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# To the role of practical works for studying the topic “The Holocaust” at the Russian educational organizations and in the system of professional development of teachers

## Abstract

The relevance of the studied problem is caused by need to organize a system-activity approach for studying the subject “the Holocaust”. The purpose of the paper is to analyze the role of practical training at the lessons of history and social science at the Russian educational organizations and in the system of professional development of teachers. The leading research approach of the problem is the principle of active tolerance. The author considers the system of practical tasks, gives an example of practical work and concludes about high efficiency of practical training for studying the Holocaust topic. The materials of the paper can be useful to teachers of social and humanitarian cycle and teachers, methodologists of the system of professional development of teachers.

## Keywords

Holocaust, active tolerance, practical tasks, practical work "Who is guilty?"

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## Introduction

The topic «the Holocaust» acts as a component of history of the The World War II. Studying the subject gives the chance to comprehend this national catastrophe as the universal tragedy.

Scientists and methodologists have no uniform point of view on how to include this difficult material in educational process. Studying of catastrophe of the European Jewry can be carried out in the Russian educational organizations within the following subjects: General History (topics "Increase of aggression and fight for peace. German Nazism", "Growth of international tension", "The World War II"), Russian History (topic "Great Patriotic War"), Social Science (topics "Good and Evil", "Regulation of People's Behavior in Society", "Political regimes", "Rights and Freedoms of a Person and a Citizen", etc.), Law (topics "Human rights violations", "Crime", etc.).

We believe the most optimum option is to study the topic “the Holocaust” within the course of General History.

When studying the topic, students meet difficult theoretical questions and concepts. The majority of modern domestic textbooks on history light event-actual part of the historical process. The author analyzed 15 textbooks of the Russian publishing houses printed in 2009-2015. Only five of them have various tasks for independent work allowing to consolidate the knowledge gained at the lesson. We can state a problem connected with organization of a system-activity approach at the lessons of history and social science, when studying the topic “the Holocaust” - modern Russian textbooks of history contain rather small amount of tasks for students' independent work (*Pershina, 2016*).

## Literature review

The topic «the holocaust» is difficult in the substantial plan. The nazism considered the the jews the defective nation and the main enemy of the aryans. Anti-semitism is an important part of the nazi ideology. The jewish people became the "whipping boy" guilty of all defeats, sufferings and humiliations of the german people. Anti-semitism (the term appeared in the middle of the xix century) was not something new to germany and other european countries. Strong anti-semitism flash was in germany in the 1880s-1890s. The strictest anti-semite demand at this time was exile of the the jews from the country.

Nazi anti-semitism is a special phenomenon. The the jews were considered as defective race, which should not assimilate with the aryans. The nuremberg laws forbade marriages between the the jews and the germans. There was the task to destruct the the jews in all the states occupied by germany during the the world war ii. This destruction of the jewish people became a historical event named "the holocaust", or catastrophe (Mushinsky, 2007).

Dissertation researches of some domestic scientists (for example, Yu.V. Galaktionov, V.A. Gorelkin, O. Yu. Plenkov) played the important role in studying the history of the Holocaust. Yu.V. Galaktionov in the work "The German fascism in a mirror of historiography of the 20s-40s years" and A.A. Galkina in the work "The German fascism" show the attitude to a problem from the point of view of the Marxist theory of fascism, developed by the group of authors led by Yu.V. Galaktionov. In these books, the treatment of fascism is formulated as the most reactionary aggressive political trend of the XX century.

Modern historical literature contains various data on the lost The Jews; 6 million people is the accepted number. Perhaps, these data are not final: as authors disagree with it. For example, R. Gilberg in the work "Destruction of the the Jews in Europe" said 5,1 million lost Jews; L. Polyakov in "The short encyclopedia of hatred" defines 5-7 million; G. Reitlinger speaks about 4,2 million victims (*Andreyeva, 2006*).

Some historians do not allocate the Catastrophe from other tragedies of a humankind, do not see the unprecedented phenomenon in it. They claim that there were many cases of other massacre in the history, for example, destruction of the Indians in the North America or slaughter of the Armenians by Turks during the World War I, the Jewish riots. Those, who object to uniqueness of the Catastrophe, specify that during the World War II the Germans and their helpers killed millions of peoples of other nationalities (for example, the Soviet prisoners, the Roma and Polish intellectuals). On the other hand, the genocide took place both before the World War II, and after it.

The uniqueness of any phenomenon in the history can be proved comparing the phenomenon with the similar ones, occurring in other times. The comparative analysis of the Catastrophe allows to allocate some signs, which do not have analogs in mass beatings of other eras. The historian Yakov Talmon pointed to some elements, which allow to allocate the Catastrophe from some other historical examples of massacre.

- 1) The Jews did not clash with the Germans. The Germans were guided by the Nazi theory about races, or the extreme anti-Semitism induced them.

2) The national socialist ideology and the political regime professing this ideology concerned the Jews not as the people or religious group, but as the race. The German prosecution and destruction of the Jews were not the reaction to the Jewish threat, they resulted from unreasonable charges that the Jews threaten all the humankind and, first of all, the Aryan race.

3) All the Jews without exception were pursued. Any descendant of the Jews to the third generation was liable to destruction. During the war, the Nazis caused a cruel loss not only to the Jews, however all these people were obvious or potential opponents of the Nazis. The Jews were sentenced to destruction entirely, without distinction of their belief, only because they were the Jews.

4) The government planned and organized the large-scale destruction. The State institutions took part in its implementation. The Nazis remained faithful to the idea of "final decision", even when its realization conflicted to military and economic interests of the Third Reich (*Guttman, Galil, 2011*).

Professor R. Vago (the International School of Institute Yad Vashem, Jerusalem) specifies that the concept "Holocaust" can be applied only to history of the Jewish people. Nothing could rescue a Jew, even epiphany. The outer side (legislation), but not a person, defined whom to consider a Jew. Though scientists should not be engaged in comparative studying of sufferings of the different people, it is possible to claim that the Holocaust (Catastrophe) was the unique phenomenon in the history of mankind (*Pershina, 2012*).

### **Materials and Methods**

Practical training for studying the topic "the Holocaust" at lessons of History and Social Science can make a certain contribution to the solution of the problem declared by the author. The academician of the Russian Academy of Education A.G. Asmolov and professor of Moscow State University G. U. Soldatova suggested teachers to rely on the principle of active tolerance for carrying out practical lessons on difficult world outlook subjects. This principle defines the major task - to develop quality of the personality, which can be designated as active tolerance. It assumes positive orientation of a person, creativity and development of ability to control the acts in human relations according to a formula: understanding and acceptance, cooperation and spirit of partnership.

The scientists developed the structure of studies. Each practical work consists of three parts: warm-up, main exercise and reflection. Warm-up includes the tasks promoting activation of participants, creation of benevolent atmosphere, unity increase and preparation to practical work. It can provide the following forms of carrying out: lectures, games, brainstorm, group discussions, exercises and tasks helping to understand and acquire the main idea. At the end of each practical training, it is necessary to give participants time to share feelings, opinions, impressions, and their mood.

When carrying out practical trainings various methods are used: social and perceptual, situational, improvisational; modeling and role-playing games; social-dramatic, behavioral, cognitive and expressional methods; exercises assuming feedback, exchange of feelings; technology of accession, fixing "here and now" state (*Asmolov, Soldatova, Makarchuk, 2009*).

### **Results**

To motivate pupils and involve them in vigorous educational activity at lessons of History and Social Science, a teacher can use system of practical training. Special questions and tasks of practical character would help to draw pupils' attention to a variety of commemoration ways to events and persons involved in the Holocaust history. For example, "Find out, in what countries, when and how the national memory day of the Holocaust victims was founded. Is there a similar day of memory in Russia?"

The second group of tasks is aimed at the development of figurative thinking and ability to interpret culture monuments. For example, "Pick up illustrations (find images in the Internet) of monuments to the Holocaust victims in Russia and other countries. What do they symbolize?"

The following group of tasks forms the relation to the artifacts created in concrete historical time and with specific goals. For example, "Who or what is represented on the monuments established on places of mass executions of the Jews in the cities and villages occupied in days of the Great Patriotic War?"

The fourth type of tasks expands pupils' ideas about commemoration and ways of historical memory management (about monuments, memorial boards, memorials and holidays, anniversary actions, books, scientific conferences, museums of memory, social projects, etc.). For example, prepare the presentation about the activity of "the Return Advantage" project participants and its results in your region.

The following type of tasks suggests to find approaches to glorification of a person in the history or its "demonizing", to understanding a role of children, teachers, doctors, priests, musicians, etc. For example, there were films devoted to the Holocaust in Russia and. Use concrete examples to show how this subject is presented in the second half of XX - the beginning of the XXI centuries (*Strelova, 2015*)

Each person makes a choice and bears responsibility for his acts in a concrete historical time point within the society. In all countries, the Righteous persons, who rescued hundreds of the Jews, acted on the territory occupied by the Nazis despite promotion of the Third Reich. What were the motives of these people? (*Pershina, 2014 (II)*)

The sixth type of tasks concerns the concepts "memory place", "cultural memory", "policy of memory", "memory war", the reasons of creation, loss or replacement of memory objects, denial, acts of vandalism. For example, the memorial board with the text about the Holocaust victims was dismantled in November 2011 in Rostov-on-Don. The new memorial board "Peace Soviet citizens" appeared instead. In your opinion, what were the possible consequences of memory objects replacement? (*Strelova, 2015*).

In 1961, the poet E. Yevtushenko visited Babiy Yar, where the Nazi soldiers shot tens of thousands of the Jews in September 1941. E. Yevtushenko wrote the poem, which first lines («Над Бабым Яром памятников нет. Крутой обрыв, как грубое надгробье») reflected indignation of the author to "historical injustice, lack of a

monument in a place, where so many innocent people were lost". Soon the composer D. Shostakovich read this poem and in put E. Yevtushenko's verses in a basis of musical parts in his new symphonic work.

Shortly before a symphony premiere, N. S. Khrushchev flayed to joint work of E. Yevtushenko and D. Shostakovich: "Anti-Semitism is the disgusting phenomenon ... But is it the time to talk about it?". Authors were accused of lack of patriotism and unilateral coverage of the topic, since the text didn't mention non-Jewish victims. The criticism did not stop D. Shostakovich: he continued preparation of a premiere of his masterpiece. Having supported the composer, E. Yevtushenko wrote the poem "Fears" especially for this symphony.

The premiere of the symphony No. 13 was on December 18, 1962. It is known under the informal name "Babi Yar" (*Pershina, 2014 (II)*). How do you think why it was important to hold historical memory for these people? In our opinion, the specified type of practical tasks can be applied in professional development of teachers, since it assumes debatable discussions, ambiguity of opinions and estimates.

The last type of tasks lifts a problem of discrepancy of collective and individual memory of people, acquaints with a phenomenon "others memory", appeals to personal self-determination of pupils. For example, the website of the Memorial Yad Vashem "Unrelated stories" is devoted to Holocaust history on the territory of the USSR. This Internet project provides information on death of the Jews in places, little-known for general public of the West Countries, Israel and Russia. How do you think, why this subject remains "a white spot" in textbooks of history, literature and social science? (*Strelova, 2015*)

Let us give a concrete example of practical work "Who is guilty?" on the topic "Increase of aggression and fight for peace. German Nazism".

Lesson tasks: understanding mechanisms for formation stereotypes, prejudices, phenomenon "whipping boy"; formation of ability to dismiss undeserved charges.

Before carrying out training, a teacher is recommended to carry out a historical retrospective about the position of the Jews in the Nazi Germany in the 30s-40s of the XX century (to actualize a phenomenon "whipping boy").

Warm-up exercise "Avalanche". Approximate time: 5 min. A teacher shows one hardly noticeable movement, for example, slightly stamps a foot. The participant sitting to the left repeats this movement strengthened it a little. The next participant still strengthens this movement, etc. As a result, the last participant repeatedly strengthened the movement. In our opinion, this exercise characterizes phenomenon of "crowd", repetition of some action without understanding, judgments of its essence and consequences.

The main exercise "Who is guilty?" (*Asmolov, Soldatova, Makarchuk, 2009*).

Tasks: understanding of experiences of the person, who is the object of stereotypes and prejudices; psychological mechanism of phenomenon "whipping boy"; acquisition of skills to assist people.

Approximate time: 25 min. Material: stickers. At the beginning of the exercise, teacher says, «Sometime each person felt himself unfairly offended or accused of what he hadn't made. In this situation people behave differently". A teacher suggests stepping in the center of a circle and sitting down on a chair to that participant, who is not afraid to be offended and rejected, who is sure that he would cope with any undeserved charge in the address.

After the volunteer was called, other participants start accusing the one sitting in the center. For Example: "You are guilty that today is the bad weather". Everyone states charges aloud, they are written down on stickers and pasted on clothes of the participant sitting in the center. The participant in the center has to be silent. Gluing of "labels" happens until charges do not run low.

Then a teacher asks the participant in the center what he feels and what he would like to tell those who accused him. Other participants are offered to share the feelings and thoughts. As a rule, there is a desire to dismiss undeserved charges. A teacher suggests each participant to unstick a leaflet with any charge and to justify "the offended". For example: "You are not guilty that today is the bad weather, weather does not depend on a person".

Questions to discuss:

- ✓ Have the situations when you unfairly accused someone happened in your life? Have you ever been unfairly accused? What happened more often?
- ✓ Have your relation to these situations changed after the exercise?
- ✓ How is it better to behave in similar situations?
- ✓ What feelings, in your opinion, did the Jews pursue on a national sign in the Nazi Germany, when official promotion of the Third Reich accused them of all troubles of the country?
- ✓ Would you begin to support the anti-Jewish campaign? Prove the choice.

Exit-exercise "The emperor's birthday ".

Tasks: removal of negative emotions, unity of group. Necessary time: 10 min. Participants are given the instruction: "Imagine that you are guests in the palace of the emperor, you are invited to the feast devoted to his birthday". The role of the emperor is played by the participant who was "accused" in the exercise "Who is guilty?". All guests deliver laudatory speeches and give the imagined gifts.

Reflection after the exercise. Questions to discuss:

- How do you think, are there any people who are unfairly accused at your school, city, region? Why does it occur?
- Is it possible to change something here?
- Have you ever been "a whipping boy"? What feelings did you have?
- How is it possible to support the person who was accused unfairly?
- Why prosecution of people on a national sign is dangerous?

In our opinion, a teacher can also use the specified practical work for professional development of teachers (*Pershina, 2014 (I)*). We repeatedly carried out this training at advanced training courses for teachers of History, Social Science, teachers of the subject "Bases of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics". During discussion of the training results, many teachers spoke about the need to form tolerance among teenagers.

### Discussions

Let us consider the study degree of methodical aspect for teaching the subject "the Holocaust" at the Russian educational organizations and in the system of professional development of teachers. I.A. Altman and D. I. Poltorak developed features of pupils' research work with documents devoted to the Holocaust. The most productive form to use documents in educational process is group work. A teacher is the head of the general discussion in a class. He induces pupils to estimated activity, raising the questions specifying their relation to events and facts of the Holocaust history. Pupils can attract additional materials - responses to memorials from history of the World War II (for example, documentary photos, articles from magazines and newspapers, Internet materials). A teacher gives additional tasks for stands preparation devoted to the memorials from the Holocaust history - to anniversaries of "Crystal night", the Wannsee conference, the Nuremberg process, execution in Babiy Yar; release of concentration camps prisoners, Righteous persons, memory of the Jewish victims of Nazism. Scientists allocated the motivational component: documents possessing force of emotional impact on children (for example, diaries of their age-mates, photos) can become a basis for the search work. A teacher can find methods of children's inclusion in activities assistance to the lonely people, who endured the Holocaust (*Altman, Poltorak, 2010*).

V. M. Kuznetsov, M. Pollack-Rosenberg, N. Segal presented the case technology in studying the Holocaust history (*Kuznetsov, Pollack-Rosenberg, Segal, 2013*). Pedagogical approaches to studying the course "History of the Holocaust and the Present" were systematized by E.E. Vyazemsky and T.V. Bolotina (*Vyazemsky, Bolotina, 2015*).

V. M. Kuznetsov and others described interactive methodological methods for the topic. In our opinion, the following methodical receptions and pedagogical technicians would be useful for teachers:



– work with personal cards and personal information from archives of various organizations (for example, the Memorial database or archive of the International red cross in Bud Arolsen);

– excursion. Trained are offered to study independently the chosen section of exposition and prepare the short review, based on one-two most significant exhibits;

– "The illustrated time tape" suggests pupils to correlate personal events in life of witnesses of the Catastrophe with the events in the history of the country or the world history;

– "Revival of the card". The arrangement of photos and other certificates of the Holocaust on the map of Europe identifies them as citizens of these or those states, gives the chance to present the scale of the Nazis crimes;

– work with "bureaucratic documents" is based on the analysis of hotel accounts, instructions, etc. It allows to estimate "partnership" in the Nazi crimes of various segments of the German population.

– "Excursion on the street" or "The city testifies" assumes excursion to familiar city places to visit memorable places, fix attention on separate city details, which serve for the story about the historical events (*Kuznetsov, Kuzmenko, Tyrtysnaya, 2015*).

O. Yu. Strelova offered scientific-methodical approaches to the substantial line "History and Memory" in the topic "Holocaust History". In the context of the personal-focused education "History and Memory" line is faces the following tasks:

1) updating of the variable estimated relation of contemporaries and descendants to historical events and persons; understanding the reasons of this variety;

2) assistance to development of interest in studying "memory places", stories of their creation, sometimes direct destruction;

3) participation in protection historical and cultural monuments;

4) updating sources base, subjects of educational projects and space of historical and social practice of pupils and teachers limited by standards and traditions;

5) studying mechanisms of formation of collective historical memory and ways of its management by means of monumental promotion and commemoration (policy of memory).

According to the scientist, the substantial line "History and Memory" enriches training of teachers and pupils by humanistic-value (axiological) component, important for life in the multicultural world. Because it promotes development of

critical thinking, empathy, emotional valuable to relation to the past and the present, conscious civic stand, counteraction to falsifications and manipulation of historical memory, variety of cultural-communicative practices and research activity (Strelova, 2015).

E.E. Vyazemsky focused attention on 4 pedagogical approaches, which can be also applied in the system of professional development of teachers: development of the course "the Holocaust History" in the context of the Great Patriotic War history; specification of concrete historical plots of the course "The Holocaust History as History of the Tragedy of the European Jewry"; development of the course "The Holocaust History" in aspect "Denial of the Holocaust"; change of the basic course name "The Holocaust History" because updating processes in the modern world (the new name "The History of the Holocaust and the Present") (Vyazemsky, 2011). Nevertheless, the role of practical training when studying the Holocaust in the Russian system of professional development of teachers is presented fragmentary (Pershina, 2015).

### Conclusion

In our opinion, use of practical training for studying the Holocaust history at the lessons of History and Social Science is rather effective in the system of professional development of teachers, since there is a realization of a system-activity approach and the principle of active tolerance.

### Recommendations

The materials of the paper can be useful to teachers of social and humanitarian cycle and teachers and methodologists of the system of professional development of teachers.

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