

Subject: Righteous among the Nations

Objectives:

After the lesson participants should be able to:

- explain the term Righteous among the Nations
- characterise the term Oral History
- synthetically explain the situation “the hiding- the hidden- the neighbourhood” during World War II and later

Handouts:

No. 1 – fragments of accounts

No. 2 – account of the Dąbscy family, the Drutin family

Lesson plan:

1. T introduces the idea of Oral History and its connection with the issue of Righteous among the Nations.

Timing – 10 min.

2. Ss assisted by T specify the definition of Righteous among the Nations.

Timing – 5 min.

3. Ss in groups get fragments of accounts of the Righteous to read and analyse. One package consists of full accounts of a Rescuer, a Rescued and the son of the Rescuer (three perspectives) (can be handed round before the class, due to their length).

The second package consists of accounts of different people.

Timing – 20 min.

4. Analysing the accounts together.

Timing – 45 min.

Supporting questions

a) How are war time incidents reported by Adela, Bencjon and Jan? Why are they reported in such a way (different perspectives (what?) – after years, indirect account (Jan), often from the perspective of a child.)? What are the differences between the accounts of Adela and Bencjon?

b) Why did they decide to rescue Jews? (the Grzesiuk family)

Did they know each other before the war? What did they have in common? (based also on other accounts) What motivated them?

c) What did the hiding places look like? What were other ways of hiding Jews? (so called “in view”, as relatives)

What form of help was provided by rescuers?

e) What was the social background of rescuers? (cross-section)

f) What dangers did the rescuers and the rescuees face? Threats – who posed a threat? How can we approach what rescuers say? Punishment for helping Jews?

g) What were the relations between the rescuers and the rescuees after the war?

h) What do these accounts reveal about the attitude and conduct of Poles towards Jews?

- mythologisation of Jews (matzo made of blood, myth about money for hiding – myth of a rich Jew)

- different representations of Jews (based on Adela and her husband's accounts)

- giving away Jews for money

objectivisation of knowledge on anti-Semitism of Poles (Drutin), rescuers often underline negative approach of Polish people (often critical)

Why was the issue of hiding Jews a taboo for a long time?

5. Lesson overview and conclusion; additional questions.

Timing – 10 min.

Bibliography

1. "Światła w ciemności - Sprawiedliwi wśród Narodów Świata. Relacje" ed. by Anna Dąbrowska, Lublin 2008.