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**TEACHING ROMA HISTORY AND ROMA HOLOCAUST**

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The paper presents ideas about teaching Romani history and Romani Holocaust – Porraimos. For this purpose different approaches and techniques for introducing the history of Roma is used, such as: the teacher's story, the textbook text, class discussion, historical sources, literary texts. Teaching Holocaust with the use of pictures, portraits, illustrations, documentary films and TV programs is recommended. The conclusions of the paper stress the importance of teaching Roma Holocaust.

**Key words:** Roma history, Roma Holocaust, teaching methods.

**Introduction**

In the early 1990-s the Council of Europe starts a project regarding the Roma history education at primary and secondary schools in Europe. In a seminar held in Spisska Nova Ves in Slovakia in 1994, Roma experts and specialists discussed this issue. During the seminar Donald Kenrick says (1995:3)

A survey in England showed that out of ten standard works for teachers of history and geography all ten mentioned the Afro-Caribbeans (West Indians), six Jews and none Gypsies. Fiction too often gives a false picture of Gypsies.

Another expert Herbert Heuss (1995:4) suggests that

there should be textbooks with Gypsies in them but also books where Gypsies can express their viewpoint.

Milena Hübschmannova (1995:6) views the oral history approach among Roma as an important source for teaching Roma history.

On the other side, there are virtually no publications on teaching Roma Holocaust. In general the literature of teaching Holocaust appeared during last decade. Barry van Driel

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Андраш Хайду,

(2003) points at the importance of the connection between Holocaust education and intercultural education. Giving examples from Lithuania, Latvia and the USA, the author writes (B. van Driel, 2003:135)

The foregoing discussion highlights the importance of making Holocaust education inclusive. Giving this topic the attention it deserves implies going beyond simple facts and abstract discussions. In order to engage students in meaningful discussions about the issues of persecution, marginalization, prejudice, bullying, exclusion, isolation, racism, violence, etc., they need to feel safe. The creation of a safe learning space for all the students in a classroom is a tall order for many educators, but necessary pre-condition to deal with the topic inclusively

G. Short (2005) in a paper about Holocaust education presents a study with students from England. In a project with different schools the issues of the Jewish Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda is discussed, but the Roma Holocaust and genocide are not even mentioned.

In most publications (The Journal of Holocaust Education, OSCE publication on Education on the Holocaust and Anti-semitism, 2006; D. Dwork, 2007; H. Huttenbach, 2004) the information is limited to the Jewish Holocaust. Only in OSCE publication there are two pages information about Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust.

Why is teaching Roma history an important issue? All minorities in Europe are presented in history textbooks and it seems that only Roma, although perhaps the largest minority, still do not get enough attention in contemporary textbooks of history. In many countries there is nothing written about Roma Holocaust. Why is it like that? Still the prejudices and negative stereotypes towards Roma in most European countries are very prevalent.

The paper aims to show some basic methodological ideas how Roma history and Roma Holocaust could be taught.

## **Teaching Roma history**

### ***The importance of the teacher's story in teaching history***

One of the basic methods of teaching history is the story. It gives the teacher the opportunity to make his students aware of the historical events and create rich and truthful images of them by means of description. In the process of presenting the historical facts, the teachers focus on the cause –consequence relationships between facts and events, make conclusions and characterizations, thus giving the students a model of historical thinking and facilitating the

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acquisition of historical terms and notions.

The teacher's story makes it possible to present dynamically and emotionally the heroism of the masses, as well as the individuals, their readiness to sacrifice their lives in the name of freedom, fatherland, justice and progress; to denounce treachery, meanness, etc., thus influencing the moral development of the student's personality.

When the story acquires the features of living speech which is clear and precise, its educational impact becomes even stronger. The grammatically correct and lexically rich speech of the teachers facilitate the further development of the students' speaking skills in the rest of the disciplines at primary school.

The possibilities of the story, however, are not limitless. There are cases where using a story only would not yield the necessary results. Much clearer and precise notions, for instance, can be created by means of pictures and concrete historical places. It is not possible for the teacher to check the students' memory and thinking by means of the story. What is more, the story does not give many opportunities for engaging the students in individual work during the class. That is why it is used in combination with other teaching methods.

***Nature and specific features of the story***

The teacher's story depends on the characteristics features of the material, as well as on the aims of the teaching of history at primary schools. In its essence it is a narrative-explanatory story.

The creation of real images of historical events is acquired by means of narration. Thus, the teacher presents with more or fewer details the historical facts, events and phenomena in their chronological sequences. In order for the students to understand their nature and importance, however, the teacher has to uncover the cause-effect relationship among them, to analyse them and make the necessary conclusions. This is done by means of explanation. On the basis of the explanation the students can form beliefs which, on their part, can become a source of social and moral judgements and behaviour. So, the narration and the explanation are the two basic elements in the process of teaching history and they have to be closely related in the teacher's story. That is the reason why we speak about a narrative-explanatory teacher's story in teaching of history. Many history lessons are taught by means of narration only.

***The Teachers's story and the textbook text***

The Teachers's story and the textbook text are the two main sources of historical knowledge

the students have. That is why there should be no contradictions between them. They have to be complimentary in order to facilitate students' acquisition of knowledge of history. Their similar aims make the two similar as well to a certain extent.

At the same time, however, the teacher's story and the textbook text should be different. The teacher has at his disposal many more opportunities to transmit the content more emotionally, at the same time taking into account the specific characteristics of his students. In many cases the teacher's story should be better than the textbook text.

The textbook may contain non-clarified words and terms which should be clarified by the teacher. In some cases, when the students are bright enough, the teacher may introduce new facts and details within the topic which are not included in the textbook. The textbook does not always point at the character and the importance of a given event, neither are ~~respective conclusions made. The historical events are not always related to the present.~~ This deficiency should be compensated for by the teacher's story or a discussion. The teacher's story can be much more vivid and statistically rich than the textbook text.

If the teacher's story is good, it makes the progress of education much more attractive and interesting. The teacher, however, should work very hard on the preparation of the each story beforehand. This concerns the content, as well as the logical structure and linguistic expression.

#### *The discussion in the teaching of history*

The discussion is another widely used method of teaching history. It consists of skillful and purposeful posing of questions on the part of the teacher, by means of which the students are directed towards reproduction of previously acquired knowledge, analysis of facts and phenomena, evaluation and characterization, "discovery" of regularities.

The role of the discussion in the process of history education is considerably different from that in the teaching of other subjects which require a deductive -logical approach. In the teaching of history the discussion cannot be used as a basic method of introducing new historical facts. The actual historical development in terms of facts cannot be discovered or constructed by logical investigation on the basis of already acquired knowledge. This does not mean, however, that its function in the process of education is insignificant.

The employment of the discussion presupposes some elementary preparation on the part of the learners. That is why it is applied as a basic method during the classes aiming at revision of knowledge. During the classes when new material is introduced it is a supplementary device.

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~~systematic face-to-face individual knowledge evaluation. Before the new topic is introduced, a~~  
 discussion makes it possible to link the new material to the old. The discussion is the basic method in explanatory reading on historical texts. It helps the students to assimilate the first historical terms and notions. Excerpts from work with authentic materials for the discussion are widely used in other forms of education – visits to museums, observations, excursions, films, plays, etc.

The discussion has a very strong educational impact on the students.

1. As far as each discussion aims at repetition, analyses and systematisation on what has already been learnt, it facilitates knowledge acquisition.
2. It is one of the traditional methods for stimulating the students' mental activity.
3. It instigates the students' interest in history, makes them think about the reasons for and the importance of historical events.

The use of the discussion in the teaching of history is very important for the teachers.

- It gives the teachers the opportunity to follow closer the results of the process of education, the quality of the acquired knowledge, the difficulties his students have as well as problems. Thus, they can adjust their methods of teaching.
- It gives the teacher a better opportunity to study the individual characteristics of his students and approach them individually.

#### *Types of discussions*

Depending on the aim, the discussion can be: organizing (introductory), controlling (in order to analyse and summarize the material) and aiming at revising the acquired knowledge.

The *organizing discussion* is usually used at the beginning of the lesson in order to direct the attention of the students towards the new material to be introduced. The system of questions makes it possible for the teacher to retrieve already acquired knowledge, which is necessary for the logical transition to the new material. In other cases the teacher can systematize and summarize this knowledge. Thus, the organizing discussion creates the necessary problem solving situation, the students realize the necessity to acquire the new historical facts and events, their interest is provoked and take active part in the process of education.

The controlling discussion aims at checking the level of understanding of the new material, the students' knowledge and the results ensuring the fulfilment of the task.

The correct organization of the teaching and learning process in the teaching of history assumes uninterrupted control over the already acquired knowledge. That is why the

controlling discussion plays an important role in the teaching history. In the so-called combined lessons it is one of the main methods of checking the students' knowledge.

By means of the teacher sets himself the task to check the level of knowledge acquisition of the larger part of the students. It is often combined with individual examinations.

The controlling discussion makes the students aware of the necessity to learn and reproduce the teaching material. This is supported by various types of questions. In some of the cases the questions should require simple reproduction, in others – conclusions, etc. By means of these questions the teacher makes the students ground their statements or provoke controversial discussions.

By means of the discussion aiming at analyses and revision of the material, the students' thinking is directed towards individual evaluation of facts and events, comparison, etc. This kind of discussion is usually present in the course of the teacher's introduction of the material, after a certain part of it has been finished, and helps the students make a plan of the lesson and take notes on what has been said. Depending on the specific content of each lesson this type of discussion can be applied in different ways.

1. In the course of teaching, when the teacher is sure that the students have a certain degree of knowledge concerning the new topic, he or she can apply a discussion in order to illustrate and specify the presentation.
2. In the course of presentation of the new material, in order to uncover the reasons for certain historical events. In this case the teacher's questions make the students compare and evaluate already familiar facts and define the primary and secondary reasons for given historical event.
3. In certain cases the discussion can define the character of a given historical event. The teacher's questions in this case direct the students' attention towards grouping and evaluation of facts which uncover characteristic features of the historical event under discussion.
4. The importance of a given historical event is evaluated on the basis of its direct or more indirect impact on the historical development as a whole. In some cases the students get some idea about that during the teacher's presentation of the new material.
5. The historical notions are explained in the course of the education on the basis of concrete images. In order to reach a definition of the notion, the students have to compare, analyze and generalize the most important features of the historical facts and phenomena. In the process of developing the students' awareness of the

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meaning of the notions, the teacher uses the discussion most frequently.

6. Depending on the teaching materials used in the process of presentation, the discussion is applied in working with illustrative materials, fiction or documentary literature, the textbook, observations.
7. The discussion aiming at revision is used in order to fix the already acquired knowledge, to systematize and generalize the students' knowledge. One of the goals of this kind of discussion is to check the students' level of knowledge acquisition. That is why it contains the most important questions related to the teacher's presentation.

Revision is made after each lesson, as well as after a group of lessons, or the whole material at the end of the school year. In these cases the discussion is the basic method employed. The teacher's questions are towards interpretation of the material, establishment of links between facts and events, focusing on the most important points.

The conclusive discussion aims at a final revision of the new material and the already familiar one. The teacher's questions in this case make the students recall the most important facts and be prepared for the new material. This division, however, is not clear-cut. It is not actually possible to draw a strict line between the various types of discussions, as they often exist together (or at least elements of them).

#### ***The teacher's preparation for the discussion***

The important role of the discussion presents to the teacher a lot of requirements. To begin with, he or she has to be very well-versed in this flexible method. This is not very easy, especially for a teacher at the beginning of his or her career.

Even if the teacher is very good in conducting the discussion, he or she has to prepare very carefully beforehand. It is a totally wrong practice on the part of some teachers to prepare only their presentations, not paying enough attention to the discussion. They formulate their questions, but there is low motivation on the part of the students and, finally, poor results. In the course of their preparation for the lesson, the teachers have to decide at what particular points to introduce the discussion. It is especially important to consider the links between the separate questions and their sequencing. In this case the character of the discussion, as well as its content should be taken into consideration. If the questions are not linked properly and they are left more or less isolated from one another, this will make it difficult for the students to build up their conclusions.

The development of the discussion and the results from its application depend highly on the character, clarity, precision and formulation of the questions. Here are some of the most

important didactic requirements towards them:

- To be accessible. The students have to answer according to their knowledge and abilities, not by means of random guesses. They have not yet fully reached the level of abstract thinking at primary school age. That is why the questions should be structured in accordance with the age characteristics of the children
- To be related to basic features of the facts or phenomena under study. To make the students think. This is very important, especially having in mind the tendency, at that age, to focus on secondary, marginal features of events.
- To be precise and well-defined, i.e. their volume and content have to be strictly defined and limited.
- The formulation and content of the question have to require a complete and meaningful answer, the students have to supply enough facts in order to illustrate their answer.
- To make the students not only recall, but also analyze, compare, group and generalize the historical facts studied.
- To be logically similar, i.e. to set the students similar task.
- Not to overuse alternative questions. They usually require a yes or no answer. Such questions do not make the students think actively.
- Not to hint at the possible answer. Questions like that do not activate the students' thinking process.
- Not to be overcomplicated, they mislead the students.

#### *The use of historical sources in the process of teaching history*

History as a science is based upon material, written and oral evidence from the past. Thus the historian is able to reconstruct the past and the laws of its development. Students, however, are not yet aware of the ways and means of investigating the past, so history for them is, to a great extent, a fairytale about historical events and people. The use of historical sources in the process of education makes the students believe that what the teacher says is based on facts, that it has really existed, that it is true. Thus history step by step reveals its scientific character for them.

The students' notion of the past is partial, unclear and modern. The use of the original materials gives the students a real idea of the particular epoch and its atmosphere. The use of authentic materials makes the process of education less monotonous, focuses the students' attention on the new material and raises their motivation and interest in the events, especially

when they are especially fict emotionally.

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~~when they are related to their native place. In many cases the use of authentic materials,~~ especially fiction texts, gives a human touch to the lesson and motivates the students emotionally.

The teacher should include the text in his presentation in a way that it should not stand out logically or linguistically. It is not advisable for the teacher to retell the text, and then to read it. The text can be also read by a student. It can be read as a whole, or in parts, depending on the length and the particular aims of the teacher. If necessary, the teacher should supply certain explanations to some of the parts or notions.

After the text is read it is necessary for it to be analysed. This is actually the most important point in using historical documents in the teaching and learning process. The analysis of the text can be done in several ways: it can be analysed by the teacher; it can be analysed by students guided by the teacher; it can be analysed by students only in class or at home in order to fulfil a task assigned by the teacher. If it is the teacher who analyses the text, he or she should read it, analyse it, comment on it and draw conclusions. In some cases the teacher can ask a few questions to the students in order to see whether they have understood his presentation. This method is used when the document is difficult for the student to analyse it and the teacher wants to give them an example of how this should be done, in order to prepare them for individual work later on.

If the analysis is done by the students under the teacher's guidance, we can have the following steps: the teacher (or a student, if the document is available in the textbook) reads the text and then conducts a discussion. During the discussion the students are asked three main types of questions in order for them to reproduce the main points of the contents and remember them, as well as to reach some conclusions concerning the importance of the document. If the text has an illustrative character and if its content is clear enough, no analyses may be necessary. Certain conclusions can be drawn instead. The use of a historical source for individual work in class is seldom practiced in lower grades. This method presupposes that all the students have a copy of the document. The teacher should already have created in his students certain skills for individual work by applying the to above mentioned methods. The students are posed one or two questions for which they have no answer after reading the document themselves.

Generally speaking, the use of the authentic materials should be very carefully measured, i.e. they should not outset the rest of the methods teaching history.

### *Use of literary text in history lessons*

Various literary texts could be used teaching Romani history. The teacher has to make a good selection of the literary texts. This means that he has to follow constantly the newly published titles, make a bibliography of the books and decide which of the topics they may be used for. Thus, he will be able to use these materials timely both in class and for the students to read individually. The choice of a particular literary text to be used in a given lesson depends on the content and character of the lesson itself. The teacher has also to take into account the students' age and mental development and focus on the texts containing a lot of imagery, but simplified in terms of plot and language.

If the teachers choose to use extracts from literary texts, they have to be very careful, as in contrast to historical sources (where the facts and the events are presented in their chronological order), literary texts more often than not depict the reality from the point of view of the lives of different characters. What is more, the extracts should be as short as possible, as long extracts make it difficult both for the teacher and for the students to analyse. The content of the extract should not introduce new factual material, it should be accessible for the students and it should create real and true images of essential features of the event or phenomenon described.

Depending on the character and the content of the extracts the teacher defines the way they would be employed in the course of the particular lesson. Some of them may be retold by him, others may be quoted without explanations, and yet others may both be quoted and analysed. The extract the teacher is about to retell should be very well familiar to him, their place within the lesson should be carefully planned beforehand. If the teacher has planned to conduct an analysis of a given extract, he or she should read additional sources concerning the problems, as well as reference books and dictionaries in order to clarify the content.

The way literary texts are introduced in the history lesson depends on the age of the students and on the character of the sources.

One of the widely used methods is to include literary texts organically within the teacher's presentation. In this case the literary texts are not quoted, but rather used as an element which facilitates the teacher's presentation to be accepted as convincing and emotive. Literature is a source of expressions, comparisons, epithets, etc. The teacher chooses to retell in parts the literary text when the material is large, but presents historical facts and events in a colourful and emotive way. This should be done at a carefully chosen time during the lesson. The teacher's story can become even stronger and more emotive if he includes shorter or longer extracts from the public style or poetry. In some cases a longer extract from a historical novel, short story or poem can be read, of course, if it is suitable for the students' age. In any

case, the reading should be available. If the students have their mental capacity for discussion.

The use of literary texts in history lessons has a great influence on the students' reading.

### **Teaching Romani history**

All mentioned sources (Karpalski 2006) because the pre-

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case, the reading or reaction should be expressive. Recordings of poems can also be used, if available. If the literary text is familiar to the students, the teacher refers to it, thus mobilizing their mental capacity to recall the text and relate it to the historical facts and events under discussion.

The use of literary text in teaching history is limited. Basic methods of teaching history are the teachers' presentation and discussion. In order, however to exploit literature's great influence, the teacher has to recommend regularly suitable literary texts for individual reading.

#### Teaching Roma Holocaust

All mentioned methods can be used teaching Romani Holocaust as well, although as Sl. Kapralski (2005:82) expresses it, still research is needed regarding the Roma Holocaust, because the previous findings are not disseminated broadly enough:

Ignorance about what happened to the Roma has a moral dimension as well: it prevents us from seeing them as victims of a campaign of racial persecution that was sustained by all the capabilities of modern Europe, and this in turn makes it difficult to free ourselves from perceiving Roma within the categories of the ingrained stereotypes that led to their tragedy, stereotypes which still lie at the root of discrimination against them.

Kapralski says that in teaching Romani Holocaust, four groups of problems can emerge (Sl. Kapralski 2005:83):

The first of these concerns what exactly happened to Roma during World War II. The second is connected with the problem why Roma did not create a "culture of memory" of their [H]olocaust immediately afterwards, why they themselves stifled the memory of the war or else regarded it as not important. The third group of issues relates to the question why Roma (or at least certain groups of them) are creating such a culture of memory now, and in what way this process is connected with transformations in Romani culture and in their present-day circumstances. The last group of issues concerns what to call what happened to the Roma during World War II, and what role contemporary discourses attributing meanings to past events plays in interpreting the past: especially, the dispute about whether the Roma were – on a par with the Jews – Holocaust victims, or whether the persecution they suffered, though tragic, was of a different order than that which befell the Jews and therefore does not fall within the discourse on the Holocaust.

One of the reason why for so many years Romani Holocaust was not to be taught in school is that for many years the Roma were not recognised as victims of the Holocaust as the Jews. Many governments and mainly the German government did not pay any attention to Roma Holocaust survivors. This is another important reason that the history textbooks and school curricula did not have any information about Roma killed in concentration camps.

A. Mirga (2005) questions European institutions, researchers and Roma about the lack of institutionalized memory about the Second World War. In his opinion an important role plays the educated elite and since the Roma did not have such an elite till very recently, there were no Roma to record the oral history of the Roma tragedy in the concentration camps. In the last two decades or so more attention is paid to the Roma victims thanks to the extraordinary work done by researchers such as D. Kenrick and G. Paxon, and particularly Ian Hancock.

One of the methods used for collecting information about the Roma Holocaust is the interviews with Holocaust survivors. Unfortunately nowadays most of the Holocaust survivors are not alive. Those who are still alive are very old – in the period when they have been in concentration camps they were children. For the interviews the students have to be prepared with well designed questionnaires with clear questions. Then the answers can be used for analyses in the classroom.

#### ***Use of pictures, illustrations and portraits***

Pictures are a source of historical information. There are available pictures from concentration camps. Many websites offer different pictures, illustrations and portraits of Roma who were in concentration camps. The pictures can be divided into two main types: episodic and typological. The episodic pictures reflect a concrete and important historical event or one of its episodes. Those pictures help the students imagine the event itself and make them admire the heroism of people. The analyses of episodic pictures should be included in the teacher's story. The discussion can be used later in going into details concerning the conditions of the images.

The typological pictures reflect usually everyday-life scenes. These pictures can be analysed by means of so-called expanded discussion. Although the students' knowledge is still limited, it can be used to stimulate their thinking. The teachers' questions should guide the students towards the most important points in the content of the pictures. The teacher has to plan very carefully the place and time to use the pictures. This can be done in several cases: in order to make the story or discussion more concrete; in order to draw conclusions and generalisations; in order to influence students emotionally.

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The portrait is an exact or near-exact image of a particular person. The portrait has a certain cognitive function in the process of education. In the choice of portraits the teacher has to take into consideration the following: the portrait should depict a historical person at a point in his life which is relevant to the content of the lesson. The teacher's work with the portrait should follow the same requirements as his work with pictures. In order to characterise the person the teacher usually uses a discussion or, if this is difficult for the students – a description followed by evaluation. In all cases the students should have enough time to observe the portrait.

The illustrations should be viewed as components of the textbook content. The existing practice to leave the illustrations for use at home is totally wrong. Without the help of the teacher, the students are not always able to understand the content and meaning of the illustrations by themselves. That is why it is very important to work on the illustrations in class.

#### *Use of films and TV programs*

The films which are used in the teaching Holocaust are divided into documentaries and fiction. The documentaries show real moments from events. The fiction films reproduce the historical reality by means of artistic images of individuals and groups of people.

It is absolutely necessary for the teacher to have watched the film in advance in order to be able, before the show to say a few words about the content of the film and clarify some points which may be difficult for the students to understand. He or she has to present the names of the main characters and comment on their appearance, as the students may not be able to read everything because of the speed it appears on the screen. If possible the teacher can show pictures from the film.

Usually after the film there is a discussion and the teacher has to be prepared for the discussion in advance. At the beginning of the the discussion students ask different questions and usually the discussion does not have structure. The teacher is the one who is giving a structure to the discussion by leading the questions of the students. In the end the teacher summarizes the students' comments.

#### **Conclusions**

Teaching Roma history and Roma Holocaust are new subjects and there are not so many teaching materials, which can be used at schools. Although in some countries there are historians and researchers investigating the issues of the Holocaust with Roma people, still in the national curricula modules on this are missing. As A. Mirga (2005) stresses, the

participation of the Roma political elite in the Holocaust educational process is extremely important. The Roma elite is the one who fights nowadays against all the new forms of fascism. And it is important that the Roma and non-Roma students learn about Roma history and remember what happened to mankind during the World War II and do not permit the new forms of Nazism and fascism in Europe.

The suggested methods in the article are illustrative and every teacher can be creative and use them in one way or in another. Definitely there are many more methods and approaches which are not discussed here, but it is a time when the issues of teaching Romani history and Roma Holocaust should be discussed in the scientific literature. In this way we can bring a new knowledge in the field of Romology, where the issues of teaching Romani history together with teaching a Romani language take a place.

ПРЕ

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**ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ ИСТОРИИ РОМОВ И РОМСКОГО ХОЛОКОСТА**

ХРИСТО КЮЧУКОВ

В статье рассматриваются вопросы преподавания истории ромов и ромский Холокост. Для знакомства с историей ромского народа предлагаются различные источники и методы: рассказ учителя, тексты учебника, обсуждения, исторические источники, отрывки из художественной литературы. Изучение Холокоста предполагает использование картин, портретов, иллюстраций, документальных фильмов и телевизионных программ. В заключении отмечена особая важность изучения массового уничтожения ромов.

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