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## **“Spurensuche” – Ways of Shoah Education in the formal Teaching and in extramural Activities**

*Im Jahr 2003, dem Jahr des 8. Nürnberger Forums, gibt es nur noch wenige Überlebende und Augenzeugen der Shoah. Was diese Menschen in den 30er und 40 Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts erlebt haben, scheint Anfang des 3. Jahrtausends weit entfernt zu sein von dem, was Kinder und Jugendliche sich mit moderner technischer Ausrüstung erschließen. Vor dem Hintergrund aktiven Engagements in der Shoah-Erziehung können bestimmte Veränderungen im Verhalten von Kindern und Jugendlichen beobachtet werden. Die Jugendlichen gehen häufig professionell mit neuer Technologie um. Ihr konzeptioneller und ethischer Zugang kann nur bewundert werden. Die Würde der menschlichen Persönlichkeit ist anerkanntermaßen das erste Kriterium ihres Urteils. Dabei ist ihr Zugang weit entfernt davon, rigoros zu sein, obwohl die genannte Überzeugung von Menschenwürde und Menschenrechten für sie über der professionell gehandhabten Technologie steht.*

*In den einleitenden Bemerkungen wird erläutert, dass es eine lange Geschichte ist, die den Weg hin zur Shoah angebahnt hat. Das wird anhand der Geschichte eines Kunstwerks von 1879 verdeutlicht. Das erste Kapitel dieses Referats stellt die Projektgruppe „Shoah und Shoah-Erziehung“ vor. Das zweite Kapitel beschreibt die Entwicklung dieser Projektgruppe, die aus Lehramtsstudierenden der Universität Essen besteht. Dabei wird auch die Wahl der Themen und Methoden erläutert. Ein wesentlicher Schritt ist sodann die Erprobung dieser Themen und Methoden im Schulunterricht. Das dritte Kapitel beschäftigt sich mit der Themenwahl durch die Schülerinnen und Schüler, während das vierte sich mit den Erkenntnis- und Verhaltensänderungen bei drei Besuchen der früheren Konzentrationslager in Terezin/Theresienstadt beschäftigt. Das fünfte Kapitel enthält eine kurze Evaluation und die Einsicht, dass ein dringender Bedarf für weitere Shoah-Erziehung besteht.*

### **1. Introductory remarks:**

*The Shoah has not suddenly fallen from the sky but was prepared in a 2000 years lasting historical development. A controversy of 1879 and the elaboration of a life threatening pseudo-scientific ‚race theory‘ illustrate this.*

Here and throughout the following paper possibilities of Shoah Education are presented with practically experienced topics.

In 1879 the German Jewish artist **Max Liebermann** opened an exhibition of his works in Munich. Among the paintings on display there was one called 'The twelve years old Jesus in the Temple'. With this the artist became famous from one day to the next. A lot of anti-semitic protests was expressed on various levels. Artist colleagues applauded to Liebermann's work, praised its realism and differentiated presentation of the characters the boy Jesus met. Liebermann's colleagues uni sono highlighted that this picture interpreted the New Testament story of St Luke in a more convincing way than it was ever done in centuries of art history before.<sup>1</sup>

Certain political and Christian circles reacted in a completely different way. They called the picture a 'scandal'. There was a debate in the Bavarian parliament on that piece of art for two days. The chaplan to the German Imperial Court, **Adolf Stoecker** started his well known anti Jewish agitation, in response to that picture. Clerical representatives demanded the removal of Liebermann's picture from the exhibition.<sup>2</sup>

A Christian journal of fine arts characterized the picture with the following words.

*A squinting Jewish boy with red hair and freckles, dressed in a dirty frock, negotiates, no bargains with stinking, low trading Jews in dusty sacks and prayer shawls.[...] A Jew dares to throw into the faces of his Christian fellow citizens such offence against their redeemer [...]*<sup>3</sup>

Nearly 125 years later a Christian arts historian corrected the distorted image in a fine article. But it is not by accident that he wrote in the title of his article that Liebermann's painting 'provoked a scandal' in 2003. It was indeed neither the Jewish artist nor his work that provoked but those Christian politicians. Confusing origin and cause of anti-semitic action or propaganda is one of the major dangers with handling the topic of Shoah and Shoah Education. Everybody active in this task must be very careful and avoid the use of the language of those Anti-Judaists.

In the looser nations of the First World War, particularly Austria and Germany exaggerated fears grow when poor Jewish refugees arrived from Russia and Poland. They were not at all welcomed by the assimilated Jewish population in these countries. However, radical nationalists proclaimed a pseudo scientific race theory. The then un-

<sup>1</sup> These reactions are reported by Liebermann himself in his memoirs but also by an art historian, Helmut R. Leppien in his publication, *Der zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel von Max Liebermann*, Hrsg. von der Kulturstiftung der Länder in Verbindung mit der Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, 1989; Auswertung dieser Zitate bei H. Fendrich, „Er hörte ihnen zu und stellte ihnen Fragen“, Durch sein Bild „Der zwölfjährige Jesus im Tempel“ wurde der Maler Max Liebermann mit einem Mal berühmt. Als das Gemälde 1879 in München erstmals ausgestellt wurde, provozierte es einen Skandal, in: *Katechetische Blätter* 5/2003, Kösel-Verlag München, pp 364-368a

<sup>2</sup> op. cit., p 365

<sup>3</sup> Heinrich Merz, Rückblick, *Christliches Kunstblatt für Kirche, Schule und Haus*, 22, 1880, S. 4f „Ein schielender Judenknabe im schmutzigen Kittel mit rotem Haar und mit Sommersprossen, verhandelt, je handelt mit übelriechenden, gemeinen Schacherjuden in schmutzigen Säcken und Gebetsmänteln [...] Dass ein Jude es gewagt hat, seinen christlichen Mitbürgern solche Verhöhnung ihres Heilands ins Gesicht zu schleudern [...]"

employed young **Adolf Hitler** read about this in pamphlets written by a former Roman Catholic monk, who called himself **Georg Lanz von Liebenfels**.

Such stupid invention has been taught everywhere in Germany. All coaches in various sports disciplines told their clientele that there are full Jews, half Jews and quarter Jews. And certain activities, like watching films in a cinema, sitting on a park bench, etc, were forbidden by law for all of these categories. Especially all relationships between Jews and non-Jews, particularly sexual relationships and marriage were prohibited. Young learners of our own time cannot imagine this. In many families there is a curtain of silence before that past, in Germany, in many European countries, partly in Israel and the US. One result of recent research was that in family talks of these days such myths are still alive. People think that Jews can be easily identified:

*They have long beards and wear black and dirty coats.*<sup>4</sup>

From 1935 to 1945 almost all biology schoolbooks spread this pseudo theories. Card board games and children books encouraged the very young to work for a society „free of Jews“.

Despite controversies on some of the teachers guides on the market, many of these publications are useful. But more helpful are children's and young people's own research activities. Some teachers work together with their pupils in libraries and archives.

Against the background of educational discussions I would express my own conviction that it is well possible to teach our topic in preschool and primary education as well. It is just a question of how. I will come back later to this.

## 2. A project group studies for more than 20 years the Shoah and Shoah Education'.<sup>5</sup>

It began with courses on topics of contemporary history in the teachers training department at Essen university. In the early 1980s, a series of seminars on **Anne Frank** and

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<sup>4</sup> See the book „Opa war kein Nazi“, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2002

<sup>5</sup> The name of the project group has been slightly changed in the course of the years. A major reason of the changes was the intention to explain content and methodology of the group's work to outsiders. At the beginning the term ‚Holocaust‘ was used rather than ‚Shoah‘. Behind the change to Shoah lies among others the observation that ‚Holocaust‘ is often used for completely different features like ‚nuclear Holocaust‘. Another sample of reasons for clarification was the fact that sometimes Shoah education is seen just as a task for history lessons, or – in another perspective – only for religious education. Both misinterpretations don't do justice to the universal meaning of the Shoah. This has been clearly expressed by Sherry Blumberg, then Professor at the Hebrew Union College New York, at the closing session of ISREV IX in Goslar, in 1994. The wording ‚The Shoah and Shoah education‘ covers both the genuine contemporary research in archives, in interviews with eyewitnesses etc., and the development of teaching schemes for the explored topics.

related examples from past and present, were well attended. From the beginning participating students did their own research. Some, for example explored the situation and persecution of Jews in their home town or village.

They compared the work in university with what they themselves had experienced in school concerning the Third Reich, the persecution, torture and extermination of Jews in Europe. Some of these students told that they didn't like abstract statistics in school lessons. Some even blamed their teachers of having dramatised and exaggerated facts and historical processes, but hidden others.

They themselves tried to avoid such mistakes. They didn't hesitate to ask teachers friends for sharing their observations with their classes. Some took part in elaborating teachers guides. Major titles of these have been: His name was **Raoul Wallenberg** (The Shoah in Hungary and the rescue work of the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg); The Children called her Aunt Clara (**Clara Grunwald**, life and work of this Jewish teacher, a sort of a female and German **Janusz Korczak**); Children who escaped the Holocaust (The situation of children in the period of the Shoah in Germany and other European countries; ‚Kindertransporte‘ saved the lives of about 10.000 children who were brought to England, and various other countries. Stories of children, saved or not).

### 3. The pupils' and Students' choice of content and methodology

Some members of the project group extended their individual research activities. **Dagmar Drovs** for example researched Jewish activities in special education, and **Susanne Streckmann** investigated literature by and on Jewish women in the time of the Shoah.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Various members, now teachers reported that they still use insights and skills, developed within the project group. One of them started her own research and published her findings in a book on ‚Special Education in German Jewry‘: Dagmar Drovs, Heilpädagogik im deutschen Judentum. 1873-1942. Eine Spurensicherung, Mit einem Essay von Shimon Sachs, Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum, Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 7, Münster-Hamburg-London, LIT Verlag, 2000. In her book, Dagmar reconstructed the shape of this educational activity. With this she drew the attention of educationalists and others to a feature which had been neglected for long. Another group member, Oliver Decka, now teacher in lower secondary education, started with colleagues a long term project on ‚Spurensuche‘ with students of 15 and 16 years. Since the year 2000, this project included among others contemporary history, Jewish studies, and the exploration of a number of special topics. One topic was ‚Kindertransport‘ and included a study trip to Britain in March 2001. (See below, particularly footnotes 7 & 8) The follow-up topic has been started with another class. It is dealing with deportation, concentration camp as well as torture and extermination, but also the enormously creative activities of children inmates. In April 2003, the work on this topic will include a study trip to Tabór, Prague and Terezín/Theresienstadt. In summer and autumn 2002, another project group member writes her thesis for her final university examination as a secondary teacher. In this she is investigating the project method in school education with (theoretical and practical) didactical examples from Shoah education. The already mentioned project ‚Spurensuche‘ will serve as a major example of this study, since the candidate,

In the 1980s the students were particularly interested in people and their experiences. Some, for example, went to a place in their neighbourhood, interviewed there refugees in their modest shelter. They explored the meaning of isolation, segregation and expulsion. They compared this with the situation of **Anne Frank**'s and her family in hiding. The students eagerly intended to find traces of human fates.

The project group exists for more than 20 years. Through this time the methods of work changed. The students discovered the adventure of archive research. Reading and evaluating a form filled in, in the 1930s, by a Jewish girl before getting allowance to leave Germany via Denmark to Palestine, means imagining her very practical experiences. This girl left parents and friends, her pet and toys. She escaped the threat of being killed, but arrived in a strange country, not knowing a word of the language spoken there – in this case neither in Denmark nor in Palestine, and there neither Hebrew nor Arabic.

Part of the work in the archives was the study of original letters, orders by German authorities and illegal correspondence within the resistance. Other documents investigated certificates, which the persecuted have been required to present to SS-bodies, or to Dutch, Belgian, French etc. offices who had to assist those German offices. The students interpreted documentary photographs, resistance documents, etc. Other students listened to stories about hidden places or resistance groups, which their friends had found in the archives or in literature. Both groups, those working in the archives and those who studied literature, learned to feel with the young people who lived some decades ago and experienced one or another side of what we call the Shoah. Other members of the project group visited places where Jews had lived or where offices of German authorities worked. Sometimes these trips offered possibilities of personal identification. One example was the young Kurt Heinrich Heilbrunn from the German city of Goslar, a boy terribly discriminated against in school and outside. Members of the Society of Friends, or the Quakers, came to Goslar and took him to a Kindertransport to England. Some of our young people had never before heard of the Friends. Now they learned of them in a case vital for that Jewish boy. The parents of this boy have been brought with other Goslar Jews to a tiny medieval house, then called the ‚House of Jews‘. A few years later they were deported to Theresienstadt (Terezín). One member of the project group studied a full day original relicts from the Heilbrunn family as well as documents of persons involved, victims and perpetrators. She took also photographs of places in Goslar where the boy and his parents had lived, the place of the former synagogue, the Jewish cemetery, etc.

Another method used by the project group was sharing the newly won insights with others. This was done in three ways. The first was more traditional. The project group

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Gunilla Dorn, was member of the research team which accompanied the project ‚Kindertransporte‘. Gunilla, in the course of her studies was also concerned with both the uniqueness of the Shoah in history and the mutual influence between those crimes and other cases of genocide. In January 2002, she attended a conference of the Wiener Library on this aspect. Her reflections have been published under the title ‚Generations of Genocide. Notes on an Important Subject‘ in PANORAMA, Int. Journal of Comp. Religious Education and Values, Vol. XIV/1, summer 2002.

invited others and shared their observations. One particular way of presentation were various exhibitions.

One teacher, **Oliver Decka**, started – together with other staff members – in his lower secondary school the project „Spurensuche“ (,Search for traces‘ - of Jewish children of the time concerned).<sup>7</sup> He and his colleague **Jürgen Parussel** designed a teaching project with practical exercises, for example at the Jewish cemetery of the city where the school is situated. The goal and content of the whole project were twofold, it served at the same time the study of the Shoah as well as the exploration of the religion of Judaism. This is for that type of school a particularly ambitious and exceptionally profound project.

In the core of the school project a study trip to London was organized. „Spurensuche“ meant meeting some of the then children of Kindertransport, now grandmothers and granddads. Extended visits and talks to some of them made the experience for the participating girls and boys a unique one. A visit to the Wiener Library, the famous Shoah research and documentation place, and talks to the Library’s education officer, **Katherine Klinger** and its photo-librarian, **Rosemary Nief** offered again another perspective to the topic. The attendance of the Erev-Shabbat service in the West London Synagogue of British Jews offered the possibility to deepen the classroom studies on Judaism and to meet other survivors at the connected Kiddush. Visits were spent to the Leo Baeck college and a section of the Jewish Museum. A rabbinic student, **Andreas Hinz** guided the school class sensitively.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The process, outlined in the following, is carefully documented in two ways. The first is a **project documentation** with illustrations. In this, the girls and boys of the school class in question describe – often in detail – the preparation in the classroom, the contribution of visitors in some lessons, learning experiences, for example in a synagogue, on a Jewish cemetery, at various memorial sites, the study excursion with all participating students, plus the young people’s interpretation of these experiences. The bibliography of this documentation is as follows:

Projekt-Dokumentation Kindertransporte. Dokumentation zum Projekt „Kindertransporte: Jüdische Lebenswege unter dem Nationalsozialismus – Jüdisches Leben heute – Schüler auf Spurensuche“ der Gemeinschaftshauptschule an der Bruchstraße. Hrsg./Ed.: Städtische Gemeinschaftshauptschule an der Bruchstraße, Mülheim an der Ruhr, Januar 2002. Text und Gestaltung: Oliver Decka, Dipl. Päd. Jürgen Parussel

Many parts of the process explained were videoed by members of the class. The harvest of these activities was tremendously helpful. It was possible to produce out of the video material a **video tape** for various purposes within the school and outside.

The bibliography of this video documentation reads as follows:

Kindertransporte. Eine Spurensuche Mülheimer Schüler. Projekt der Klasse 10A der GHS Bruchstraße im Schuljahr 2000/01. Projektleitung: Oliver Decka, Jürgen Parussel. Medienpäd. Betreuung: Jörg Briese (Oberhausen). Wiss. Beratung: Dr Herbert Schultze (Uni Essen). Information: Städtische Gemeinschaftshauptschule Bruchstraße, Bruchstraße 87, D-45468 Mülheim an der Ruhr, Telephone: \*49-(0)208-448081. E-Mail: ghsbruchstrasse@debitel.net

<sup>8</sup> All these visits and activities within the project’s framework were carefully elaborated by the partaking students of the school and the responsible teachers, and later documented in the project documentation as well as the video tape of the project. For both see footnote 4, above.

All events during the study trip linked experiences of the Shoah with the contemporary situation of certain people, more than fifty years later. Therefore visits to The Great Mosque at Regents Park as well as the Swami Narayan Mandir, the Hindu Temple in Neasden, North London did fit well in that programme. London, no doubt, is a multi-cultural society. This is the place where the ‚Children who escaped the Holocaust‘<sup>9</sup> now live. The participants in the study trip were accompanied by students of the project group, **Gunilla Dorn** and **Susanne Streckmann**. These helped the girls and boys from Gemeinschaftshauptschule Bruchstrasse in Mülheim (a place close to Essen, the place of our university) not to get lost in a world which looked to most of them strange, sometimes threatening and adventurous at the same time.

These girls and boys spoke frankly about problems in the own family or with friends and their own attempts to cope with these problems. They didn't hide either their experiences with internet programmes, even illegal and brutal ones. In this climate, like the sphere in a great family, they examined what they got to know from the Shoah.<sup>10</sup> Since this has been presented to them by eyewitnesses on the one hand and within the multicultural setting on the other hand, they couldn't and wouldn't put it aside as a story of yesterday. They experienced all this as a story of their own time and their own world. They were committed to giving their personal judgement. They realized the then threat by the Shoah now, in their own time, as a tremendous threat against the dignity of every human being.

Some of the school class belonged to ethnic minorities.<sup>11</sup> The experience of the service in the synagogue made them crying. Their tears have not been a pity but a liberation.

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<sup>9</sup> The work of the university project group on various activities for the rescue of Jewish and other persecuted children was published fully in two languages, English and German, by the project group and the section Protestant Theology, FB1 of the University of Essen as volume 16 of the series *Iserlohner ConTexte (ICT)* and in co-operation with PANORAMA, *Int. Journal of Comp. Religious Education and Values*. In November 2000 the publication was launched in the University of Essen. Dr Jo Reilly from the University of Southampton and Dr Wim Westerman, both consultants of the project delivered lectures at this opportunity. The bibliography of the publication reads as follows: Oliver Decka, Dagmar Droys, Dorothee Einhaus, et alii (eds.), *Children who escaped the Holocaust / Kinder, die dem Holocaust entkamen, A Teachers' Guide with Resources, Documents, Pictures, Tables and Suggestions for Teaching in Primary and Secondary Education*, *Iserlohner ConTexte (ICT) No 16*, in co-operation with ‚Interreligiöse Arbeitsstelle (INTR<sup>o</sup>A) and PANORAMA, *Int. Journal for Comp. Religious Ed. and Values*, ISSN 0937-8219, 2000

<sup>10</sup> In the discussion of this paper at ISREV 2002, in July 2002 in Norway, participants interpreted the good atmosphere of the conversation between the school students and their teachers and guides as ‚generations talking‘.

<sup>11</sup> Among the 14 or 15 years old students of the school class were 1 Egyptian, 2 Bosniaks, 1 Croatian, 8 Germans, 1 Polish and 1 Turk. Source: Project documentation, see footnote 4, Introduction by the project team. It may be added that the discussion of this aspect in Norway (see footnote 1) highlighted the fact that young people from deprived or marginalized homes often used to be an easy prey for groups of right wing extremism. Further deliberations in ISREV let it open whether experiences as the study trip to London might have contributed to the young people's personal stability or not.

*Stories of eyewitnesses met the students' experience of their limited knowledge of the English language and their feeling of being a stranger in that country. The experiences of those who were young in the time of persecution met the students' feelings of being a stranger in the third millennium. [...]*

*One girl [...] from the Kosovo reacted spontaneously to the story of one eyewitness. [...] She told later in a personal conversation that she identified herself with the story of that man and associated the expulsion of her own family from the Kosovo.<sup>12</sup>*

The encounter with eyewitnesses gave the pupils the freedom to see their own experiences as well as those of the persecuted in the Nazi period in a universally human context. Their newly realized freedom included the possibility to regard their controversial internet experiences at least for the moment, critically.

Also positive internet experience, the exploration of traces of the persecuted, could be corrected on the other hand after personal encounter with the then children.<sup>13</sup> There is another positive effect of the project 'Spurensuche'. Right wing extremism is for these young people sometimes tempting. Now they have met victims of such an ideology. This made the often unclear concept of Neonazis immediately clear. The young pupils became able to identify tolerance and to distinguish it from the terrorist claim of truth forwarded by the extremists.<sup>14</sup>

The project 'Spurensuche', the study trip to London, as told, an exhibition prepared by the young people, presented in the school as well as the townhall of that city, a profound project documentation of the project 'Spurensuche' and a professionally produced video tape – all this became a very peculiar project of that school. (To call this just a sort of dissemination of the work of the university's project group and its results can only be identified as a case of academic ignorance, because it is overlooking the authenticity of the work done by and in that school.) The co-operation of the team of the school with a research team of the university meant, no doubt, benefit for both sides. It would be an exciting idea to interlink as many of such school projects as possible.

#### 4. Changes in the response of different student groups to one place of the Shoah: Terezín/Theresienstadt

The activities of the project group (with its different memberships), described above, included a number of organized visits to Terezín, as it is called in Czech, or Theresienstadt, the name from the time of the establishment of that place during the Austrian Empire. An experience during a visit spent in January 2002 by members of the project

<sup>12</sup> Project documentation, see footnote 6, interpreted by Oliver Decka.

<sup>13</sup> Participants in the ISREV discussion, see above, for example footnotes 1 and 8, underlined the mutually supporting insights from internet information on the one hand and personal encounter on the other hand.

<sup>14</sup> This effect is indicated in the project documentation, see footnote 6, as well as touched upon in the correspondence with some sponsors of 'Spurensuche', see also project documentation



group, made the author of this paper aware of interesting changes in the attitude with which students responded to their observations in the former ghetto camp. In the following the response at three different visits will be mentioned: The first visit, referred to here, took place in 1992, the second was organized in 1994, and the third one as already mentioned in 2002. All visits took place in late autumn or winter time, the first in February, the second in October, and the third in January. In the first and third cases we had snow and ice, more in Terezín, to which in all the cases mentioned, we went in a day trip, than in Prague where the groups were staying. In all cases we travelled from Prague to Bohušovice, the railway station, from which the first inmates had to march through that village and to do forced labour in building the camp facilities, and later a railway track connecting Bohušovice with Terezín. Other transports from Czechia, the Reich and other occupied countries followed and made use of the installations build by the first inmates.

In 1992, three years after Czechoslovakia became a democratic state after decades of Communist rule, the train journey from Prague to Bohušovice needed more than two hours and not many trains ran. In 1994 the journey lasted less than two hours, passengers had to change once, and a few more trains ran. In 2002 trains went through to Bohušovice again and the journey was only one hour.

In Terezín/Theresienstadt, the old Austrian fortress and after establishment of multi-ethnic Czechoslovakia in 1920 a sleeping city, the Reich protector Reinhard Heydrich, founded „a city for the Jews“ of Czechia, later used for various groups of the persecuted Jewish people from most parts of Europe.

In 1992 the student teachers from Essen University walked for half an hour quietly through the village of Bohušovice to Terezín. A quiet walk through this small city, where nothing had be changed after the camp was handed over to the International Committee of the Red cross in 1945, led to the Ghetto Museum. At that time a rather simple exhibition, still arranged under the Communist regime, did carefully do justice to the very special feature of that ghetto camp. The suffering of the Jewish inmates was more correctly presented than in the former period. The walk back to Bohušovice was done in a similarly meditative atmosphere. After having visited the crematory, the group walked through the autumnal town. The students read the inscriptions at the entrance doors of the former barracks, converted by the SS and the Jewish camp police to prisoners‘ homes.

Visitors at this time could easily imagine what had happened to the inmates there, men and women, girls and boys separated from each other, as already mentioned. In the Museum, during the camp time the girls home, artefacts and photographs, taken immediately after the liberation, helped to understand what the few surviving may have thought and felt. The walk to the Small Fortress with its cells and the execution place deepened the meditative silence similarly as the short time standing at the banks of river Oři. There some of the last prisoners were ordered by the SS to shed the carton boxes with the ashes of cremated prisoners into the waters. Sick inmates who died but also executed ones were cremated by specially appointed fellow prisoners. These had

the eshed in the mentioned boxes carefully kept for years. Now the river became the place of remembrance of those victims. A last service inmates were forced to do. Silence, meditation, thinking with those who were killed, have been the main reactions of the group at this visit.

In 1994, although the group was different, externally much of its visit to the former concentration camp has been similar to the visit a few years before. But there must have been a hidden tension within the group. Some participants kept in their memories, that a tension between the place and its sad history on the one hand and the now business as usual atmosphere of that small city, must have been the reason for these feelings.<sup>15</sup> A programme similar to that told of the first group's visit was absolved. But then a dispute arose, just after the group had left the Small Fortress. One participant, differently from other participants no student teacher, nor a member of the project group, but fiancée of another active group member, expressed his opinion: when nowadays someone would come up and give orders similar to those of the Nazi period, volunteers would be prepared to obey. They would commit the same crimes against humanity again.

This statement received immediately a strict opposition by one group member who for years has been deeply involved in most of the project activities. He responded strongly to the critic: This will never happen again! Times have changed. And there is a sufficient number of people who are prepared to resist. The dispute continued some time. The opponent quietly insisted that it is human to be tempted to behave criminally. But his opposite, full of temperament, stated such opinion had to be called nothing else than resignation. No compromise between the two was found. Over a meal in a pub the climate could only be called frozen. This time the sphere after the visit had to be characterized as follows: (consternation,) silence, dispute, hardly a settlement of that dispute, even not by an agreement on disagreement.

In 2002 the visit was part of a working scheme elaborated by project group members. An evaluation after the visit to Theresienstadt/Terezín was intended to pave the way for formulating questions and suggestions to be presented to guest lecturers on a special day of Shoah education in the university. Some special conditions of this third visit should be taken into account. This excursion lasted, including travel time, altogether only three days. In addition we used the time on the train for reports and discussions of aspects of our subject. Thus everybody was somewhat tired. The day, we took a train to Bohušovice, we saw in the morning a Professor and director of the Centre for the Research of Social Multiculturalism of the Department of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. At about 13.00 hrs that day, on our walk from the railway station to Terezín, we met on the snowy and icy road a few people with their dogs on a leisure walk. On our arrival at the crematory we read the disappointing news that the building was closed that day and time.

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<sup>15</sup> This and the following was particularly confirmed by the participants Dagmar and Gerhard Drows. I am grateful to both of them for helping with their memories.

Continuing to the town of the former ghetto camp we met young people returning from ice hockey, a national sport in Czechia. These players made jokes like other young people and didn't care of the fact that they passed a cemetery of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. In dawn, we walked through that city and realized soon firstly that the Museum, since the last visit of project group members, has been furtherly developed. Many extended texts and a lot of photo-transparencies had been added to the former exhibition, some in the style of the Washington and Los Angeles Holocaust Memorial Museums. After having spent our visit there we went to see another novelty, an additional site of the museum, which had been recently opened. There a number of rooms of the ghetto camp had been re-constructed. We had to leave on closing time. On our way to the railway station we called at a pub, established close to the former entrance of the ghetto. After some snack and drink we went to the railway station.

On the train we started the planned evaluation. This began with some clear opposition of most members of the group against the style, citizens of Terezín seemed to respond to the place where they live. We had seen shop windows with propaganda for car repair and others with advertisements for milk and food. An obvious contrast to the topic centred design of the two part museum. This image of the small city of Terezín, according to some group members, is not an appropriate way to remember the past. Those young people coming back from the ice hockey ground, how shall they understand a message as left behind by the victims of the Shoah in Theresienstadt. The more eye-witnesses and survivors will have died in the course of time, the more appropriate ways of remembrance are necessary. It was said that voices of victims of the Shoah, of those who have been killed as well as those who survived, should be more clearly made visible and audible. These voices must determine activities of remembering the Shoah for the future.<sup>16</sup>

Only a few weeks later in a university seminar, project group members presented this suggestion to a survivor and one eyewitness. The surviving Rabbi said among others the sentence: One thing is clear, the victims have suffered from loss, in any case. This expression became controversial. Why? It may be worthwhile to think about this question. Has anybody, not belonging to the victims, got the right, to make the suffering of those inmates nicer as it has been in reality? Is it allowed, even for God's sake, to reclaim that there were hope and justification other than stated by the victims?

## **5. Possibilities of Shoah education with a generation of the internet and short messages**

For Shoah Education in the third millennium we should recognize, that children and young people have their own ways of communication. Short messages service – SMS

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and other electronic means are for some of them part of their every day life. They got to know the internet as a source which seems to provide information at any time, on whatever topic and answers to many questions. Some of them don't hesitate, to tell adults, in whom they trust, their visits to forbidden internet pages, even criminal and cruel ones, and that often in detail.

But they distinguish clearly between fiction in those programmes and reality in the stories of survivors and eyewitnesses. They appreciate internet information on the Shoah but prefer the encounter with eyewitnesses. Young people who told about their meeting those witnesses became for their peers, who couldn't take part in the meeting, a trustworthy source.

The nowadays popular debate on war against terrorism is perhaps often served with too inflexible responses. Children and young people identify behind those inflexible responses often second thoughts.

It is impossible to teach on the Shoah without regard to the Holocaust deniers. A most instructive example is that of David Irving. Shoah Education is an urgent task. The popularity of Anti-Semitism in certain Arab mass media is obviously an indicator.

Shoah Education at the same time meets the favour of children and young people for ideal persons. The young woman suffering from a complete hair cut because her friend was Jewish, will be tremendously respected by learners. These will also be able to discover similar examples in old calendars, books, journals etc.

The main aim of Shoah Education should be to learn critical openness. Part of this is to accept nothing without questioning it. Shoah Education includes exercises of subversive attitude and behaviour. Meeting eyewitnesses like **Bea Green** is particularly effective.

Education for subversive assistance for fellow human beings must start as early as possible.