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**SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY TEREZÍN MEMORIAL
FOR TEACHERS FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

informal paper

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Against the background of the present situation in the society where racism and intolerance remain a cause for concern, it is increasingly important to educate the public about the Holocaust and the related issues of coexistence of nations and ethnic groups.

Terezín Memorial has played a major role in public awareness and education efforts. Its educational projects include seminars on teaching about the Holocaust, open to teachers from Czech schools of all levels since 2000. After the first round of seminars on "How to Teach about the Holocaust" many participants showed an interest in advanced courses to improve their knowledge of historical facts as well as the current teaching methods and their application. To meet these requirements, the programme has been extended and divided into three stages.

(1) Stage I – Basic three-day seminar "How to Teach about the Holocaust"

The seminar is organized by Terezín Memorial in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, the Educational and Cultural Centre of the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Roma Culture Museum in Brno. It is subsidized by the Ministry of Education.

86 teachers from all parts of the Czech Republic attended the two rounds held in 2002 .

The three-day programme starts at the Cultural and Educational Centre of the Jewish Museum in Prague, with lectures on the history of Jewish communities in the country and a tour of the Jewish Quarter in Prague. The participants are encouraged to discuss Holocaust education, antisemitism and the ways in which the Holocaust affected the nation's life. Then they leave for Terezín where the programme focuses on the Holocaust in general and the role of Terezín in the "Endlösung der Judenfrage" (final solution of the Jewish question). They make a tour of the former Terezín Ghetto, are informed about the work of the Memorial's Educational Department, talk to a Holocaust survivor. There are optional workshops e.g. on a teaching method using the official lists of persons rounded up for transfer to concentration camps, or the use of videos and internet sources in class as well as art activities encouraging children to express their views on the Holocaust, etc. The cultural segment includes a performance of

"The Lament for 77,297 Victims" by Miriam Theatre Company, based on a poetic prose by Jirí Weil which is also suitable for school performances. The third day is devoted to the Roma Holocaust and the customs and traditions of the Roma community in the Czech Republic. The lecturers are experts on Roma culture and history.

The lecturers and instructors are members of the co-sponsoring organizations or other institutions.

The participants are asked to complete a questionnaire concerning their satisfaction with the programme, suggestions and wishes, as a feedback for the organizers of the next round.

Stage II – Four-day international seminar "The Holocaust in Education"

The seminar is co-organized by Terežín Memorial, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic and the International Task Force for Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research.

The second round on 21-24 November 2002 was attended by 48 teachers from the Czech Republic. There were 18 Czech and foreign lecturers and instructors, experts on Holocaust history and teaching.

The course is intended for participants who have completed the first stage ("How to Teach about the Holocaust") and want to study the issue more thoroughly. The purpose is to familiarize Czech teachers with the teaching methods used abroad – in museums, memorials and at schools; the teachers are also encouraged to exchange experience concerning their work and the possibilities for Holocaust education at their schools. In addition there are many lectures on historical facts and events. The debates touch upon a closely related topic - education for tolerance and peaceful coexistence of ethnic and national groups.

This time the cultural segment included a performance of Hans Krása's children's opera "Brundibár" by Dismas Radio Children's Choir, and "Tapka" children's ensemble performing a drama based on a Terežín painting by Helga Weissová-Hošková.

The feedback is again based on questionnaires. So far the programme, lecturers and instructors, organization and technical support as well as hospitality have received high ratings.

Stage III - Four-day seminar at a Holocaust site abroad

Teachers who complete the second grade are offered a visit to a Holocaust site abroad. The first trip took place in early November 2002 when 41 teachers from all parts of the Czech Republic accompanied by members of Terezín Memorial Educational Department and a representative of the Ministry of Education visited Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. The participants were shown round the camp area, the archives and collections, and informed about the programmes of the Auschwitz Education Centre. The presentation included a debate on the symbolic role of the site in the context of the present policies of interethnic tolerance.

During all three stages the teachers receive additional reading material as well as texts for use in classroom teaching or extracurricular activities. These handouts and publications are either provided by the co-sponsoring organizations or paid by the Ministry of Education.

Experience has shown that teachers who completed the programme tend to devote more time to Holocaust education. Their activities range from school trips to Terezín Memorial, student projects and exhibitions, to the organization of public debates and school performances. Information about these useful activities is provided to the media.