

DIDACTIC UNIT 3

Struma

The Illegal Immigration

Metod Koleji, Ankara, Turkey

2014-2017

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	2
BIOGRAPHY RATIONALE	4
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	6
Turkey’s Situation	6
Backstage of the Disaster	7
BIOGRAPHY	10
Struma: A Ticket to Heaven	10
Biography of David Stoliar	13
ACTIVITIES	18
Activity 1	19
Activity 2:	21
Activity 3	22
REFERENCES	24
Bibliography and other resources	24
AUTHORS	25

INTRODUCTION

Title

Struma: The Illegal Immigration

Age

Students from 13 to 18 years.

Duration

8 Sessions (40 minutes for each).

Sources

- A news from Turkish Channel KanalD
- A video of David Stoliar's speech about Struma Disaster
- A drama by Turkish performers
- An ode by Metod Koleji Students

Aims

1. To think critically about prejudices, bias and discrimination behavior.
2. To develop empathy and social sensitivity.
3. To build up substantial acceptance towards cultural diversity.
4. To make students take a more skeptical approach towards the national and cultural homogeneity.
5. To increase their knowledge and understanding of human rights.
6. To change their attitude and start taking action.

7. To raise awareness and foster students' critical thinking regarding the consequences of - gross- violations of human rights.
8. To develop the critical analysis of the governance.
9. To demonstrate a desire to act morally.
10. To demonstrate an ability to think critically about human behavior.
11. To make students get an idea of the rights of minorities.

Other aspects

- **Classroom arrangements.** Students will be sitting in circle.
- **Groups.** Students will work in groups.
- **Equipment.** A white board and board marker, a computer, speakers, a projector and internet connection are needed for all activities to watch the videos.

BIOGRAPHY RATIONALE

Throughout much of history, people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group – a family, indigenous nation, religion, class, community, or state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the "golden rule" of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran (Koran), and the Analects of Confucius are five of the oldest written sources which address questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities. In addition, the Inca and Aztec codes of conduct and justice and an Iroquois Constitution were Native American sources that existed well before the 18th century. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition, have had systems of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members.

Its roots, however, lie in earlier tradition and documents of many cultures; it took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience. The UDHR was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, partly in response to the atrocities of WWII.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) urges member nations to promote a number of human, civil, economic and social rights, asserting these rights as part of the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." The declaration was the first international legal effort to limit the behavior of states and press upon them duties to their citizens. Although the first sentence of the Preamble to the Declaration of Human Rights says that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" it is not the case in reality.

To violate the most basic human rights is to deny individuals their fundamental moral entitlements. It is, in a sense, to treat them if they are less than a human and undeserving of respect and dignity. One well known example based on prejudice involves the Jews who have endured mistreatment and persecution for thousands of years. The largest scale attempt to destroy this group of people occurred during WWII when millions of Jews were exterminated in German concentration camps in the name of Nazi ideals of "racial purity".

In this plan, we have issued the effects of violation of human rights under some circumstances. In this respect, students will be aware of having responsibility not just for themselves but also for others who suffer from this violation through learning striking examples from history and their negative results on humanity. They will also be able to internalize not to ignore the humiliation of others and co-operate with murderers.

Apart from brutal actions, to stay silent is also being a party to the crime. One of the Hitler's greatest allies in the holocaust was also the indifference of the world. His ally was the world that chose to remain silent as Germany kept testing the limits of the universal tolerance for its evil actions. Turkey will be put under the scope as one of the indifferent countries causing the death of 768 Jews in Struma. This lesson plan will increase awareness and foster students' critical thinking about prejudices, bias and discrimination behavior and build up substantial acceptance towards cultural diversity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Turkey's Situation

In 1914 Ottoman Empire joined the WW1 because of ambitious goals of Enver Pasha which could never become true. He wanted to take all Central Asia from Russia and control the other Turkic states under Ottoman Empire. Enver Pasha deeply believed that Germans would win the war and he thought joining world war with Germans would bring him opportunity to make his goals real. Because of Enver Pasha's ambitious dreams Turkish people joined this war and had a disastrous time.

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk knew that new big war would come out soon and his policy was to keep Turkey out from possible world war. Ataturk learned a very good lesson from WW1 that joining wars because of ambitious empty dreams are very dangerous and risky. Ataturk died in 1938 and after Ataturk died Ismet Inonu became the most powerful person in Turkey.

As Ataturk predicted WW2 started and Ismet Inonu handled the WW2 very skillfully. Ismet Inonu was Ataturk's close friend and he followed the policy which Ataturk would follow if he was alive.

Ismet İnönü, skillfully resisted all of the pressures from the other countries and kept Turkey out of the war. He signed a friendship treaty with both Nazi Germany and Great Britain. Also in 1941 Turkey became one of the biggest trade partner of Nazi Germany. By 1944 Turkey canceled all of the trade agreements with Nazi Germany because of the high pressure of USSR and G.Britain.

After the battle of Stalingrad, Hitler wanted Turkey to believe that he will going to win this war and he tried to gain Turkey by showing how strong German military is. He invited Turkish officers to eastern front but unfortunately German Army got crushing defeat at battle of Kursk and Hitler's plan to bring Turkey to war failed.

In 1943, Churchill came to Turkey and meet with Ismet İnönü to open second front from Balkans. Ismet Inonü said Turkey can join the war with allies but allies should give Turkey war preparation money and weapons. Ismet İnönü listed a huge list and half of that list was a lie. He demanded things from allies which they could not accept. So Churchill failed to bring Turkey in war.

The Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers and fought with Germany during World War I. As a result it was one of the great European empires that were destroyed by the War. So, modern Turkey remained neutral in World War II. Turkey, as a neutral country in a global war, and in geographically ideal location, was already flooded with refugees escaping the German invasion in the central Europe. The pressure from the British, the Germans, and from the Arabs not to admit any Jewish refugees to Turkey, and not to accommodate the refugee ships coming through the Black Sea, was enormous.

Judging from the developments in the world scene, the Turks expected more refugee ships in the Istanbul harbor in the near future and more calamities at sea. In an effort to solve this problem, the Turkish government approached the United States government with a plan for an orderly transportation of 300,000 Romanian Jews through Turkey to Palestine with the concurrence and cooperation of the British. However, Cavendish W. Cannon of the State Department's Division of European Affairs rejected the Turkish proposal on the grounds that there were not sufficient ships to handle the migration, and also it was contrary to the British White Paper published in 1939, allowing only 75,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine within the next five years. He further cited the Arab reaction to a Jewish exodus to Palestine.

Meanwhile, a long, diplomatic tussle began behind the scenes. Great Britain refused to allow the *Struma* to continue on to Palestine. Romania didn't want it back, either. The United States stayed out of it completely. And Turkey, still neutral at the time and not wanting to get on the wrong side of anybody, forced the passengers to stay on board, where they were slowly starving.

Backstage of the Disaster

In 1941, the war had already been going on for two years. The German troops scored whirlwind victories throughout Europe, and marched on eastward to Russia, forcing the Jewish immigrants from Poland, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia to Romania, on riverboats and barges, each filled to overcapacity, traveling down the river Danube. Their destination was the port city of Constanza in Romania, and their dream was to travel to Palestine via the only route open, the Black Sea and Turkey.



A photo of Jewish children escaping from the Holocaust

During the war, the Arab factor was a sensitive issue for both the Allies and the Axis blocks. Hitler coveted the rich oil fields in the Middle East, and aggressively sought the Arab alliance. He made a pledge to the Grand Mufti (the highest religious figure of the Palestine Arabs) of Jerusalem that no Jews would be allowed to escape to Palestine. His notorious anti-Semitism won enormous sympathy in the Arab world.

At that time, Palestine was a British mandate administered by a British governor. Under the circumstances, the British policy was not to offend the Arabs. They were afraid that even a perception of leaning towards the Jews could provoke a wide-spread Arab revolt. Furthermore, admitting any Jewish refugees to Palestine would have triggered a rush of Jewish immigration to Palestine from all over Europe and Balkans, which could lead to a grand scale settlement and relief problem. Therefore, the British blockaded Palestine to-prevent any clandestine entry by the Jews. Their excuse was possible infiltration of German spies under the guise of Jewish refugees.

Before World War II, Romania's Jewish population was about 900,000. About half-a-million Jews perished in Romania during the war, some of them under the German occupation and in the territories ceded to Bulgaria and to the Soviet Union. Some of them were deported to Nazi death camps, but a large majority died in the pogroms organized by the State and the militia.

Under the oppression of the Romanian Iron Guards (the equivalent of the German SS) the Jews began fleeing the country from the port of Constanza to Palestine in 1938. An Associated Press dispatch dated March 2, 1939 described the city of Constanza as a huge refugee camp with thousands of Palestine-bound Jews forming lines in front of travel agencies that sold tickets for fly-by-night shipping companies. This inaugurated an era of the so-called "coffin ships" as all the vessels chartered for this purpose were rickety, unseaworthy boats devoid of amenities, crammed 5 to 10 times their normal capacities, and their destination was, in most cases, fatal.

However, the Romanian Jews were quite resolute for their salvation. Around that time, a shipping agency began advertising a voyage to Palestine on a luxury liner. Their posters and brochures even featured the picture of Queen Mary.

In reality, a cruel scheme was underway. In those days, the Germans requisitioned all ships, large and small, to transport foodstuffs and cattle from Romania to Germany via the river Danube. Therefore, to find an available ship was a major problem. The Germans, however, were not impressed at all by a ramshackle riverboat called MACEDONIA, abandoned in a dock. She was too old to risk cattle. This was a fluke for the ship owner, and he immediately took possession of the vessel. At that time MACEDONIA was 74 years old, and measured only 50 feet long and 20 feet wide (later on these measures were confirmed in a New York Times article dated March, 13, 1942). After a cursory repair, she was put under Panamanian registry, and renamed Struma.

BIOGRAPHY

Struma: A Ticket to Heaven

Struma is a historical tragic event that took place during WWII, involving 769 Romanian Jews who was buried in the cold waters of the Black Sea in a ramshackle ship called Struma, escaping from the Holocaust and reaching Palestine on February 24, 1942. Of 769 Jews who tried to escape from Holocaust, 269 were women, some of whom were pregnant, 103 infants or toddlers, several professionals, including 30 physicians, 30 lawyers, 10 engineers, a number of businessmen, merchants, craftsmen, students and a select group of youth leaders called Betarim.

When all these people saw the ship, their disappointment was beyond description. She had only 100 bunks, and not a single toilet! The ship owner had prepared himself for that moment; he soothed the worries of the passengers by saying that as the advertised ship carried an American flag she had to lay outside the territorial water of Romania; therefore, Struma was merely an intermediate transportation.



Struma with her 768 passengers..

Struma's diesel engine failed several times between her departure from Constanța on the Black Sea on 12 December 1941 and her arrival in Istanbul on 15 December. She had to be

towed by a tug both to leave Constanța and to enter Istanbul. The engine was malfunctioning, and there was leak in the hull. The captain of the ship requested a permit to stay in the harbor until those repairs were completed.

In view of the unbearable conditions on the ship, the Turkish authorities were willing to permit the passengers to disembark while the ship was in repair; however, it became known that none of the passengers had entry visas to Palestine. As a compromise, the Turkish Foreign Office requested at least an assurance from Mr. Adrian Knatchbull-Hugessen, the British ambassador in Ankara, that all the passengers were to be issued visas to Palestine. However, the British refused to give such assurance.

Thereupon, the Turkish-Red Crescent, The American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Turkey, and the Jewish community in Istanbul mobilized to feed all 769 people on board.

Struma stayed in the Istanbul harbor 71 days, during which time the Turkish government conducted intense negotiations with the concerned states to find a viable solution to the Struma affair. To that end, the British were reminded that the yearly quota of 10,000 allowed by the White Paper was still unfilled. Could it possibly be allocated for the passengers of Struma? The British dismissed this possibility claiming that as Romanians, these passengers were enemy aliens; as such they did not qualify for this quota.

Shortly afterwards, the Turkish Foreign office engaged to another initiative and proposed that Struma be allowed to return to Romania. The Romanian ambassador, Alexandre Cretzianu, asserted that those Jews had left the country in an illegal manner, therefore, it was impossible to re-admit them to Romania.

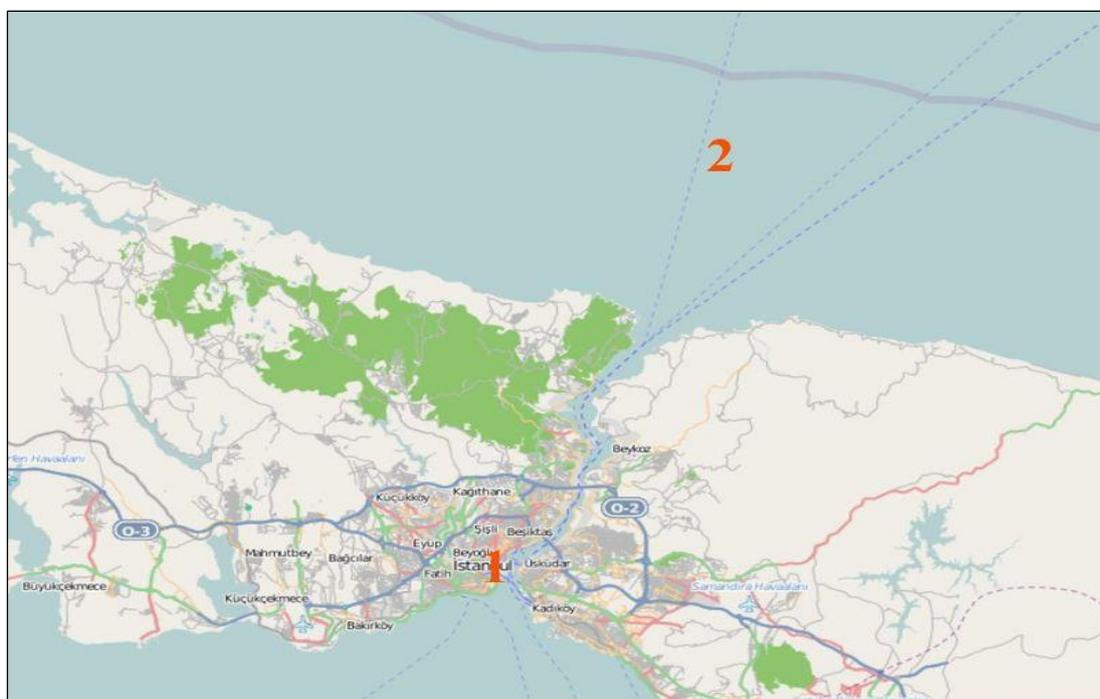
In February, British indicated that they might issue visas to the 70 children on board to enable them to travel to Palestine via the land route. They revised the age category to include only those ages between 11 and 16. Yet, the Turkish government declared that such a decision was never confirmed to them. In fact, days passed and nothing further was heard from the British.

Two months had passed with endless negotiations, high level contacts, and diplomatic stunts without any remedy to the stalemate, and the Turkish government became convinced that it had exhausted all the ways and means to find a viable solution to this dilemma. The Turks finally resigned themselves to the fact that no goodwill and humanitarian efforts, no concession or compromise could overcome this tragic situation.

Struma

The Illegal Immigration
Metod Koleji, Ankara, Turkey

After negotiations between Turkey and Britain seemed to reach a predicament, on 23 February 1942 a small party of Turkish police tried to board the ship but the refugees would not let them aboard. Then a larger force of about 80 police came, surrounded *Struma* with motor boats, and after about half an hour of resistance got aboard the ship. The police detached *Struma's* anchor and attached her to a tug, which towed her through the Bosphorus and out into the Black Sea. As she was towed along the Bosphorus, many passengers hung signs over the sides that read "SAVE US" in English and Hebrew, visible to those who lived on the banks of the strait. Despite weeks of work by Turkish engineers, the engine would not start. The Turkish authorities abandoned the ship in the Black Sea, about 10 miles north of the Bosphorus, where she drifted helplessly.



Map of the bosphorus strait showing where Struma anchored in Istanbul harbour (1), and where she was torpedoed and sank in theBlack Sea.(2)

The following day, February 24 at 9:00 A.M. the tragic news came through. An unexplained explosion had torn apart *Struma* while she was about 4-5 miles from the Cape Igne Ada. Several Turkish rescue teams were dispatched to the area. With the exception of one survivor all- 763 women, men and children had perished. The survivor was David Stoliar, a 21-year old Romanian Jew.

There were speculations about the cause of the explosion. A German, Russian, Romanian, as well as a Bulgarian submarine was a strong possibility. The engine of the ship being rather small was ruled out as the source of explosion. A mine was a remote possibility, but was not ruled out entirely. Sea storms and freezing weather contributed to the fatalities, but did not account for the explosion. Or, what was thought to be an explosion was a sudden crack that caused the ship to come apart at the seams. Many years later it was revealed that the ship had been torpedoed by the Shchuka-class Soviet submarine Shch-213, that had also sunk the Turkish vessel *Çankaya* the evening before.

The woeful circumstances that surrounded this event were a grim global war, clumsy diplomatic maneuvers conducted by the British to keep the Jews away from Palestine, and also a hypocritical international politics. Jews all over Europe were desperately trapped in this chaos relentlessly haunted by a pathological Nazi hatred.

Biography of David Stoliar



David Stoliar who is the only survivor of Struma disaster died in 2014 in USA.

David Stoliar who was the only survivor of Struma disaster grew up in Romania, home to nearly 800,000 Jews before World War II. By the summer of 1940, their life, too, had become unbearable, thanks to anti-Semitic laws, deportations and, ultimately, bloody pogroms.

Stoliar was 19 when his father decided David should leave the country and arranged passage for him to Palestine. *"My father paid an exorbitant price for a ticket for the Struma. Equivalent to maybe \$1,000 today. He sewed a leather money belt for me and bought me a heavy coat.*

Those two things helped me survive. He cried bitterly when I left. Thanks to my father I avoided the terrors of the fascist regime in Romania, which was allied with Nazi Germany," Stoliar says.



The ID card of David Stoliar, the sole survivor of the Struma, which was carrying nearly 800 Jews fleeing Romania. (CreditUnited States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

In December 1941, David, Ilse Lothringer, his fiancée, and her parents left Romania from Constanta, a port city on the Black Sea, on the "Struma," an old cattle boat. When they finally caught a first glimpse of the Struma in the Black Sea harbor of Constanta, it was a bad omen: The ship, originally meant for only 150 passengers, had been retrofitted to carry almost 800, in tiny wooden bunks on three low levels -- and that in the coldest winter in generations. "Like sardines," Stoliar says. "We couldn't even turn over. But we had no way of going back."

The ship departed, but once at sea its engines malfunctioned, and it took great effort to reach the Turkish port. But the hoped-for permits were not there waiting for the passengers, who remained locked up on board the ship under difficult conditions for about 10 weeks. *"The Turkish authorities held us prisoner on the ship. We were desperate to escape," Stoliar says.*

At last, on February 23, 1942, the Struma was towed out to sea by the Turkish coast guard. *"The police ordered us to go down to the lower deck, where we were crowded like sardines in a can. We resisted and threw several policemen into the Istanbul sea. Backup arrived and their people beat us with clubs. They cut the anchor and towed the Struma outside the Istanbul port, toward the deep Black Sea. The ship was left without a working engine, anchor, radio, food or water," Stoliar says.*

At daybreak on February 24 the ship was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine, which thought it was an enemy ship. Most of the passengers were asleep, including Stoliar. *"It was probably three or four in the morning," he says, now softly and haltingly. "I woke up as I was thrown into the air. I fell back into the water, and when I surfaced, there was no vessel anymore. Nothing. Just debris."*

Most passengers and the Romanian crew of the *Struma* died in the torpedo's explosion. Among them were Stoliar's fiancée, Ilse, and her parents, who had been sleeping in the bottom part of the ship's hull. One reason Stoliar survived was that his bunk was right below deck.

More than 100 survivors were still struggling to stay afloat and alive in the ice-cold water around him. Stoliar and a few others clung to a piece of floating wreckage, a section of the wooden deck. But one after another they froze to death and slipped into the abyss. *"Eventually," he says, "I was just by myself."*

At some point, a man swam over. He introduced himself in Russian as Lazar Dikof, the *Struma*'s chief mate. They sat on that piece of wood talking, yelling, trying to keep each other alive.

Morning passed, then afternoon, then evening. Night fell again. At dawn, Dikof was dead. Stoliar lost hope. He tried to kill himself by cutting his wrists with a pocket knife. But even that didn't work: *"My hands were too swollen from the frost."*

After 24 hours, a coast guard rowboat appeared and picked Stoliar up. He was brought to the port of Sile and then to a military hospital in Istanbul. A week later, he was moved to a jail, where he was detained for being in Turkey "illegally."

Stolier was kept in jail for 71 days. Only then did the British government decide to grant an "exception" and allow him to enter Palestine. A train took him to Aleppo, a car to Tel Aviv.

After the war, Stoliar tried to forget about the *Struma* and start a new life. His mother had died in Auschwitz. His father survived in Bucharest, and Stoliar brought him to Palestine. But not even his first wife, Adria, whom he married in Cairo in 1945, knew about the *Struma*.



Snapshots of Mr. Stoliar that appeared in The Sunday New York Times: at his office in Cairo, and after his wedding in Cairo. (CreditUnited States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

In 1954, Stoliar ended up working for a trade company in Tokyo. Adria died of cancer. After his wife's death, he remarried, to an American woman, and moved at the end of the 1970s to the U.S., where he died, in Bend, Oregon in 2014.

The story of the *Struma* faded into obscurity. MGM once wanted to make a movie about Stoliar's story, but he declined. There were a few articles in newspapers and magazines. In

2003, Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, two former *New York Times* correspondents, reconstructed the tragedy in their book *Death on the Black Sea*. Stoliar, albeit reluctantly, was their main source.

ACTIVITIES

Teaching strategy

- Starting Activity: A Performance by Metod Koleji Students: Turkey’s Situation.

Video: https://0ws.pw/0n/Turkeys_Situation.mp4

- Brainstorming: Talking about economic and social difficulties of Turkey during WWII.
- The Presentation of the Lesson.
- Implementation of the Activities according to the “Lesson Procedures”.

Activity 1

- Introductory lesson about indifference: Struma, A Ticket to Heaven.
- Watching the Video: David Stoliar's speech.
- Discussion question which leads students to a moral dimension of the disaster.

Which one was more responsible for the Struma disaster? The opportunist "hope mongers" who tricked the Jews trying to escape from holocaust with "inappropriate conditions"; or the governments which left them alone with their hopeless destiny?

Video: An Interview with David Stoliar



David Stoliar talks about the insufficient conditions of Struma which was the first/main reason of the disaster. When the ship departed, at sea its engines began to malfunction, and it took great effort to reach the Turkish port. But the hoped-for permits were not there waiting for the passengers, who remained locked up on board the ship under difficult conditions for about 10 weeks. "The Turkish authorities held us prisoner on the ship. We were desperate to escape," Stoliar says.

He shares their suffering from the conditions of voyage intensely in the video below:

<https://lcmmedia-assets.ushmm.org/testimony/dsb0879m.mp4>

"During the journey to Istanbul, first of all we could hardly move because we were told that, you know, because of so many people, if there are too many of us on the deck on one side,

the, the vessel can be in danger. So, first of all, they wanted us to move as little as possible and also, once we are on a deck for a few hours, also to try to keep the vessel in balance by not going too much on one side or the other. So we were directed, some people on the left side, some people on the right side, then go slowly. In other words, there was a possibility that the vessel may get out of balance if, if we move too much. So the conditions were such that you just stayed in your bunker as much as you can, without, without moving. So there was no way of getting cleaned up or, or even, even, you barely managed to, to drink water, never mind about washing or something like that. And as the time went by, it was getting naturally worse and worse and worse.”

Activity 2:

- *Reading the Text: Stoliar's Point of View*
- Watching the Video: An Ode to Victims
- Brainstorming:
 1. In small groups, students are given the key words such as; loss of hopes and future, pain, loss of the ones loved, a new beginning after a tragedy, revenge, forgiveness, guilt...
 2. In each group, students empathize with the victims, their relatives and the witnesses and talk with each other and share their opinions and feelings using the key words above.
 3. Students write their ideas on the board.
- Students are asked to write a letter to the passengers of Struma or their families who lost them in the disaster as the civilians or the authorities who did nothing to save their lives.

Reading: Stoliar's Point of View

"Early in the morning, a Soviet submarine fired a torpedo at us. The ship vaporized around me, some 500 passengers were killed immediately. I was thrown into the sea along with several hundred others ... no one came to our aid. Everyone died, everyone, except for me," David Stoliar, the lone survivor of the tragedy says.

At first, David Stoliar needed to have psychological help/support to overcome the trauma he experienced. He did not speak so much about the Struma. But after so many years, he forgives and leaves behind all the people who were responsible.

"Today, for me these days are gone. I leave what happened to God and to the history books," Stoliar writes in the testimony he provided to the Holon municipality. "On this day, I do not judge all those who were responsible for the tragedy. Instead, I choose to remember those who left us and to express appreciation and gratitude to those who helped me survive," he adds.

"My time of rage has passed. Like it is written, 'to everything there is a season.' For me, now it is time to mourn, to heal, to embrace, and to convey my memories to the next generation so they will remember and not forget."

Video: An Ode to Victims: https://0ws.pw/0n/an_ode_to_victims.mp4

Activity 3

- Reading the text: *Press Release of Turkish Foreign Ministry*
- Watching the video: KanalD News
- Discussion Questions

“Struma was left alone, insignificant, unattended, and desperate. It was a trouble that everyone wished to get rid of. It was a calamity that is desired to be never lived, to be removed from the history. Unfortunately, it was a ship that is wished to be never existed by not only Turkey but also England, Russia and all other European countries.”

1. What can be the reason(s) of not mentioning/ neglecting the Struma tragedy for more than 70 years?
 2. What can be the reason(s) of a commemorate after 73 years of silence?
- After sharing their thoughts, students are divided into three groups for a discussion between the parties of the Struma tragedy.
 1. First group will represent the government authorities, second group will be the jews or civilians who were trying to help the victims, and the last group will be passengers of Struma.
 2. They should defend the implementations of the ones their group represent and insist on what they do or feel.
 3. Students are aimed to see the whole perspectives and judge the situation after this experience and answer the following question:

Are you convinced that Turkish government tried all possible solutions?

Reading: Press Release of Turkish Foreign Ministry

Turkish Foreign Ministry issued the following press release about the tragic chain events happened right few miles off the coast of Sile after 73 years:

“Seventy-three years ago, on February 24th, 1942, the Struma a vessel carrying Jewish refugees, outbound from the port of Constanza, sank after it was torpedoed by a Soviet submarine off the cost of Şile, in the international waters of the Black Sea, 768 people perished, including 103 children and the entire crew. Only one refugee survived.

Seven hundred and sixty-eight people who were forced to leave their villages, cities and countries as a result of the rise of Nazism and Anti-Semitism in Europe, died tragically 73 years ago. The victims included women, children, babies, the sick and the elderly.

With this understanding, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust, we respectfully commemorate all those who have lost their lives on the Struma. We also extend our condolences to their relatives and to our Turkish-Jewish citizens, who remain sensitive to and saddened by this tragedy, as it happened right before their eyes. We share the deep sense of loss of those people, as we made efforts for them to survive.

This incident, regardless of the religious or ethnic background of the victims, is a tragedy that has taken its place in human history and must be commemorated as such.

Turkey always, adopting a humane approach with respect to humanitarian tragedies that occur in its vicinity, feels the responsibility of passing along the memory of this tragedy to future generations."

Video: KanalD News: <http://Ows.pw/0n/StrumaKanalD.mp4>

REFERENCES

Bibliography and other resources

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Struma_disaster

<http://www.turkishjews.com/struma/>

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/interview-with-lone-survivor-of-torpedoed-jewish-refugee-ship-struma-a-901490-2.html>

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/the-lone-survivor-of-a-jewish-refugee-ship-1.414588>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/struma.html>

<http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/10682/struma-faciasi-icin-ilk-resmi-anma>

https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_oi.php?ModuleId=0&MediaId=2483

<http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/the-lone-survivor-of-a-jewish-refugee-ship-1.414588>

http://www.salom.com.tr/SalomTurkey/haber-94211-turkey-officially_remembers_struma_disaster_for_the_first_time.html

AUTHORS

- Mrs. Nihal YILDIZ.
- Mr. Ertem YILDIZ.
- METOD KOLEJI, ANKARA.