

Subject: Approaches to representation of the Holocaust

Objectives:

After the lesson participants should:

- be able to explain “historiography”
- be able to name main historiographical theories concerned with representing and understanding the Holocaust
- be able to explain main arguments in favour of a given theory explaining how to talk about the Shoah

Handouts:

No. 1 – tasks for group 1

No. 2 – tasks for group 2

No. 3 – tasks for group 3

Timing:

45 min.

Required materials:

A flipchart

3 markers

Lesson plan:

1. T introduces the subject and objective of the lesson with reference to previous lesson, when Ss analysed the movie “Five Steps to Tyranny” and reflected on how particular problems in the documentary relate to the Shoah.

Timing – 5 min.

2. T elicits from Ss their associations with the term historiography and writes the results on the board. Ss attempt to formulate the definition of historiography. To round up, T presents two suggestions of definition and tries to explain them to Ss.

Definition by Jan Pomorski – Historiography is a contemporary (in a given time and place) method of social cognition (and familiarisation) of the world, different from other methods as its foundation – the empirical base – are surviving source materials, containing accumulated social experience of past generations. Historiography is not so much a provider of knowledge about the past [...] as it is a self-reflection of a generation, a record of its cultural self-knowledge [...]. (J. Pomorski, *Historiografia jako autorefleksja kultury poznającej*, [in:] *Świat historii*, ed. by W. Wrzosek, Poznań 1998, p. 377)

Hayden White claims that “historiography is an ideology – a history told from a certain standpoint”. (J. Muchowski, *Historyka Shoah*, Warszawa 2006, p. 38)

Timing – 10 min.

3. T presents three theories concerning approach to representing the Holocaust. First theory argues that the Holocaust should be understood as a unique event, second states that the Shoah should be approached as any other historical event, third suggests that the Holocaust should be treated as a universal event. T divides Ss into three groups, and supplies handouts for each group.

Group 1 receives arguments in favour of treating the Holocaust as a unique event. Group 2 works

with materials supporting the view on the Holocaust as any other historical event, group 3 – as a universal event. The task for each group is to get acquainted with their theory in order to present the argumentation to other groups. Each group is asked to write down main arguments.

Timing – 10 min

4. Each group presents 4 main, in their opinion, arguments from their materials. After presentation T asks Ss if they are in favour of any of the theories and could justify their choice.

Timing – 15 min

5. Lesson overview and conclusion.

Timing – 5 min