the Third Reich. Many people consider all the incarceration sites built by the Nazis to be

concentration camps. Therefore, it is vital to distinguish between the three terms, which can be confused because concentration camps are sometimes identified with ghettos or liquidation camps. However, only the largest camp at Auschwitz and the camp at Majdanek were used simultaneously as concentration and extermination camps. While the classic concentration camps functioned as labor camps and held people of various European nationalities, especially Soviet prisoners of war, the purely extermination camps with gas chambers housed only a fraction of the permanent prisoners and served exclusively for the rapid liquidation of Jews as part of the so-called Final Solution. Whereas in a concentration camp prisoners survived for several months or years, in the extermination camps Jewish transports were liquidated on the day of arrival. (URL16)

The main and only purpose of the extermination camps was mass murder, mostly of Jews. The Nazis began to build these camps in Poland in remote areas in order to hide what they were committing. The first was Chelmno, in German Kulmhof, where gas vans, the principle of which has already been mentioned, were used instead of gas chambers. This camp was opened in 1941 and the Nazis liquidated Jews there, mainly from the Łódź ghetto, just as Chelmno was created primarily to kill selected Jews from the Lodz ghetto. The other camps, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz II - Birkenau, had been in operation since 1942, Majdanek since 1943.

Belzec became the third largest extermination camp used only for mass murder. This camp had already been built in the autumn of 1941 on the site of the previous labour camp, which had been closed down a year earlier. More than half a million people were gassed at Belzec, which the Germans had already closed and abolished in December 1942.

After the infamous Auschwitz II - Birkenau, Treblinka was the second largest extermination camp, built in the summer of 1942. It served as an extermination camp primarily for Jews from the ghettos in the General Government. At first, there were three gas chambers in the camp, but soon the number was expanded to a final thirteen. Treblinka, where some 870,000 people probably perished during its one year of operation, closed in August 1943. (Emmert, 2018, p. 122) Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka were collectively referred to as Reinhard camps being just temporary places. Once the murderous work of these three camps was completed, they would cease to exist.

Facilities for mass murder by gas, the so-called gas chambers, were built in a number of Nazi concentration camps, but only in the extermination camps did they fully serve their purpose. Obviously, the Nazis lied so as not to arouse suspicion, so they assured the victims that they would take the train to the labor camps. Sometimes they were even offered bread and jam in return for signing up for transport out of the ghetto, or they also received a ticket before departure. It is quite safe to say that Jews from Western Europe often traveled on standard passenger trains, unlike Polish Jews, who had to travel on freight and cattle trains, without food or water, nor toilets. They were forced to stand, sometimes for days, pressed against each other. As stated previously, many of them did not survive the journey.

Upon arrival at the camp, they were first forced to surrender all their luggage, personal belongings and valuables, which then went to the German Reich. The women were then shaved bald, their hair sent for industrial processing. Afterwards, all Jews had to strip naked and were told to take a shower to get rid of lice. In reality, they were herded into a gas chamber that was meant to give the impression that it was a washroom or de-worming station. Sometimes prisoners were even given pieces of soap. However, despite Nazi assurances that nothing would happen to them, they usually entered the chambers with fear and suspicion. A massive hermetic door was closed behind them, the light was switched off and gas began to enter the chamber, either leaking from a supply pipe inside the building or pellets were thrown in through a roof opening, which released hydrogen cyanide through the action of heat and moisture. (Strahinich, 2015, p.24,25)

In the process the SS discovered that the gas was more effective the hotter the room, and the more people that were crammed inside. According to Rees (2017, p.225), *an SS man crawled up on to the flat roof of the building. He put on a gas mask, he opened a hatch (in the roof) and he dropped the powder in and he shut the hatch. When he did this, in spite of the fact that these walls were thick, you could hear a great scream.* Because of the screaming, the SS started up two motorcycles to try and drown out the noise, but still it could be heard people yelling for fifteen or twenty minutes and becoming weaker and weaker.

The gassing usually lasted twenty to thirty minutes. After venting, the so-called Sonderkommando or “prison squad“ (special prisoners assigned to this dirty work) entered through the back door and did all the manual work - searching the body's orifices for gold, such as gold teeth, and subsequently pulling the dead bodies out of the gas chamber and then

incinerating them in cremation ovens. Initially, the bodies were buried in pits and ditches, later they began to be burned. What, however, stands out, is the fact that it was always SS personnel who dropped the Zyklon B into the gas chambers, never the prisoners.

In the first phase, carbon monoxide was used for killing, but later on the poisonous gas Zyklon Blausäure (or cyclone B for short) was switched to. This was a chemical originally developed for agricultural pest control and also for disinfecting clothing. Since 1942 it has been used to destroy prisoners in the gas chambers. The substance was stored as granules in cans. When opened and exposed to oxygen, it quickly turned into a poisonous gas. (Emmert, 2018, p.122)

2.4.5 Auschwitz

The largest camp complex in history, which is considered a symbol of the Holocaust, was called Auschwitz. It was located in occupied Poland and served as both an extermination and concentration camp.

In the first phase of its existence, Auschwitz functioned only as a concentration camp for political prisoners, mostly of Polish nationality. However, in March 1941, the camp complex began to expand considerably. In addition to the existing Auschwitz I, a much larger camp, Auschwitz II - Birkenau, was established, and soon Auschwitz III was added, with several smaller branches in the surrounding area.

From 1944 onwards, death trains entered the camp directly, where selections were carried out on a newly built ramp. Before that, the trains ended their journey outside the station at Birkenau and the prisoners had to continue to the camp on foot or in trucks. In the area, known as the 'ramp', SS medical personnel spent a few seconds assessing each new arrival, and sent those picked to work as forced labour to one side, and those they had chosen to die to another. (Rees, 2017, p.264)

The SS units waited for the new transports right on the camp ramp and immediately began to divide the Jews into groups according to age, sex and health. The sick, the old and weak, and often children, were immediately sent to the gas chambers.

In 1941 and 1942, gas chambers were built in Birkenau, all four of them were working by the summer of 1943. Up to eight thousand people could be murdered in them in a single day, primarily because of putting more than one corpse into an oven at a time. Jews arriving in special death transports were either gassed on the day of their arrival or were sent together with prisoners to work as slaves. The prisoners chosen to work were tattooed for identification then. Due to the harsh conditions in the camp, the vast majority of prisoners died within a few months.

As in other camps, there were Nazi doctors at Auschwitz who conducted experiments on prisoners. In May 1943, a young practitioner, an infamous Dr. Josef Mengele, arrived and began inhumane experiments for which he chose mostly Roma children. (URL17) As Rees (2017, p.358) states, *Mengele was thirty-two years old when he arrived at Auschwitz, a handsome, decorated veteran of the war. He was undoubtedly brave – he had won the Iron Cross for rescuing two soldiers from a burning tank – and he was always perfectly turned out. Survivors often remark, for instance, on his immaculate uniform and his beautifully polished boots.* He committed incredible cruelties on his patients, such as inducing diseases, operating on people without anesthesia, dissecting them, making them bleed to death, or stapling twin arteries together. What must be pointed out, however, is that Mengele was not the only one. For example, Professor Carl Clauberg and Dr. Horst Schumann both conducted research into sterilization. Mengele was never caught, dying in 1979 while swimming in Latin America.

Auschwitz also had a camp prison in the infamous Block 11. Here, prisoners were whipped, hung by the hands, and last but not least, shot at the "black wall." Death was the punishment not only for escape attempts, but also, for example, for stealing food.

The commander of the Auschwitz camp was Rudolf Höss, who had been there since 1940. In March 1947, he was sentenced to death and hanged in Auschwitz.

From March 1942 to November 1944, Jewish transports from all over Europe arrived at the camp, and even after the abolition of Operation Reinhard at the end of 1943, when the other extermination camps ceased to function, extermination continued at Auschwitz.

The permanent number of prisoners in the entire Auschwitz complex was around 140,000. By November 1944, about 1,135,000 people had been gassed in the gas chambers,

while another 260,000 prisoners had died as a result of abuse, starvation, exhaustion, being shot or committing suicide by jumping into the electric fences with barbed wire.

On October 7, 1944, there was a prisoner uprising in Birkenau, during which three guards were shot and one crematorium was blown up. On Heinrich Himmler's orders, the Nazis began covering up evidence of their crimes by destroying the remaining crematoria and records in November 1944. In January 1945, as Soviet troops approached, the evacuation of the camp began. More than 50,000 prisoners were forced to set out on foot on the so-called "death march" under the supervision of the Nazis, who shot anyone who fell down from exhaustion along the way and therefore could not continue. In total, around 15,000 prisoners died on these death marches as part of the evacuation of the Auschwitz camps. Those who survived were further transported to concentration camps such as Mauthausen, Buchenwald and Dachau. The Czech town of Terezín became one of the last places where evacuation transports were still arriving in late April and early May 1945.

On 27 January 1945, the Soviet army entered Auschwitz and liberated about 7,000 half-dead prisoners. It should be pointed out that just before or shortly after liberation there was a truly enormous death rate of prisoners. After the liberation of the camp, a large number of valuables looted from the murdered Jews were found in Auschwitz. (Emmert, 2018, p.109,110)

2.4.6 Victims of the Holocaust

In addition to the number assigned to each prisoner in the camp, which was tattooed on his arm and pressed to the top of the left side of his prisoner's uniform, there was also a mark below the number in the shape of a coloured triangle. The number, together with the triangle, served to identify the prisoner. The colour of the triangle determined what the prisoner was imprisoned for, for example, red for political prisoners, pink for homosexuals, brown for gypsies and green for criminals. Jews wore the usual yellow star instead of the triangle.

As has been discussed several times, the Nazis considered blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryans to be the master race that would dominate the world. While the dark-skinned, dark-haired Slavs of Eastern Europe (Russians, Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Croats, Slovenes, Serbs) were considered a subhuman race, as were the handicapped, homosexuals, the sick, and gypsies,

whom Hitler despised. Last but not least, Jews were of course considered the most inferior people, therefore the Germany's primary enemies. The vision of Nazi Germany was therefore to gradually get rid of all these people. (Strahinich, 2015, p.30)

The first victims of the Nazis were political prisoners who despised the regime. These included labour unionists, social democrats, socialists and communists. However, anyone who disagreed with the Nazi government was considered an enemy and subsequently interned in a labor camp.

Another group of people to be destroyed were people with disabilities. Hitler considered them defective. As stated previously, before World War II, there was a highly secret program known as T-4, in which people with mental or physical disabilities were transported to killing centers for euthanasia. These victims were usually transported by buses with blacked-out windows. After the "patients" were killed, condolence letters were sent to the families stating that their loved ones had died naturally. Although the program was eventually stopped, the Nazis managed to kill about 100,000 people in this way.

The next ethnic group to be exterminated were the Roma and Sinti (Gypsies). Unlike the Jews, however, they were not all to be exterminated, nor were they subjected to the same extensive public persecution as the Jews. They were included among the so-called asocials and considered primitive. In the camps, German doctors conducted fake experiments to prove that the blood of Roma and Sinti was different from other human blood. They were also subjected to other painful medical experiments, and even Zyklon B was tested on Roma children in 1940. An estimated one million Roma and Sinti lived in Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, and by the end of World War II, the Nazis had killed almost half of them.

Jehovah's Witnesses were another threat to the German Reich. This devout group of Christians refused to join the German army and accept Nazi ideology; they refused to accept any other God than Jehovah, in whom they firmly believed and were willing to die for their faith. Of course, these people were also imprisoned, sent to work or shot. Although there were about 25,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in Hitler's Germany, many of them died. They could only save themselves by signing a pledge to stop associating with other members of the group. (URL18)

Another category at risk were homosexuals. These individuals were tolerated before the Nazis came to power. This changed with the rise of Hitler, however, and homosexuality was against the law. In the camps, homosexuals were treated brutally and subjected to research to see if their orientation was hereditary. They were only offered freedom on the condition that they agreed to be castrated or consent to sexual abuse. In all, roughly 6,000 to 9,000 homosexuals died.

The Slavic people, who lived in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, and other countries occupied by Germany, were also to be eliminated. They were perceived as not intelligent and dangerous too. Doctors, lawyers, priests, professors and many others were tortured and finally murdered in Poland. At the same time, the Nazis closed Polish schools and churches, statues, monuments, and libraries were destroyed. By the end of the war, Poland had lost about 3 million non-Jewish inhabitants. In all, it is estimated that the Nazis murdered around 35 million non-Jews. (Strahinich, 2015, p.35)

People from various countries were deported to the camps. In July 1942, transports began from occupied western countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and northern France, and from Norway.

At the turn of 1941 and 1942, Nazi Germany called on satellite states in its sphere of influence to hand over Jews into German hands. Only Slovakia was willing to fully cooperate and renounce Slovak Jews as its citizens. In Hungary, mass deportations did not begin until 1944.

Unoccupied Vichy France, for example, adopted its own anti-Jewish laws, but at the same time tried to protect its Jews. They were finally deported only after the German occupation of southern France in 1942. Even Italy did not hand over its Jews to the Nazis until it was directly occupied in 1943. Like Finland or Bulgaria, they strictly refused to extradite Jews. In Croatia, on the other hand, the fascist regime exterminated its own Jews in large-scale pogroms. (Emmert, 2018, p.126)

According to Rees (2017, p.340), the Danish experience of the Holocaust is singular. This was the only country under Nazi domination where large numbers of Jews – around 95 per cent – were saved by their fellow countrymen. In Greece, around 80 per cent of the 70 thousand Jews in the country died during the war. Unlike in Denmark, the Germans were determined to expel the Jews of Greece. Altogether around 55,000 Jews were sent from Greece to Auschwitz.

It is worth mentioning that in the ghettos and in most of the extermination camps there were riots, but they were suppressed in blood and the rioters were immediately killed. Prisoners also attempted to escape, but even the escapees were usually quickly caught and killed. Some, however, were successful in their escapes.

Allied armies advancing from the west and east liberated the starved and partially cleared concentration camps during March and April 1945. The troops were shocked and immediately documented the horrors they saw so the world would know what the Nazis had secretly done during the war.

Historians estimate that more than 10 million people perished in Nazi concentration and extermination camps. In all, about 35 million people died because of Hitler's warmongering.

Nazi war criminals were tried in the early post-war years, with the Nuremberg and Auschwitz trials among the most famous. In the Nuremberg Trial, which began on October 18, 1945 and lasted nearly a year, the Allies charged the Nazis with crimes against peace, humanity, and war crimes. Twelve were sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment, four to long prison terms, and three were found not guilty. (Strahinich, 2015, p.52)

3 Heroism before the Holocaust

3.1 The Nicholas Winton Story

3.1.1 Childhood and Youth

Nicholas Winton became famous in the second half of the last century, specifically in February 1988, for having managed to save 669 Czechoslovak children from the Nazi threat in 1939. As a preface, I would like to note that although this was a truly heroic act, by no means was Winton solely involved in the entire rescue operation. With the help of a support team, his plan ultimately succeeded. That said, we should not forget the other people who unfortunately did not receive such huge recognition, although they were also involved in the rescue of both children and adults, such as Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick, Bill Barazetti, Beatrice Wellington, Martin Blake, Barbara Willis and many more.

The rescue of German, Austrian and Czechoslovak, mostly Jewish, children from the Nazi threat in the period since the beginning of the Second World War is known collectively as the Kindertransport, or children's transports. (Winton, 2014, p.17)

Nicholas Winton, real name Nicholas George Wertheim, was born on 19 May 1909 in the London Borough of Hampstead into a wealthy family of German-Jewish descent. Winton's paternal grandparents were both born in Germany and immigrated to England in the late 1860s as part of the then Jewish immigration from Germany. During the First World War, Nicholas's parents, Rudolf and Babette, anglicised their name slightly, from Wertheim to Winton, due to anti-German sentiment. Nicholas (nicknamed Nicky) had two siblings, the older Charlotte and the younger Robert. Nicky spoke German until the age of five.

At the age of seven, in 1916, he began attending a private primary school at University College School in Hampstead, where he made a lifelong friend, Stanley Murdoch, with whom he spent a lot of time. Stanley wanted to go to a brand new private boarding school in Stowe, which was the reason Nicky persuaded his parents to send him there too. He was accepted and started school in September 1923. (Chadwick, 2017, p.55)

Nicky was always quite small, reaching only 168 cm in adulthood. It can be concluded that he was not a very sociable boy. His hobbies included pigeon fancying, stamp collecting, photography, and the latest in aviation. As far as school results were concerned, he did not excel in anything except mathematics, which was his forte and he was often the best in his class. The only sport in which he excelled was fencing. He had a natural aptitude for it, which allowed him to participate in fencing matches against other high schools. In the 1930s he continued to compete in competitive fencing around the country, even going on to represent British fencers at the 1940 Olympics. However, due to the outbreak of war, the games were eventually cancelled.

He left Stowe at the age of 17 in July 1926. There he developed independence, determination and the ability to follow his own intuition based on a moral ethos of social responsibility. He subsequently chose London and the banking world instead of a university. He became a bank clerk at Japhet's Bank. He then went to Germany and France for three years for banking internships, returning to London in 1931, where he joined the Stock Exchange in 1937. He and his friend Stanley rented a flat together in West Hampstead. Nicky then lived with his brother Robert (Bobby). (Smith, 2017, p.38,39)

Winton also became involved in politics. His beliefs and world view tended to lean more left than right, so he joined Labour. As a result, he met left-leaning friends, such as Westminster schoolmaster Martin Blake. Through Blake he met leading Labour Party figures - Tom Driberg, Stafford Cripps and George Russell Strauss. Together they spent a lot of time talking about politics, especially the growing German threat.

According to Winton (2014, p.116), Nicky claims that he was prepared for the task of rescuing the children of Prague by the political discussions he had in his group of friends up to 1939. He and his friends were acutely aware that Hitler was planning expansion, he had already laid out his intentions in Mein Kampf, and they could not understand why the National Coalition government of the mid-1930s and then the Conservative Party were unable to perceive the great danger Nazism posed to Europe.

3.1.2 Journey to Prague

Blake was one of the volunteers who helped refugees from Germany and the occupied Czech Sudetenland. In December 1938 Nicholas Winton was preparing for a two-week ski trip to Switzerland, where he was to go with Martin Blake. However, he called Nicky before he was due to leave and told him that the trip would not happen after all. Blake was going to Prague and wanted his close friend to come and see what he was doing there. So Winton went to Czechoslovakia instead of the Alps.

On New Year's Eve Nicky arrived in Prague, where he headed to Wenceslas Square to the Grand Hotel Šroubek. Martin then took him to the offices of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, BCRC for short, and briefed him on the political situation and the refugee issue. He was also introduced to Doreen Warriner, who was also brought here in October 1938 by the need to help. (Chadwick, 2017, p.57) As Winton (2014, p.36) reports, German agents were already moving around Prague trying to track down and detain people on Hitler's wanted list: his political opponents, especially the leaders of the Sudeten Social Democrats, Communists and other Sudeten anti-fascists. And it was Doreen's job to help these people escape to Britain. Warriner's secretary was Bill Barazetti, himself a refugee.

Winton was immediately involved with the Warriner's office. He realized that his priority had to be the children, because there was no one to take care of them. So Winton suggested that he would take charge of them. He became secretary of the Children's Committee for Czechoslovakia. Although there were agencies that helped hundreds of children to get out of Germany and Austria, unfortunately there were none in Czechoslovakia. (Smith, 2017, p.27) It should be noted that Winton immediately turned to his mother, with whom he had a very good relationship and constantly corresponded. In his letters, he asked her to assist him with a few administrative matters concerning the immigration of his children.

There were five main refugee organisations in Prague, each focusing on its own area of interest and all seeking help to get their people to safety. Due to the complicated situation of people sending their applications to these organisations, Winton decided to speed things up and inform all the agencies that he now had a list of children he was happy to look after and if they wanted them to supply him with their own list, which he would then add to the existing one. He

succeeded, and the next day he received all five lists and was able to start work on the records of the children he would take to London. As he did not speak Czech, all negotiations were conducted in German. (Chadwick, 2017, p.60,61)

3.1.3 Kindertransports

Thanks to the funding of the Barbican Mission, an organization engaged in missionary work among the Jews with the aim of converting them to Christianity, 20 children were rescued and flown from Prague to London on January 12, 1938. Winton went to see them off at Ruzyně airport, where the famous photograph was taken of Nicky holding three-year-old Hans Beck in his arms. For this reason, the flight was named the Hansi Beck Flight. Probably four days later, thirty more children flew to Sweden, marking Winton's first success. He took an extra ten days of vacation.

Nicholas Winton also visited a couple of refugee camps around Prague to see for himself the conditions that prevailed there - minimal food, cold, austere accommodation. These camps provided shelter for people who came to the interior after the annexation of the Sudetenland. At that time, there were about a quarter of a million refugees living in Czechoslovakia. These were not only Jews, but also German democrats, Sudeten social democrats, communists and many ordinary Czechs. (Smith, 2017, p.18)

The boys' boarding school sent two Englishmen, one of whom was Trevor Chadwick, who taught there, to go to Prague to select two boys and one girl among the refugees. Once they were safely taken to England, Chadwick returned and offered his help. Together, he and Winton then compiled a list of children until Nicky had to return home to work.

Nicholas Winton finally left Prague on 21 January 1939. In London, he immediately returned to his work on the stock exchange, but the rest of his free time was devoted to plans to get permission for his children to travel to England and to arrange a new home for them. In the meantime, Warriner sent a letter to the BCRC's managing director strongly recommending that she put Winton in charge of the children's section. (Winton, 2014, p.44,45)

However, given that everything was very slow, Winton decided not to wait for permission and, as he states in the Jerusalem interview (Chadwick, 2017, p.67), *at that time the BCRC was too busy to be able to deal with any more children, so I worked from home and made a letterhead (with BCRC letterhead) that looked very official, and under the letterhead we put "children's section" with my home address... So we started like that and then someone brought me a list of all the committees (BCRC) around England that were sub-committees of the BCRC in London and then, still without permission of course, we wrote letters informing them what we were doing and that we needed to find sponsors for the children to bring them to England. And that's actually how it started.* The official appointment to the position of "Secretary of the Children's Section" did not come until May 24, 1939.

Every day after work, Nicky and his volunteers, including Winton's secretary, Barbara Willis, sent letters to potential sponsors, sent documents about the refugee children to suitable guardians, asked for money, arranged visas, etc. According to Chadwick (2017, p.69), Winton stated: *When someone said: "We'll take a child," we sent them a picture with eight photographs... They chose one. It was like running a business. Really terrible, but it worked...* Nicky has always been brought up not to show emotions and not to despair. He knew that if he was going to achieve anything, he would have to concentrate fully and arm himself against emotional reactions, which helped him greatly to some extent during this rescue.

In total, 8 transports took place. The first one, on 14th March, was probably by air, the others by train. The largest one was dispatched on July 1, 1939, in which 241 children left. The ninth transport, on September 1, 1939, in which 250 children were ready to leave, was unfortunately cancelled just a few hours before the scheduled departure, as Germany invaded Poland and the borders were closed. It is most likely that almost all the children from this failed transport, for whom 250 foster parents were waiting in England, ended up in concentration camps. (Smith, 2017, p.165)

As I have already mentioned, Winton worked from London and was assisted in Prague by Trevor Chadwick, who organised 5 transports until June 1939, Doreen Warriner, and last but not least Beatrice Wellington who, like Doreen, independently provided help to adults at risk. Nicky always waited with his mother Barbara for the children at Liverpool station and organised their collection by their foster families. Barbara was then in charge of all ongoing activities until the end of the war, especially dealing with children whose foster parents could

no longer care for them and other difficulties. The children's transports were always accompanied by a few adults who had to return, but a few vulnerable women apparently escaped in this way. Among the refugees were not only Jewish children, but also several Aryans in each transport. (Winton, 2014, p.60)

It should be noted that Nicholas Winton's priority was the rescue of children and that race and religion were of no concern to him. His intention was not to save exclusively Jews, but all children who would be at risk when the Germans arrived. In all, 669 children were saved before the outbreak of war during nine months of hectic activity by a small group of dedicated volunteers.

3.1.4 Life after Saving Children

At the beginning of World War II, Nicholas Winton joined the Red Cross, where he became an ambulance driver. He was also part of the retreat to Dunkirk in 1940. At the end of 1941 he applied to join the ranks of the Royal Air Force (RAF). Unfortunately, due to his poor eyesight and the fact that he wore glasses, he was refused the opportunity to serve as a pilot or as a crew member. Instead, he became a flight instructor. At the end of the war he also served as deputy commander of the RAF travelling exhibition. This toured war-torn European cities. (URL19)

In 1947 he became part of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and had to move to Geneva, Switzerland for a time. His work consisted of collecting items looted by the Nazis during the war and discovered by the Allied forces. He had to first categorize these items, such as gold or rings, then arrange for their sale, tally up the proceeds and transfer the money, which would go to help victims of the Nazi regime.

In 1948, Winton was offered a job in Paris, where he met his future wife, the Danish Grete Gjelstrup. He married her the same year and they subsequently had three children together - Nicholas, Barbara and Robin, who was mentally disabled. (Winton, 2014, p.191)

Nicholas retired at the age of 58, when he devoted his time to charity work, especially to the Abbeyfield and Mencap organisations. He was even awarded the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in 1983 in recognition of his charity work, i.e. for services to the public.

Nicholas Winton, at the age of eighty, decided to show his fifty-year-old notebook with all the details of the children's transports and the addresses of their future families in England to Elizabeth Maxwell, a historian specializing in the Holocaust. She happened to be the wife of Robert Maxwell, owner of The Mirror Newspaper Group. (URL19)

On the morning of 28 February 1988, The Sunday Mirror published a long article headlined 'The Lost Children' about the rescue operation at the time. That same evening, the BBC broadcast "That's Life." This show was to feature a children's story and the production asked Nicky to come watch the broadcast from the front row of the studio audience. There was a surprise planned for Winton. He had no idea that the people sitting next to him, behind him, and everywhere in the auditorium were former children from the transports fifty years ago, whom he had never met before. For him, this moment was indeed unexpected and quite emotionally stressful, and from that day on he became a famous personality. (Chadwick, 2017, p.76,77)

A year later, in 1989, Nicky and Grete made a trip to Israel to present Nicholas's notebook to the Yad Vashem memorial. At the same time, they met with Israeli rescued children. Then in 1991, Nicholas and Grete traveled to Prague, where Nicky was invited to Prague Castle to meet Czechoslovak President Václav Havel. Winton was awarded the Order of Thomas Garrigue Masaryk for "significant support for humanity, democracy and human rights." In April 1999, Winton was made an honorary citizen of Windsor and Maidenhead. On 28 August that year, Nicky's wife Grete died as a result of a serious illness. Shortly after her funeral, Nicholas was invited to Prague for the premiere of Matej Minac's film "All My Loved Ones." In September 2001, he was again invited to Prague, this time for the premiere of Matej Minac's documentary on child transports, "The Power of Humanity - Nicholas Winton."

Winton was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in March 2003. In October 2007, Václav Havel invited Winton to Prague on the occasion of the annual Forum 2000 conference. It is important to note that Nicky admired Václav's moral stances in public life and politics. In 2009, Nicholas celebrated his 100th birthday. That year, on 1 September, Czech Railways dispatched

a historic train for the first time in seventy years, reconstructing the route the trains took from Prague to London in commemoration of the events of that year, when the last children's transport from Prague was cancelled. His last trip abroad was in 2011, when Nicholas was invited to another premiere of Matej's film "Nicky's Family." In Prague, Nicky also had a private interview with former President Havel. (Winton, 2014, p.165, 239,268) Nicholas Winton died on the morning of 1 July 2015 at the age of 106 as a result of cardiac arrest.

4 Heroism during the Holocaust

First of all, I would like to point out that there were numerous people who stood up against the Nazis to help innocent Jews during the Second World War. Some of the stories of these heroes, who gave money, helped Jews escape or provided temporary hiding places, are better known, such as the story of the world-famous Schindler's List, while others are not that well known in society. The honorary title of „The Righteous Among Nations of the World,“ which has been awarded since 1963 to persons of non-Jewish descent who risked their lives in order to help persecuted Jews during the Holocaust, has so far been awarded to more than 25 thousand rescuers. (Emmert, 2018, p.167)

4.1 Oscar Schindler

Although a somewhat controversial figure, Oscar Schindler, born in 1908, was the only member of the Nazi Party to be listed among the Righteous Among the Nations. He was a German businessman who worked for the German Office of Military Foreign Intelligence before the war. He was even imprisoned in 1938 for his involvement in espionage activities against Czechoslovakia.

In 1939 he became the owner of an enamelware factory (Deutsche Emaillewaren-Fabrik) in Kraków, Poland. He quickly became rich and lived a life of luxury. He employed Jews from the Kraków ghetto as cheap labour, thus protecting them from internment in concentration camps. Schindler produced mainly for the army and thus avoided his factory being closed. He was even arrested three times by the SS on the grounds that he tried to save his Jews at all costs and did not resist corruption and the black market. Schindler very often bribed the security authorities to obstruct investigations. In 1944, he organized the transfer of his workers to a factory in Brněnec in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, where Jews were involved in the production of anti-aircraft munitions. It was then that the very famous Schindler's List was created, thanks to which he saved around 1,200 men and women. (URL20) At the end of the war, he provided his Jews with weapons and escaped with his wife. After the war he did not lead a very successful life, living for a time in Argentina, then returning to Germany, where he died in 1974. To thank Oskar, his Jews had a gold ring made on which was engraved the text "He who saves one life, saves a whole world." (Strahinich, 2015, p.42)

4.2 Other rescuers

One of the other brave people was a young Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, who arrived in Nazi-occupied Hungary in July 1944, where mass deportations of Jews to extermination camps were just beginning. Wallenberg worked at the Hungarian embassy and issued Swedish protection passports to the Jews. He even set up houses for Jews in Budapest where they could be protected from the Nazis. In total, he saved more than 100,000 people. After the liberation of Budapest in January 1945, Raoul was arrested by the Soviets and disappeared. He was also awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations. (URL21)

Chiune Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat who served as Vice Consul of the Empire of Japan in Lithuania from 1939 to 1940. Once the Soviets began occupying Lithuania in 1940, despite orders to do so, Chiune arranged visas for the mostly Polish Jews located in Lithuania to escape the Nazis. It is estimated that he saved the lives of more than 6,000 Jews. He was also arrested by the Soviets at the end of the war, but was released after 18 months. Sugihara is also a recipient of the Righteous Among the Nations award. (Strahinich, 2015, p.38)

Varian Fry was an American journalist who was also granted Righteous Among the Nations status by Israel. Between 1940 and 1941, he managed to save more than two thousand Jews when he volunteered to serve on the Emergency Rescue Committee, which provided aid to refugees in Nazi-occupied France. Together with other volunteers, they used forged documents and bribes, to take away as many endangered persons as possible before they could be arrested and sent to concentration camps. (URL21)

Aristides de Sousa Mendes was a Portuguese government official in southern France during World War II. Mendes defied orders by arranging passports and visas for Jews to escape from France to Portugal. Although it is not known exactly how many people Mendes saved, he is also among the recipients of the Righteous Among the Nations award. (Strahinich, 2015, p.38)

It must be remembered that there were countless such persons, from various countries around the world, who participated in the rescue not only of Jews but also of other persons threatened by the perpetrators of the Holocaust. What else is worth mentioning, not only men

figured in the stories of saving lives, but roughly half of the Righteous Among the Nations recognized by Yad Vashem are women. These were courageous women, from Germany, Russia, France, Serbia, Romania, Poland and other countries, who were not afraid to risk their lives by hiding Jews or who joined rescue networks in order to resist the Nazis.

5 Practical Usage of the Holocaust and the Nicholas Winton Story in ELT

5.1 Theory

The practical part of the thesis offers the reader two potential lesson plans which could be used in ELT. The SWOT analysis of each lesson plan is also presented. „English Language Teaching (ELT) includes various approaches, techniques and methods that are involved in teaching English, to people with English as First Language and also those who use it as a second and a foreign language. When English is used as the predominant language for communication at work and for education, but not at home, it is termed as ESL (English as a Second Language).“ (URL31)

The primary concern of these two lesson plans is to introduce students to a topic they have not yet heard about or have little knowledge of, and through conversation to get them thinking about the overall issue and possible connections to the contemporary world. At the same time, the aim of these two classes is to observe how students perceive the topic, how they react to it, how they feel about it, what they already know about it, whether they would be able to show bravery and help, and last but not least, whether they can empathize with the victims. With the help of the usage of authentic materials such as original photographs, videos, testimonies, students get an insight into the whole concept of the topic and might be able to understand more easily.

The school curriculum does not strictly state when children should first be introduced to the topic of the Holocaust and for how long. However, as Martinovský states, they can learn about it as early as the first grade in their history classes. The latest they can do so is in ninth grade, when the Second World War is discussed. (URL30)

According to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, there is no single "right" way to teach any topic, nor a single ideal methodology suitable for all educators and all students. Some educators are hesitant to explore the history of the Holocaust because they perceive the topic to be sensitive and difficult. Some educators question how to convey the

magnitude of the tragedy, the vast numbers of people it touched, and the depths to which humanity can sink. Some wonder how to engage students without also traumatizing them, or worry about their possible reactions to the topic. Above all, educators want to be prepared for the different types of reactions and behaviors that the intensity of the content may elicit. Students of different ages can be introduced to the history of the Holocaust as long as the method and content are age-appropriate. For younger audiences, it may be appropriate to focus on individual stories related to victims, escape and rescue. Older students can work with more complex and challenging material, making greater use of appropriate primary sources. (URL29)

Additionally, according to Natalie Wexler: „Children retain a lot of information, are highly curious, and—through the accumulation of knowledge—develop a sense of the past. Even older children and adults take in information more easily through stories or narratives, which makes history the ideal vehicle for transmitting knowledge of civics and geography as well as history itself.“ That is the reason why testimonies and other authentic materials are implemented in the following lesson plans. „The earlier we start teaching history, the more likely it is that kids will understand what history is all about. Even if children do not understand the concepts immediately, early experience can lay the foundations for later learning.“ Daniel Willingham, a cognitive psychologist, stated: “If you wait until you are certain that the children will understand every nuance of a lesson, you will likely wait too long to present it.” That is why it is quite appropriate topic for 8th/9th graders. As stated above, it is also possible to teach even younger pupils (with the use of non-complex vocabulary). (URL32)

Due to the fact that the topic is challenging, quite difficult, vocabulary-intensive and requires a critical thinking as well as a high level of sensibility, it is recommended to apply these lesson plans for the 9th year of lower secondary school or higher secondary school, meaning students aged 14 and older. It is also necessary to schedule each lesson plan for two consecutive lessons, i.e. 90 minutes net time, since just 45 minutes would not be enough to cover the topic. The ideal group size is twelve students.

In a lesson that is focused on only one type of activity, students' interest in the topic is likely to decline, it will be difficult to concentrate fully, and they may become bored. All of this can lead to an ineffective lesson, where discipline problems can arise. Thus, it is highly desirable to plan a varied lesson that will attract students with its interesting content and a wider range of activities. (Ur, 1991, p.228)

Penny Ur also lists 5 principles that should guide the lesson: (p.229)

1. Put harder tasks earlier
2. Have quieter activities before lively ones
3. Think about transitions
4. Pull the class together at the beginning and the end
5. End on a positive note

As Ur states (1991, p.233), communication is important for language learning, but you can also learn through non-communicative activities. Therefore, the following two lesson plans are not exclusively about communication, although communication is a very important and not insignificant part. The lesson plans also offer activities focused on other language skills such as listening or writing.

Questioning is a universally used activation technique in teaching for many reasons, such as finding out something from the learners (facts, ideas, opinions), getting learners to be active in their learning, encouraging self-expression, etc. (Ur, 1991, p.241) A myriad of questions are offered by both lesson plans, with the intention of getting students to think deeply about either the photographs provided or the moral issues related to the topic and then not be afraid to give their own opinion, thoughts, attitudes. The purpose is not to look for the correctness of the answers, the aim is to make students think and share different interpretations.

According to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, using precise language to describe concepts and activities can help students avoid generalizations that blur distinctions and impair understanding. For example, the term "camp" is used to refer to a variety of places and locations. Although people died and were killed in many camps created by the Nazis and their collaborators, not all camps were intentionally built as killing sites or as death camps. Different camps functioned differently at different times. These included concentration camps, forced labour camps and transit camps. Precise definitions help to avoid misunderstandings by providing specific information. (URL29) For this reason, the teacher should realize that it is relevant to emphasize the correct and accurate interpretation of concepts when teaching this topic.

Group work is a form of learner activation that is of particular value in the practice of oral fluency. It fosters learner responsibility and independence, can improve motivation and

contribute to a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class. (Ur, 1991, p.244). Group work is just as important and indispensable as independent work, in which students learn to develop their own ideas and methods and also have to rely only on themselves, on their own abilities. Lesson plans present both group and individual activities.

Last but not least, motivation plays a big role, without which the lesson cannot be effective since motivation is very strongly related to achievement in language learning. Whether intrinsic motivation, the incentive to learn for its own sake, or extrinsic motivation, derived from external stimulus, both types of motivation are prerequisites for successful learning. (Ur, 1991, p.288)

Each of the two lesson plans will contain the following information:

Date:

Class:

Age of the students:

Level of English:

Classroom language:

Timing:

Objectives:

Lesson focus:

Materials:

Finally, a SWOT analysis is created, presenting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities as well as threats.

5.2 First Lesson Plan – the Holocaust

This lesson plan concentrates on the infamous period during World War II, known as the Holocaust, and is designed for 9th grade lower secondary students or higher secondary students. Therefore, due to the heavy content of this topic as well as a more demanding vocabulary, the recommended age of students is ideally 15 years and older. The whole consists of two consecutive hours, i.e. 90 minutes of pure time. The lesson is primarily focused on speaking. A prerequisite for the successful conduct of the lesson is undoubtedly the students' cooperation, willingness to discuss the subject, attentive listening and the ability to think deeply and critically.

Note that it is of vital necessity for the teacher to have studied the historical background of this event in advance and, if possible, to have more detailed knowledge in case there are questions from the students. At the same time, it is desirable to take into account that this shadowy topic can have different effects on students. Therefore, it is essential to constantly observe the students' reactions and if the teacher notices adverse reactions, emotional tension, anything negative that could provoke trauma-like feelings in the students, it is highly recommended to change the topic, at least for a few minutes, lighten the lesson and then return to the initial topic. In order to avoid such negative phenomena, it is also recommended that the teacher introduce the topic for example in the following way: *This is a very serious and unimaginable crime committed by the Nazis more than 80 years ago and that is the reason why we should learn about it and keep reminding ourselves of it so that we do not forget it and so that such terror does not happen again...*

Date:

Class:

Age of the students: 14-15 and higher

Level of English: B1-B2

Classroom language: L2

Timing: 15 minutes group discussion, 45 minutes presentation, 10 minutes discussion (together), 15 minutes video with questions, 5 minutes summary

Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to understand and discuss the meaning of the holocaust, analyze it critically and interpret it in their own words or with the usage of a newly gained vocabulary.

Lesson focus: Speaking

Materials: computer, data projector, interactive board, 4 black-and-white photographs with questions below, pieces of paper for the students

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher does not announce the topic of the lesson, instead he/she has the students make guesses with the help of period photographs, which they will describe in groups. This initial activity could be motivating, as students would have to try to figure out what they are actually going to learn about. Assuming there are twelve students in the class (numbers may vary, of course), students will be divided into four groups of three students each. The groups will be divided randomly, based on the distribution of papers with the numbers of specific groups, which will be drawn by students. Each group will be given one black and white photograph (shown below) under which there will be supporting questions for students to discuss together. This activity will take approximately fifteen minutes.

1.

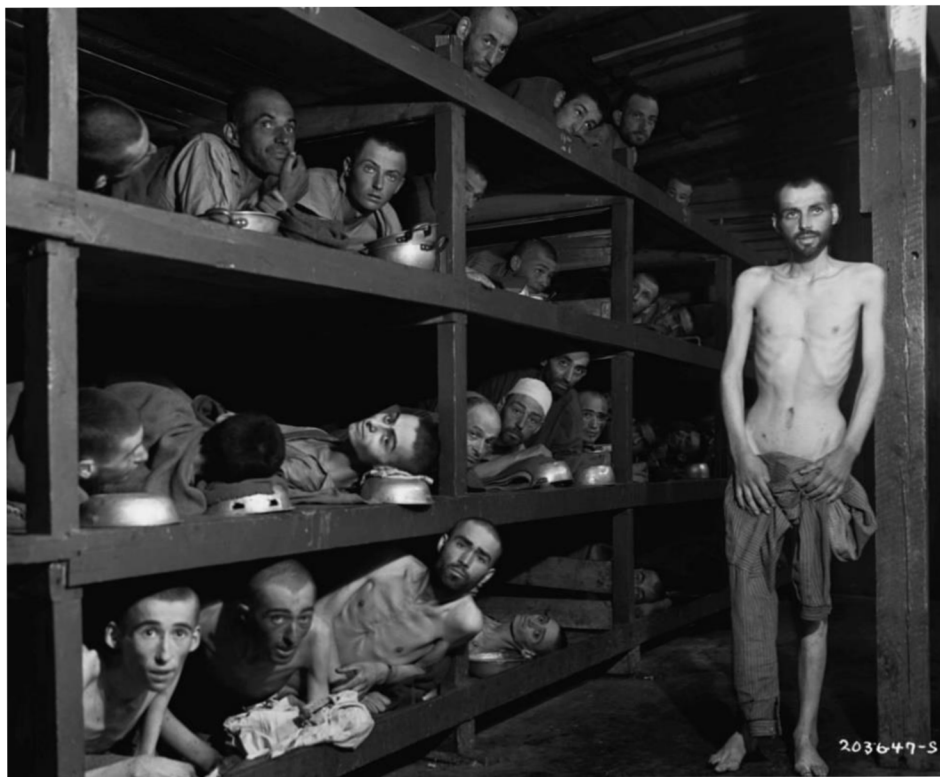


Source: URL22

Questions:

1. Who are the men on the left and who are the men on the right?
2. When was the picture taken?
3. Where was the picture taken?
4. Why is there a fence?
5. What is the man giving the other men?
6. Why are the men on the right smiling?
7. Why are the men on the right wearing striped clothes?

2.



Source: URL23

Questions:

1. When was the picture taken?
2. Where was the picture taken?
3. Who are the men?
4. Why are the men so skinny?
5. Why are there just men and no women?
6. What thing is under their heads?
7. Why is the man on the right wearing no clothes?

3.



Source: URL24

Questions:

1. Who are the people?
2. Where was the picture taken?
3. When was the picture taken?
4. Why are the men's heads without hair?
5. Why is their hand raised?
6. Who is the man standing in front of them?
7. Why are there so many men?

4.



Source: URL25

Questions:

1. Who are the people on the left?
2. When was the picture taken?
3. Where was the picture taken?
4. Why are the men on the left and the man on the right wearing striped clothes?
5. Why is the man in striped trousers on the right wearing a coat?
6. Why is the man in the middle wearing a uniform?
7. Why is the man in striped trousers on the right talking to the man in the uniform?

After finished, this will be followed by a very short discussion where the teacher will ask if the students have any idea what the topic of today's lesson might be. Then the topic of the lesson will be revealed through a PowerPoint presentation of about forty-five minutes. Explaining new (challenging) vocabulary will also be an essential part, with the teacher always writing the word on the board and explaining it, for example: antisemitism, extermination, persecution, etc. Students will take notes in their notebook.

It will then be very good to revisit the four photographs that the students described at the beginning of the lesson. It is now that they have learned the necessary information that they are able to deduce the real meaning of the photographs. For about 10 minutes, there will be a joint interpretation of the pictures with the teacher, where the different groups will share their opinions. The teacher must encourage students to think more deeply, for example by asking questions such as: *Why did this happen? How could people allow this to happen?* Hopefully, they will be able to react.

Then, after the discussion part, there will be a quieter activity, namely a short video in which a Holocaust survivor reminisces and narrates. The three-minute video is available under the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrsnrWapBHI> The first time students listen to the video, they will be tasked with understanding the overall content and essence of the video. The teacher will ask students general questions such as: *What was the video about? How do you feel after watching it?* Afterward, they will be given a handout with a transcript of the video and five questions below. Students will read the text for themselves (independently) and mark any unfamiliar words, which the teacher will then explain. During the second listening of the video, students will focus on specific information so that they can respond independently in writing to questions.

Questions:

1. How many siblings does the woman have?
2. How many days did they not get food during the train journey?
3. What was the name of the first camp the woman and her family went to?
4. Which members of her family were sent to the gas chamber?
5. What was the name of the second camp the woman went to?

Lastly, the teacher will ask the students what they have learned today. To make the questioning more interesting, each student will have to say one sentence - a piece of information that surprised or intrigued them. For curious students who want to learn more about the topic, the teacher will recommend internet resources, for example <https://www.ushmm.org/>, or books dealing with the subject, such as *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* or *Sophie's Choice*. It would be very beneficial for the students if, for example, an excursion to Auschwitz were planned for the next day. This lesson could therefore serve as an introduction to the subject, which they would learn about in more detail at the place where these things really happened.

SWOT analysis:

Strengths:

Students learn about major historical events that everyone should know about, gaining insight into a challenging period in Europe during the first half of the 20th century. They are forced to think critically through the use of authentic materials such as period photographs and eyewitness accounts, and are encouraged to reflect on the lives of people at the time. They are able to compare the current world situation with that of that time, or find parallels. In addition, the lesson plan encourages group discussion and collaboration.

Weaknesses:

A given topic is time consuming and also challenging to implement because teachers do not know in advance how students will react, whether or not the lesson objective will be met. It is also possible that some may fail to grasp the extent of the seriousness of the subject and not take away any relevant knowledge from the lesson. Students may struggle with more challenging vocabulary and a strongly negative topic which may not be good for the psyche. They may also prefer their mother tongue to the target language, especially in group work.

Opportunities:

The lesson plan offers the opportunity for free discussion, and can encourage students to be curious and follow up with self-study at home. Students can discover/rediscover, based on the information gathered, their family stories going back to the first half of the last century (e.g. through grandparents who may also have been involved in the rescue). Students can then apply their newly acquired knowledge in other subjects, such as history or civics.

Threats:

We do not know the family background of the students in question (family history, whether they are a Jewish family, whether they have faced or still face anti-Semitic insinuations), so this may be a particularly difficult topic for the students, strongly influencing their psyche. Students may consider the topic as not serious and thus make fun of it. It can also arouse traumatic feelings in particularly psychologically weak individuals. In extreme cases, there is also a risk that students will start spreading discriminatory or anti-Semitic ideas.

5.3 Second Lesson Plan – Heroism, the Nicholas Winton Story

This lesson plan deals with heroism in a very difficult time. Personalities such as Oscar Schindler are mentioned in the theoretical explanation, but the lesson focuses mainly on the merits of Nicholas Winton and humanity acts. The plan is intended for 8th grade lower secondary students and higher secondary students, which means that they should be approximately 14 years of age and older. The slightly lower target age group of students compared to the previous lesson plan is given here because the topic does not deal to such an extent with the mass murder of victims in the camps, it deals mainly with bravery and humanity. In order to make the teaching as interesting as possible and to convey the information sufficiently, a longer period of time is again necessary, namely 90 minutes, i.e. a combination of two lessons. The activities focus mainly on three skills - listening, speaking and writing.

Again, it is in the best interest of a teacher to study specific material in advance so that he or she can have a broad knowledge, alternatively to recommend interesting resources for students to study on their own. Furthermore, it is more than appropriate to observe how students react during the lesson, whether they are capable of empathy, imagining that they could also help, or whether they show disinterest, contempt, or incite hatred. Similar to the first plan mentioned, a prerequisite for the successful conduct of the lesson is undoubtedly the students' cooperation, willingness to discuss the subject, attentive listening and the ability to think deeply and critically.

Date:

Class:

Age of the students: 14 and higher

Level of English: B1-B2

Classroom language: L2

Timing: 10 minutes introduction, 25 minutes group debate, 30 minutes presentation, 5 minutes video, 15 minutes letter writing, 5 minutes summary and task assignment

Objectives: At the end of this lesson, students will be able to produce basic information about the rescue of children by Nicholas Winton, as well as be able to think and discuss unwanted social phenomena related to discrimination against others, such as bullying, and

subsequent help for victims. The aim is also to evoke feelings of humanity and gratitude in the students.

Lesson focus: Speaking, listening, writing

Materials: computer, data projector, interactive board, pieces of paper for the students, parchments for the students

For this lesson, it is essential that the teacher has the questions for the initial discussion prepared in advance, either written on the computer so that they can be projected, or written on the board, where, unfortunately, there might be a risk that students will read the questions during the break. Pre-written discussion questions will prevent time being lost during the lesson.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher will introduce the topic of the lesson and briefly give basic information about Nicholas Winton's rescue of children before the start of the Second World War. Once done, the discussion questions will be displayed for students to read. In case they find any unfamiliar word, they will note it down and then there will be a mass translation with the teacher to make sure the students understand everything. It is assumed that the unknown words will include: disability, participate, bullying or victim.

- *Have you ever made a negative comment about another person based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin?*
- *Have you ever heard a friend make a negative comment about another person based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin? If so, how did you respond? What did you say? What did you do?*
- *Have you ever participated in bullying?*
- *Have you ever known a victim of bullying? If so, what did you say or do to help?*
- *If you saw a victim of bullying, what would you do?*

Afterward, the teacher will divide the students into four groups, each group consisting of three students (the numbers may vary, however), and the selection of the groups will be random, as in the previous lesson, by drawing papers with the group numbers. The teacher will instruct the students to freely debate the questions within the group. This activity will take about 15 minutes, with the teacher constantly going around and listening to the groups to make sure that only English is used. This will be followed by a group discussion with the teacher, during

which the teacher will try to instil in the students moral principles, appropriate behaviour, a sense of belonging and mutual respect.

After the discussion part, the teacher will show a PowerPoint presentation so that the students learn in more detail about the story of Nicholas Winton, as well as other rescuers such as Oscar Schindler. It is in the teacher's best interest to intersperse the presentation with occasional questions such as: *How would you act? Would you risk your life? If your friends or family were in danger, what would you do? Would you help strangers you didn't even know?*

The theoretical presentation will be followed by a short video, which some students may have already seen if they are interested in the topic. It is an emotional excerpt from That's Life broadcast by the BBC in 1988, when Winton met his rescued children without knowing beforehand that they were sitting around him. It is available under this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_nFuJAF5F0 Note that it is essential that the teacher observes the students' reactions to see if the video moved them or left them cold.

Once the video ends, the teacher will tell the students the following: *Imagine you are already retired and find out you are one of Winton's rescued children. Your task is to write a short letter to Winton. What would you write to him? How would you thank him for saving you? What feelings would you describe to him?* Each student will then be given a piece of parchment. Once the students have obtained the parchment, they will have approximately 15 minutes to write their letter. Afterward, the letters will be collected.



Source: URL28, text: own

Ending the lesson, the teacher will briefly summarize what the students have learned and ask them how they perceived the lesson, what surprised them, eventually what they realized. Once done, the students will be given written homework (the teacher will hand out sheets with the assignment printed on them). In order to motivate students to complete the assignment, they will be told that the best work with the minimum number of errors will be awarded a mark.

Homework (write at least 100 words):

Imagine it is 1938, you are a parent and you have two children. You are a Jewish family and therefore in danger. The possibility arises that you may send your children abroad, to England, and it is quite likely that you will never see them again. How would you decide? Would you give up your children and send them away, or would you keep them in your home, in the uncertain situation of not knowing how the whole situation will develop and what will happen to all the Jews?

SWOT analysis:

Strengths:

Students learn about important historical events that contribute to a general overview. They are forced to think critically and are encouraged to reflect on the lives of people at the time. They work with authentic materials (a video featuring Nicholas Winton and his rescued children). Students also develop their communication and expression skills in group discussion, expressing their opinion within the context of the issue. They also develop creative and writing skills, specifically in writing an imaginary letter to Winton or in the subsequent homework.

Weaknesses:

Students may struggle with more difficult vocabulary. In group work, they may prefer their mother tongue to the target language. They may be undisciplined while watching the video, as in the creative task (writing a letter). They may also refuse to participate in group discussions, especially introverted individuals.

Opportunities:

Students independently engage in a creative writing skill in which they capitalize on their imagination and humanity. The lesson plan offers the opportunity for free discussion, and can encourage students to be curious and follow up with self-study at home. Students can then apply their newly acquired knowledge in other subjects, such as history or civics.

Threats:

Students may be uncomfortable asking questions to discuss negative comments and bullying, especially if they have ever been a victim themselves or otherwise been involved in it. They may therefore refuse to participate in group work. For less mentally resilient individuals, such as victims of bullying, this activity can be somewhat traumatic. And in theory, students' potential reactions can dramatically disrupt the flow of the lesson.

6 Summary

This thesis dealt with the heroism before and during the holocaust, as well as the holocaust itself, and the usage of history in ELT. The thesis was divided into two parts, a theoretical one, which offered the reader a description of historical events related to the issue of antisemitism reaching its peak during the Second World War, and heroic acts, especially the figure of Nicholas Winton, and a practical one, which provided two potential lesson plans related to the topics.

The theoretical part examined not only the period when the Nazis, led by Adolf Hitler, seized power and in the following years participated in the mass murder of Jews in concentration and extermination camps, but also earlier events, dating back to the ancient history of the Jews, when they were already the target of persecution and oppression.

The first chapter (The Holocaust during WWII) first of all, focused on the general meaning of the word Holocaust. Subsequently, the life of Adolf Hitler with his gradually growing influence and the consolidation of the power of the NSDAP were described.

The second chapter, entitled Antisemitism, mentioned chronological events, in particular, among others, the Nuremberg Laws or Kristallnacht, which went hand in hand with the assertion of Nazi Party power and the associated persecution of Jews.

The next chapter (Final Solution) provided the reader with a detailed explanation of the concept of the Final solution to the Jewish question, related to the deportation of the victims to the death camps, where mass murders were secretly committed in 1941-1944.

The remaining part were the chapters Heroism before the Holocaust and Heroism during the Holocaust. Heroic deeds were investigated, especially the life and merits of the Briton Nicholas Winton, who, among other persons, participated in the rescue of innocent children. Other brave figures were also mentioned, notably the world-famous German Oscar Schindler.

The practical part then outlined two lesson plans that could guide teachers in teaching this topic. The first lesson plan dealt with the Holocaust, the second with the story of Nicholas Winton, both of which were subjected to a final SWOT analysis.

Although, for some, apparently emotionally draining topics could be realised in ELT, it is necessary to be aware of certain impediments. Given the fact that this is not an easy yet rather complicated topic, especially the Holocaust theme, more time is needed to convey it sufficiently. Thus, time constraints may appear as one of the problems. Another obstacle might be the reluctant approach of the teachers to teach this infamous topic, due to the uneasy preparation and the uncertainty or fear that the information will not be properly delivered to the students. Last but not least, the psychological burden on the teacher and students as well is also a challenge, which should be taken into consideration.

However, it is in the highest interest of our society not to ignore history and not to forget the events from which humanity should learn. For that purpose, it is essential to constantly pass on the essential information of the last century to the younger generation so that they can remember the horrors that took place and that should never happen again in the future. At the same time, it is desirable to encourage in students moral principles, humanity, willingness to help others and not to be indifferent to the things happening around us.

These two lesson plans offer activities that focus primarily on communication skills; however, listening, writing, and reading skills are also included. At the same time, students expand their vocabulary with unusual words that are not commonly taught and, last but not least, gain an understanding of the history not only of England but also of the Czech Republic and many other countries. Therefore, it can be concluded that this topic, developed into two lesson plans, contributes to the general development of students, encourages discussion and deep reflection on social issues and, finally yet importantly, offers students a completely different form of English language teaching, namely the cross-curricular relationship, i.e. the interweaving of English language and history.

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Resumé

Tato práce pojednává o tématu Holocaust společně s příběhem Nicholase Wintona a je rozdělena do dvou částí, teoretické a praktické. Část teoretická popisuje historické pozadí, zaměřující se na vývoj událostí vedoucích k masovému vraždění Židů během 2. světové války a rovněž se zabývá hrdinstvím - je zde představen příběh Nicholase Wintona a dalších hrdinů, kteří se podíleli na pomoci či záchraně Židů před nacisty. Praktická část se odvíjí od části teoretické a snaží se nastínit možnosti, jak lze daná témata implementovat ve výuce angličtiny (ELT).

Teoretická část je rozdělena do tří částí – The Holocaust during WWII, Heroism before the Holocaust a Heroism during the Holocaust. Teoretická část se zabývá nejen obdobím, kdy se nacisté v čele s Adolfem Hitlerem chopili moci a v následujících letech se podíleli na masovém vyvražďování Židů v koncentračních a vyhlazovacích táborech, ale i dřívějšími událostmi, sahajícími až do dávné historie Židů, kdy již byli terčem pronásledování a útlaku.

První kapitola (Holocaust during WWII) se nejprve zaměřuje na obecný význam slova holocaust. Následně je popsán život Adolfa Hitlera s jeho postupně rostoucím vlivem a upevňováním moci NSDAP. Druhá kapitola s názvem Antisemitism zmiňuje chronologicky události, zejména Norimberské zákony nebo Křišťálovou noc, které šly ruku v ruce s prosazováním moci nacistické strany a s tím spojenou perzekucí Židů. V další kapitole (Final Solution) se čtenář podrobně seznamuje s koncepcí Konečného řešení židovské otázky, která souvisela s deportacemi obětí do táborů smrti, kde byly v letech 1941-1944 tajně páčány masové vraždy. Zbývající část tvoří kapitoly Heroism before and during the Holocaust. Zkoumány jsou hrdinské činy, zejména život a zásluhy Brita Nicholase Wintona, který se mimo jiné podílel na záchraně nevinných dětí. Zmíněny jsou i další statečné osobnosti, zejména světoznámý Němec Oscar Schindler.

Praktická část této práce, nazvaná Practical Usage of the Holocaust and the Nicholas Winton Story in ELT, nabízí čtenářům dva potenciální plány hodin vztahující se k tématu, které by mohly být využity ve výuce angličtiny. Ke každému plánu lekce je zpracována SWOT analýza. V první podkapitole se hovoří o teorii, přičemž následující dvě kapitoly sestávají z připravených plánů vyučovacích hodin, které by mohly být vodítkem pro učitele při výuce daných témat. První plán hodiny se zabývá holocaustem, druhý naopak příběhem Nicholase

Wintona. Plány výuky zahrnují následující: věk žáků, cíle, zaměření hodiny, jazyk třídy, úroveň angličtiny, načasování a doplňkové materiály. Při tvorbě vyučovacích plánů je opíráno o principy Penny Ur.

Hlavní metody pro výzkum byly použity nejen odborné knižní publikace, internetové zdroje, články, ale i autentické zdroje, například dobové fotografie či výpovědi přeživších.

ANOTACE

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| Rok obhajoby: | 2024 |

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| Název práce: | Using History in ELT: Teaching Lower Secondary School Students about the Nicholas Winton Story and the Holocaust Era |
| Název práce v angličtině: | Using History in ELT: Teaching Lower Secondary School Students about the Nicholas Winton Story and the Holocaust Era |
| Anotace práce: | Tato diplomová práce se zabývá problematikou holokaustu a hrdinskými činy před a během druhé světové války, konkrétně příběhem Nicholase Wintona. Kromě historie zkoumá tato práce i způsoby, kterými by bylo možné implementovat daná témata ve výuce anglického jazyka. |
| Klíčová slova: | holokaust, ELT, historie, Nicholas Winton |
| Anotace v angličtině: | This thesis deals with the Holocaust and heroic acts before and during World War II, specifically the story of Nicholas Winton. In addition to history, this thesis explores ways in which the topics could be implemented in English language teaching. |
| Klíčová slova v angličtině: | holocaust, ELT, history, Nicholas Winton |

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| Přílohy vázané v práci: | - |
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| Jazyk práce: | Angličtina |