

NEIGHBOURS WHO DISAPPEARED

Ústí nad Labem



The song

The game is over
A weekday begins
The grey will obscure the sun.

We pile up our torments
And in captivity we groan
Anger and hatred close the world for us

There will come a day
When we walk free of the ghetto
And life will smile upon us

Despite the flames
We break the bars
Hope leads us ahead

An unknown child author, Tereza

Martina Svobodová, teacher at basic school in Ústí nad Labem:
I offered the work on the project Neighbours Who Disappeared to my students in February 2020. I thought one or two pupils would be interested but a sixteen-member group quickly got involved. We met every Tuesday at seven in the morning and they were really so interested.

We thought this work would help us to find responses to our questions. The contrary is true.
The more we learned, the more our questions appeared. I feel that it is impossible to find the answer to the cardinal question - how could it happen? In spite of this we will keep asking.

We particularly wanted to publish memories of the people whose lives were changed by the war and the Holocaust. We had the opportunity to meet Mrs. Viera Štádníková who survived Auschwitz. On the Internet we were in touch with Mrs. Rachel Isorow who, together with her family, left Ústí nad Labem. We had a chance to have a look at the authentic diary notes of our classmate's great-grandfather and get acquainted with the memories of our two classmates' grandmothers.
The students of 8th and 9th classes at the Basic School and Basic School of Arts in Husova Street, Ústí nad Labem

My great-grandfather's diary
The pages of my great-grandfather's diary. First I was surprised that I have Jewish ancestors. Then sometimes my mum told me my great-grandfather was Jewish. In his diary he mostly wrote about his little daughter Hana - my grandmother (Hana) - but among these notes one can find passages on the restrictions of Jewish people in the Protectorate and who among his family or friends was waiting for a deportation transport. When I found my great-grandfather's diary and read it I was astonished at the fact that someone could carry out such a thing. Most of all I was struck by his descriptions of the departure from Ústí nad Labem. My great-grandfather left with the last deportation transports thanks to his German wife and he was the only one of the family who came back alive. His only remaining relatives, the Kabačák family, emigrated to France.

Zuzana Benešová, 15 years, 8.B student

My grandmother Marie Farkašová rose World War II and introduction of the race laws of Nuremberg very badly. She is of Roma origin. In 1943 she was, together with other Roma and Jewish people, placed by force into the premises of the former prison in Jičovice. She was brought there wearing nothing but her nightgown. With bars in her eyes my grandmother told me that on that day her death path was to start. She was to be escorted to Kamýžko and from there to a concentration camp. Fortunately, one lady with whom she was on her way to Kamýžko, had more children and adopted my grandmother. This way she rescued my grandmother. To end now my grandmother says that she must have been rescued by the being that represents good on the Earth.

Veronika Kolomárová, 15 years, 8.B student

My memories of Ústí as young child are very pleasant ones. I lived a peaceful life and was much loved by my father's congeners. We spoke German and Hebrew at home. We were very attached to the Czech citizens and admired Presidents Masaryk and Beneš.
... During the summer of 1938 my family were in the Carpathian Mountains to visit our family. In September of 1938 I was sent to Ústí and so we never came back. We were hiding outdoors as we were stateless without passports. We were lucky to be able to immigrate to New York. My one aunt and 5 cousins survived the war. We once had well over one hundred relatives.

Quotation from Mrs. Rachel Isorow's letter
Miroslava Špetíková, 15 years, 8.B student

We got in touch with Mrs. Rachel Isorow thanks to her son Kaiiser, an archivist of the archive in Ústí. Mrs. Rachel Isorow, who was born in Ústí nad Labem in 1938 and whose new home after her American stay became Israel, sent us several letters. Thanks to them we have learned new information on the Jewish community in Ústí before World War II.

Petra Masarová, 13 years, 8.B student

As a young girl Mamiiliana Kratochvílová, the aunt of my grandmother's father - worked for the family of a Jewish merchant. But first she worked in his house but as she was handy and efficient his family took her to the shop and let her study at the commercial school. There she married her blind son who died at the beginning of the war. She did not convert to Judaism and remained a Catholic. Perhaps that is why she did not have problems with the Nazis. However throughout the war she did not get ration tickets and she was supplanted with food by the family of my grandmother.

Miroslava Špetíková, 15 years, 8.B student

Mrs. Viera Štádníková was born in southern Slovakia in the family of a Jewish doctor. The year 1944 became fatal for her and her family. Her father, together with two hundred other doctors, was arrested. After a one-week stay in the ghetto, Viera and her mother were transported to the Polish extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, Extermination camp B3. There was no water, sanitation. The girls had to lie on the ground without blankets. Every day there were roll calls, endless counting and standing in columns of five, humiliating fights for drinking water, kneeling with a stone held over the head, beating.
According to Polish prisoners' advice Viera stated her mother was her sister. That saved their lives, particularly her mother's. From Auschwitz they were both transported to Ravensbrück. There were also Czech women here - the women from Lidice. The third and last camp was Buchenwald. They worked for 12 hours a day. Only Sundays were free. In April 1945 the evacuation of the camp began - the march of death. A group of Frenchmen helped Viera, her mother and four others to escape from it. Coming back home, Viera and her mother survived. Her father was shot dead on 6 October 1944.

Vlastislav Drobáček, 15 years, 8.B student

1939

... 1939 Maunafiah Jane brought us the anti-Semitic laws. According to the second, final version she is a non-Aryan, as she comes from a marriage conducted after 15 September 1935.

1940

... the transport leaving on 23 June from Praha.

1941

... 1941: In last the written connection with Tereza is released (card of 30 words in block letters). We write though we are convinced that our attempt is in vain.

1941

... 1941: The last close member of our family - our grandmother (aged 71 years) is following father's brothers and sisters and other relatives on the road to the unknown. We hope together with her that it will not take long that she will survive in good health and that she will come back to us together with all our beloved. Bad news came: Aunt Ella, Uncle Emil and Zdenka are included in the transport leaving on 23 June from Praha.

1942

... 1942: Some extracts from the diary of Zuzana Benešová's great-grandfather.

1942

... 1942: Some extracts from the diary of Zuzana Benešová's great-grandfather.

1943

... 1943: Some extracts from the diary of Zuzana Benešová's great-grandfather.

1943

... 1943: Some extracts from the diary of Zuzana Benešová's great-grandfather.

- #### Of the authors' opinions:
- At first I was not interested but then when I learned some interesting things I started to get interested but I do not think I will continue.
 - I was interested but as I have no Jewish ancestors it would perhaps be difficult to find someone I could be interested in.
 - I would like to establish an organization for people who are interested in this. They could continue this work with us and other people.
 - Whether I will or will not continue, it has left a mark on me and it is an outstanding experience for the future.
 - I will probably continue, I would like to correspond with Mrs. Rachel Isorow also on different topics.
 - It is important not to forget what the Holocaust was.
 - I am glad I participated in the project.
 - Thanks to the project I have learned more about Jews.
 - The work took a lot of my time but I do not regret it. I will continue but I will not collect any other facts.
 - The more interested I am in this topic, the stronger the feeling I have in my heart. Therefore I am not going to continue. Even today, more than 80 years after the war, I do not think that racism will ever disappear from the world.



The students of the 8th and 9th classes

Basic School and Basic Artistic School, Ústí nad Labem