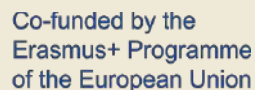




The collection of students' texts inspired by WWII witness' stories



Gymnázium Pavla Jozefa Šafárika -
Pavol Jozef Šafárik Gimnázium Rožňava

Střední škola designu a umění, knižní
kultury a ekonomiky Náhorní

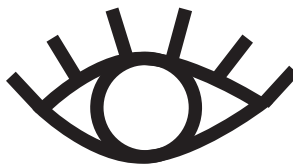
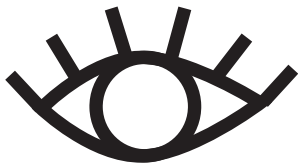
Centrum RoSa



FACE TO FACE

The collection of students'
texts inspired by WWII witness'
stories

ARRANGED by Eva Szanyiová





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Introductory words

International cooperation, in which we have been involved as a school for several years, brings participants an attractive opportunity to go abroad as part of educational activities and establish new friendships there. These are taken for granted when planning the project, although this is not the main reason why partnerships between schools are established. In the project Let's learn to read, let's read to learn we also did something special. We found our way back to the neighbours, with whom we looked from window to window, but otherwise we didn't know much about each other. In November 2019, as part of an international meeting of Czech and Slovak project participants, a mutually enriching intergenerational cooperation was established, which both parties will be surely happy to remember. Five contemporary witnesses from the RoSa Center had the opportunity to tell their personal stories to the audience and share their entertaining life experiences. Everyone recalled their memories of important moments in Czechoslovak history. The Second World War, February 1948, August 1968, emigration, normalization and November 1989 neither of them went unnoticed. High school students, on the other hand, were very glad to encounter these events through eyewitness accounts, because, as some of them admitted, these topics did not get much room in family debates. Memories - in some cases only sketchy, in others even unexpectedly detailed, as if describing the events of the previous day - were a kind of springboard for artistic activities such as writing short stories, poems and dialogues, but also creating illustrations. The creative workshops and the introductory meeting with the contemporary witnesses were led by either the writers or the teachers of our school. The sorrowful events, which gave the whole cooperation an even deeper dimension than we could have ever expected, were the deceases of **Mrs. Anna Habersbergerová** (†87) and **Mr. Jaroslav Votýpka** (†87), who passed away only two months after the project activity. For all of us, it was a chilling lesson that we should not postpone any significant meetings to a "more appropriate time", because ours "sometimes" can be simply rewritten by the fate to "never". The texts from the workshops pleased Ms. Anna during her stay in the hospital, but unfortunately the repeated meeting with the high school students has never happened. The contribution of her personality, not only for the project, was captured by the workshop leader **Tim Postovit** in a short memory: "Her mindset was contagious. When we talked about the Soviet occupation, we all smiled, because she described the tanks in

one sentence, while the flowers seen in the meadows in the sixties, during her honeymoon in Šumava, could be vividly imagined by others thanks to her words.” The passing of Mr. Votýpka was unexpected and his loss is felt not only by his family and friends, but also by the cultural life in the RoSa Center. He was a male driving force of the theater association, led by director **MgA. Marta Dvorská**. For example, they rehearsed the dramatization of Erben’s Bouquet (Kytice), which was also performed for our students. Mr. Votýpka’s performance was an inspiration for young viewers that even at a senior age it is possible to live fully and participate in various hobbies. In short, use the time that is given to us in a joyful and meaningful way. And this applies to both contemporary witnesses who can no longer enjoy the published collection with us...

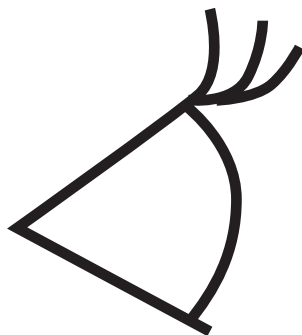
We wish all readers a pleasant time, which hopefully confirms our belief that it should be shared primarily in real life and not only on Facebook.

Pavína Vočková
The project coordinator

„The power of the story told by the contemporary witnesses is the most natural way for pupils and students to gain an insight into our past. Thanks to the personal experiences of the actors, their perception of the event “then and there”, young people get a unique opportunity to inquire anything. Taken into consideration, it is an exceptional and at the same time very enriching project, which can provide information that we wouldn’t find in any history textbook.“

Pavla Jiříčková, history teacher

RNDr. Anna Habersbergerová



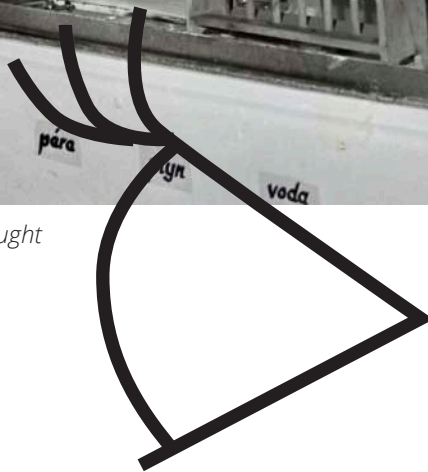
The inspiration for the group of lecturer Tim Postovit was the memories of **Mrs. Anna (87 years old)**, a woman for whom science has become a lifelong passion. As she admits, chemistry helped her cope better with the difficult times of normalization. Emigration was out of the question because of having to take care of her and her husband's mother. The words of the doctor about human equality and dignity were reflected, for example, in the slam poetry written by the participant of the creative workshop Sára Jankovičová. Mrs. Anna's story covered almost all the turbulent moments of our country during the 20th century. The young creators were inspired, for example, to write a short story about the announcement of a partial mobilization in 1938 or a stylized letter, which was never sent due to the Iron Curtain. When the group finally asked for some wise life advice, the contemporary witness didn't have to think long about her answer, „Learn languages and travel.“

„When Mrs. Anna talked about her protectorate childhood, the listeners tried to understand how it felt, to tape up the photo of the president on her atlas and feel sadness while doing that. She described such things with a smile typical for people who lived their lives with dignity, in spite of everything. I think that the captivating nature of this personality is quite faithfully conveyed by the texts selected by the workshop participants who were grateful for the excursion to the clear mind of Mrs. Anna.“

Tim Postovit – workshop lecturer



Anna Habersberger decided to work which brought her joy.



Sára Jankovičová

FROM A NEVER SENT LETTER

27. 5. 1971

Dear William,

Do you remember how we said goodbye and then you gave me that bouquet of daisies? They all faded, I felt like I had lost something important. I feel that way now, too, but multiply that by three thousand. Paul was called to Bartholomew. I hope you understand what that means. Of course I don't know anything, nobody ever knows anything here. I'm trying to stay calm somehow, but gardening, strangely, didn't help me enough. It reminds me of a time when we had to tape up the photo of Masaryk in the first reading book or how my dad's pharmacy was taken ... or when they only gave me one pound to travel to you. Helplessness and absolute misunderstanding of the situation. I'm just looking at a photo of our old house, those white shutters and withered flowers in pots. Oh, how I miss you, William. I miss London, the freedom and a life without worries! When I got to work in '65, it had never crossed my mind that once I would look at the Big Ben. I like to remember it in the most difficult moments and I tell Paul so often about it!

I'm afraid they would hurt him, you know how stubborn he can be - one day he won't get away with it. Today I went through Opletal's square to work and you can't imagine how unpleasant it is when several submachine guns are aimed at you on every corner. Absurd things are happening here. It's ridiculous, but we can just cry over it. London, it was something completely different... almost unbelievable! I know you probably think I'm stupid now, but you know I couldn't stay. Mainly because of my mother. Congratulations on your doctorate. It's hard to believe we haven't seen each other for two years. I hope you are well in England. Do you remember Adam? Definitely yes. In a week it will be 3 years since he died. Time flies so fast! If I were to tell someone outside what was going on here and that the system and the government had driven him to suicide, no one would pay attention to it, that's the worst thing about it: that nobody cares. Nevertheless, we are doing as well as we can. Or at least we've had so far, because I don't know what will happen to Pavel... My throat is tightening and I hope they won't hurt him. I'm going to read something from Nezval, hopefully I'll come up with other thoughts. At least for a while. How is Aneta? Maybe all of you are doing better than us here. I am looking forward to your reply.

Greetings
Anna

Nikola Slezáková**MY STUDENT LIFE**

Choosing a high school was very simple and difficult at the same time. My parents did not want me to go to the secondary grammar school in Kralupy. This was because there was a major railway intersection that was often bombed. In the end, it was decided that I would go to the local grammar school. I wasn't exactly thrilled with the choice, but I could at least study well there. My main goal was to run my father's pharmacy. I was excited to take it over, so when I started high-school I immediately knew I wanted to go to college. Mainly I wanted to study pharmacy. The first day of high school, like many others, was not easy. Not much could have been done during the war. Getting up in the morning, washing myself, going to school and praying for not having our city bombed. One day my mother told me that the grammar school in Kralupy was destroyed. The right wing was bombed after the raid. I was afraid that it would happen to our school as well, even though the school was useless because we didn't learn much. Mostly just what we couldn't do and a little on what we could. In the tumultuous soul of the teenager, the ban was the same temptation as the apple in the Garden of Eden banned from Adam and Eve. We were not allowed to listen to the radio. We listened to it in our small room. Geography was not taught. We looked up information in books. The only language was German. It was a tough nut to crack, as there were not many ways to learn foreign languages. There were no history lessons. Our history did not exist. But there were grandmothers and grandfathers who told us everything in the evenings. My mother wanted a well-secured man for me. So, she wasn't thrilled when I announced an invitation from a boy from my class. His name was Paul, he was German and that was the main stumbling block. She screamed that she wouldn't let me go with him, that I was stupid goose. But I wanted to. I saw in him the opportunity to go to the theatre, where we couldn't afford to go. I wanted to enjoy myself while I could. I didn't care that he was German, he treated me nicely and that was the main thing for me. He did not understand the Germans who had joined Hitler. "We all came from "Adam's rib", so where the aversion comes from," he often said at school. He was very smart, he wanted to become a teacher. With Paul I could forget we were living in a time of war. When the war ended, it was a blessing. That day was beautiful, we all were waving flags and singing songs. Our rescuers received flowers from us. I believed that everything bad had already ended...

Saturday morning was pleasantly warm. The sun was shining, and the clouds were floating peacefully across the sky. Although the weather was beautiful, no one stopped, people rushed to the station to catch the train to Kralupy or Prague, to work. Everyone was running with the crowd. Still, most people were able to stop to buy a newspaper from a young man for a few pennies. The surprised and troubled expressions of readers said, that something had happened that would turn everyone's life upside down. After a while, people were whispering among themselves about German troops in Bavaria and Sass and about the partial mobilization of the country. „Good morning, ma'am," said the 40-year-old pharmacist from behind the counter of his small home pharmacy. He was proud of his pharmacy, taking it from his father, so he hoped that his little Annie would one day become a pharmacist and take over the family business. He considered it as his mission, because the patient is the most important person in the world. „Good morning to you, I'd like some herbal tea against coughing," said a young brown-haired woman. The man turned to the shelves and reached for the herbal tea. He held the box in his hand and placed it on the counter in front of the woman. „Martínek is coughing again, and now my husband is leaving for mobilization," complained another woman as she searched for her purse and adjusted her scarf.

„Mobilization?" said the third voice incredulously. The pharmacist's wife was standing in the doorway leading to the residential area of the house. With tears in her eyes and a silent apology, she turned and walked up the stairs in a quick step. Wonder she didn't break inside. On the second floor she stopped and took a slow step in front of the door of the room, which belonged to her six-year-old daughter Annie, whom she loved very much. The report of partial mobilization hit her. She was glad when Austria-Hungary lost and the country became independent. She was proud of it. But now she was afraid. She was worried about the future. She didn't know what was going to happen. They said tensions were rising in the Sudeten, but she believed it would pass. She believed it was just a momentary discontentment. That it would calm down over time. But she was wrong, and now she was just hoping that everything would be all right and that their country and the Germans would make it out peacefully. She hoped there would be no war. She took a deep breath, clenched the handle in her slightly sweaty palm, quietly opened the door and walked in. Opposite her was a window through which sunlight was flowing in. Next to the window on the right was a drawn bedside table and a bed in which a young girl was sleeping under the duvet. In the far-right corner stood a large wooden box, in which little Annie had hidden a few good pieces of clothing. On the left side of the window stood a small table with a highchair, where pencils, papers and scissors were found. In the left corner there was room for toys, which were all over the room anyway. There were stuffed cars, wooden cars all over the room and she saw a teddy in the corner. She slowly picked

up the stuffed animal that lied in front of her. It was a teddy bear named Hubert, missing one hand and an eye. A woman made it for Annie, on her third birthday – the teddy was still unharmed back then. He's had some hard times in the three years it has been in her care. When the woman looked at the teddy bear, she thought about the future and the hard times that await her family. She had tears in her eyes again. She put Hubert on the bedside table next to the bed, where she sat down, and began to wake Annie slowly. She was sleepy. My mother took a deep breath and said, „Good morning, Little Annie. Partial mobilization is beginning.“

Dávid Németh

YOU DON'T NEED TO HAVE EVERYTHING MEMORIZED; YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW HOW TO SEARCH.

Ms. Anna Habersberg is a very inspiring and respectable person, who lived most of her life in very unfavourable times. Many people in that era ended up imprisoned, deported or even dead. There were dark times, full of sorrow and pain but fortunately the regime didn't capture everyone and one of those people was Ms. Anna. During our very interesting conversation I have learned many things about her history. She was speaking about her carrier and how easy life was during socialism. I was the most interested at the end of our debate, where Mrs. Habersberg was asked to give us some life advice. Mrs. Anna told us a few." You should travel; learn languages with a focus on conversation. It is very important to use common sense and always check the information you have received. It's all right if we have different opinions." Importantly, I got this one stuck in my head: "You don't need to have everything memorized; you just need to know how to search." You don't need to have everything memorized; you just need to know how to search. Immense words from a doctor of science who dedicated her life to learning and knowing everything. At the beginning it may not seem like a big deal, but the more we think about it, the more power of these simple words is revealed to us. We must not get overwhelmed by the beauty of ignorance and illiteracy and therefore let us think about it. Ms. Anna Habersberger was born in the last century, without the conveniences of modern digitalization. She did not have a permanent access to a phone and there were no computers or internet connection at all. If she needed information, the most reliable way was to search in her mind. If it happened that she did not know something important, she had to ask someone who understood the matter or problem, which could take several days if the person was not nearby. Another option for her was to look for an answer in the encyclopaedia, which was much more difficult than searching in today's modern encyclopaedia called Wikipedia. When she was able to say this in her era, why do we have to learn so many unnecessary things now despite the conveniences of modern technology. Most of the unnecessary things we will never use in our life but even if we needed them, we have unlimited access to them.

Sára Jankovičová

BALLAD FOR THE STATE

I closed my eyes
while walking the street
when there everywhere
like three saints
stood their submachines

on every corner
it was like waiting
on the day of God's
court

don't tell me that you
had to do that
that perhaps it didn't work
otherwise

no one forced you
to eat out of their hands
to clean their shoes
and wash their dirty
intentions

they threw to our heads
questions like arrows
same
who you trust and
who you dine with

from pioneer shirts
a lot of it
has not changed
they just called a few reinforcements
they tied my hands
and unleashed
the hell

from January to December
and from December to January
it was just
one and the same
Dickens's carol

and my knees are shaking
read me something from Nezval

I would love to have
A ticket to the world
and Dad's pharmacy
reopened
which they nationalized
on the day of nationalization

so at least I
followed his footsteps
school and then
the institute -
nuclear physics
and also classics
Koželuh and Zelenka
and a forget-me-not
is fading outside the window

as Erben's ballad
that resonated in
František's village
where we stayed in the
1968

a little longer
so unwillingly

then came the strike
the posters and
slogans
just another dose
that they
stabbed in our heads

and when we all here
stood like sheep
who could have guessed
that revolution
will come soon?



Mrs. Anna Habersberger looked modest and fragile, as did Michaela Jedličková from the last grade of graphic design. The graduate especially liked the witness's attitude to life, thanks to which she managed to be happy, although she was limited by totalitarianism. "She managed to come to terms with what she could and couldn't do, and she enjoyed the things she had," Michaela recalls and adds that this is the motif she tried to transfer to the illustration. Chemical tools on a red flag symbolize the role of work in Mrs. Anna's life. It was meaningful work that brought her satisfaction and joy in all circumstances, and even the Communists could not take it.



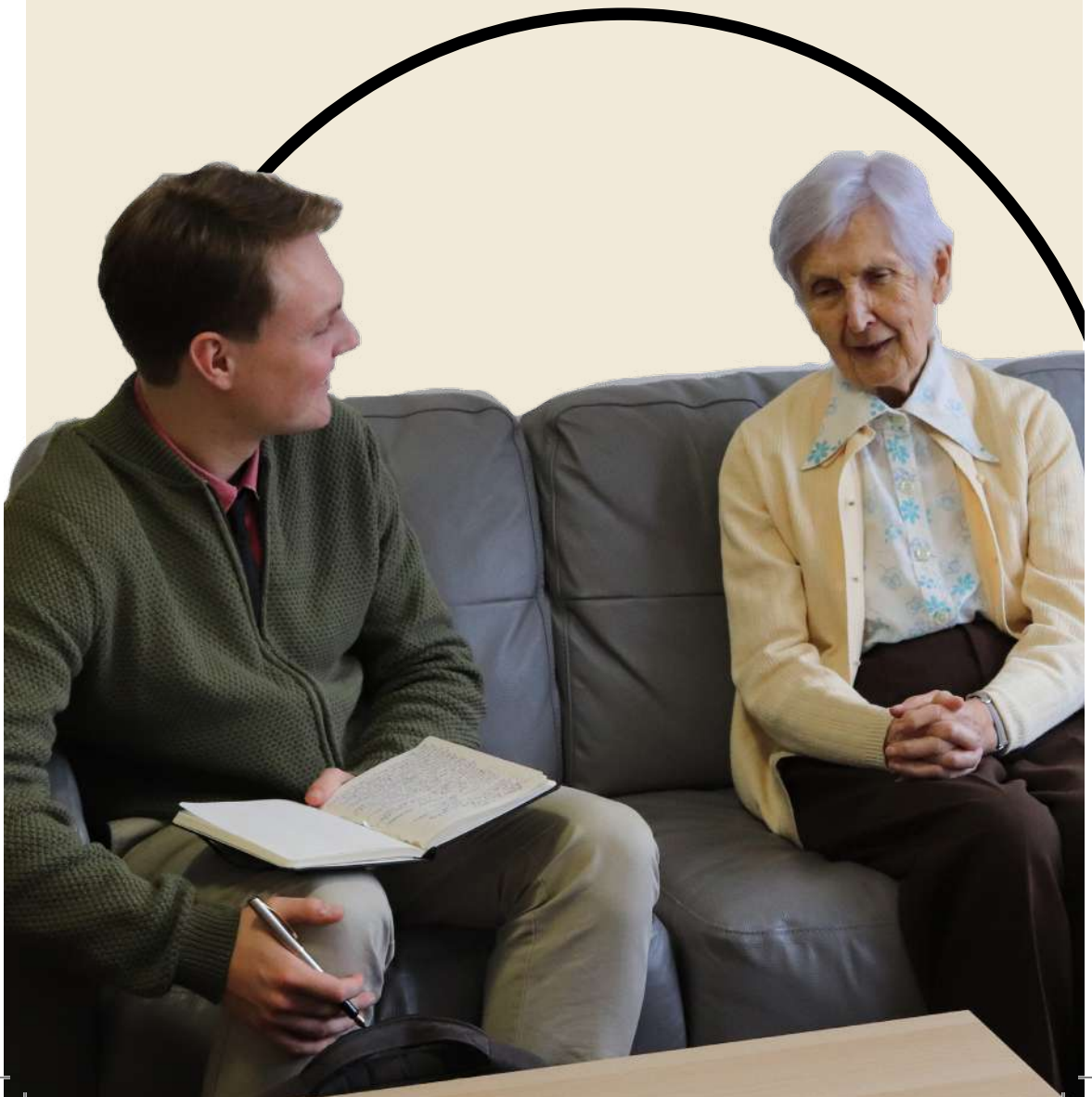
Before writing, it was important to go through the important moments in the life of the witness



Photographs from the pre-Christmas literary reading, where the Czech participants - in the case of Tim's group only girls - had the opportunity to present their texts publicly

Anna Habersbergerová

Lecturer Tim Postovit and Mrs. Anna found many common topics. For example, there were discussions also about translations of French poetry



Květa Turková

Mrs. Kveta (81 years), comes from Kobylisy, she spent her youth in the same school like us today. She remembers rough times in her life with an open mind and without any self-pity or doubts. Some of her memories from the war time were harsh, we even had to hold our breath, other were really touching and a lot of us couldn't hide tears. "Is it even possible in one lifetime live through so many tense moments?" came to our mind. They realized that heroes are not just those who got appreciation. Like Viktoria Bárova wrote in her opinion essay: "We can find them among the ordinary people, who live among us. For Kveta her idol was her grandpa, a resistance fighter who lost his eye during an interrogation by Gestapo. Adrian Adamik, a Slovak workshop participant, artistically described this relentless scene.

„Mrs Kveta is a strong person who builds respect. The workshop participants were probably expecting to meet a fragile lady, nostalgically looking back to the good old days. To the irretrievably lost times from the historical films. But the nostalgia did not happen. Even the good old days did not come. If at all, there were some good old days. Mrs. Květa's story reminded a lively war film.“

Lukáš Vydra – workshop lecturer



Květa Turková's long dark hair deserves admiration not only in the photo from 1975, but even today

Adrián Adamik

AN ENDLESS DAY

“Will you finally confess?”

“Never! I haven’t done anything.”

Obersturmfuhrer pulled out his luger out of a black leather case. He pushed the barrel against Johns forehead. John could feel the cool of the German steel. Down the barrel John could see the grin on this perfect “Arian mans” face.

“So what? Has anything come up to your mind?!”

That’s a monster, John said for himself. He looked into the obersturmfuhrers eyes and spit on him.

The obersturmfuhrer wiped his face and asked the question again: “Do you want to confess to anything, du schwein?” John was quiet, looking on the floor trying to cover up his emotions.

“Someone isn’t as open minded as we would like him to!” laughed the obersturmfuhrer.

“Hans! Could you please bring in our little surprise?”

The soldier left, the only thing he left behind was the sound of heavy nails touching the ground on his soles.

The obersturmfuhrer carefully looked at John, who prepared another load of saliva. Hans arrived at the door with his surprise, through the heavy door they could hear the soldiers voice: “Don’t be afraid, move! There’s a surprise waiting for you inside”

When the doors swung open John couldn’t believe his eyes. A shy little girl stepped inside the room; it was John’s niece.

“Let her be you swine!” he tried to move around but the handcuffs were holding him down tightly.

“It looks like we won the jackpot assuming from your little dance.” The obersturmfuhrer turned towards the girl: “come on little one, have you seen a human eye from up close?” The girl thought a little about the question, quietly answering: “Yes.”

“Very well, so pay attention to this.”

The obersturmfuhrer moved down his hand, reaching the swastika he loved so much that was embedded on the handle of his long dagger. He gently pulled the dagger out of its case and froze still while looking at the glance of its blade. He stepped towards John

and played with the dagger around John's eye. John tried to move away but there was no escape. The little girl tried to look away from this petrifying scene. The obersturmführer immediately noticed it.

"Hans, hold her head! So that she can see what a model we make out of her uncle" he laughed away at his own rotten mind. The girl was shaking, she was frightened, knowing what was going to happen. John moved around trying to escape the cool of the German blade. "Please, stop!"

"Well my dear, it's too late for that."

He held John's head and placed the tip of the blade in the middle of his eye. With the softness of a ballerina he moved the blade closer and closer. The girl couldn't look at it anymore: "Please stop, don't do it sir!"

The obersturmführer recognized that voice from somewhere but had no idea from where....

"Oh, I know! This little *fräulein* had once appeared on our shooting range." He kneeled to the girl with the same grotesque smile. She began to sweat and shake.

"Oh, come on, don't be afraid, I'm not going to hurt you. I'm not a monster" he stood up and diverted his attention back towards his work. John was mad, moving around, trying the strength of the cuffs. It was too late the hand of cards was served, the dagger went through the whole eye, John cried out from pain, the neighbors on that street must have wondered what's going on. But it wasn't anything out of the ordinary, they shook their heads and continued in their petty lives in the name of the Reich. The girl was crying, she hadn't seen that much terror before. The obersturmführer kneeled down to her "Don't cry... tell me what's your name?"

"Eliška, sir"

"So, Eliška your uncle was a criminal, he betrayed the Reich and cooperated with its enemies", he was only served what he deserved. For Eliška the whole world was a blur, so much terror, fear and hate had collected in her as never before. In that moment, the obersturmführer's hand reached down towards his pistol. Eliška knew what was going to happen, everything is over, she's going to die she thought. And then a bar of chocolate appeared in the obersturmführer's hand. "You were obedient, so here's your reward and now go home, your parents must be looking for you. And there's something more. Remember how the enemies of the Reich will end up!"

Eliška was on her way, she was in shock, startled and disoriented. Only her memory guided her home. She came to her senses after a while, when she heard the shot it rang in her ears. Tears ran down her cheeks, she knew that her uncle wasn't amongst the living anymore. She began to run, her head filled with ideas. The words of the obersturmführer bounced around in her head. She knew she must do something; her father was also

collaborating with the resistance. She was shaking when the thought of her father ending up the same way appeared in front of her eyes. She stopped in front of their home, it was empty, no one was home. She ran inside, the massive door almost stopped her. She swung it open. Running down the stairs into the cellar, her hands shaking as she gently removed a box full of leaflets from an old closet. She took the anti-German propaganda leaflets and quickly threw them into the fire. She was relieved, finally she felt safe. But this illusion wouldn't last for long. Sitting in the living room flipping the pages of the book that was mandatory even in the smallest home library on the territory of the Reich. This heavy book had on its front cover embossed with golden letters "Mein Kampf". This was the "new bible", the Nazi bible, the book, that was responsible for this madness. A book can't be bad or good, that can't be, she thought. Only a person can be bad, the one who wrote it. Her train of thought was intersected by the hard knocking on the door. She slowly moved towards the door, carefully looking outside, in front of the house there was a black convertible made by Mercedes with a Berlin license plate. When she opened the door ajar, in front of her stood a figure in a brown overcoat with a black hat on his head, amazingly hiding the identity of its wearer. The man with his emotionless face said:

"Guten Tag! Are your parents at home?" that Bavarian accent was iconic, you can't mistake it for any other.

"No, my parents are at work," Eliška replied,

"All right, may we step in?" He wasn't interested in the answer, stepping inside her home, he began to walk around the living room. Checking every part of the room. He noticed the open book on the couch. He picked it up and asked Eliška: "do you read this book?"

"Yes, sir," replied Eliška. She slowly moved towards the unknown German.

"May I bring you something, coffee, tea?"

"Nein danke," smiled the gestapo officer, it must have been the first smile that appeared on his face for a long time. "Please take a seat I only want to have a little chat."

"Did I do something wrong?" Eliška asked with guilt in her voice.

"Oh no, no, of course not, I just came to talk, about what your mom and dad talk about at home."

Eliška couldn't find her place, the gestapo officer knew he was in the right place, he thought about the bonus he would get if he manages to destroy the local resistance cell.

"About almost anything, about money, you know they must work hard so that we can have a little food on our plates."

"Everyone is talking about that. Haven't you heard that they used any anti-reich rhetoric, any talk that was aimed against the Fuhrer. Or were they talking about some resistance?" He didn't move looking at her with his bright blue eyes, he was looking for hints of insecurity.

“No, not really, actually I heard them once talk about how the resistance should go back to England and not interfere in our peaceful lives”.

“Very well, I can see, that your parents are exemplary citizens” he gave her candy and a little lapel pin. Elizabeth hadn’t even taken in a breath and the gestapo officer has already disappeared. He slowly walked towards his Mercedes, took out a small notepad, wrote down the house number, street, and name.... “suspicious for cooperation with the resistance.”

Viktorie Bárová

REFLECTION ESSAY ABOUT HEROISM

Here we are, nowadays, in our homes, with our families. We wouldn’t be here without those who had been here before us. I’m talking about heroes and not just those ones from the last century. Who is actually a hero? Some sort of relic from the old days? Is the hero an anachronism that does not belong to this day? Prince on a white horse, who will kill the dragon? I think the hero can be someone without a horse and sword. By definition, a hero is “a person who usually has superhuman abilities or idealized character traits that allow him to behave unusually and perform significant deeds (heroic deeds) that make him famous.” But must every hero be famous? Does he have to have superhuman abilities? I think that hero should be someone who does not lack humanity. Hero is a person of flesh and bones just like any of us. In fact, the hero can sit next to you right now, you can share a compartment on the train with him or give him advice on the way to the city centre. They are just uncommonly common people. Does heroism have to be so unattainable for us? Or is it just our inaccessibility and shallowness? There are a lot of heroes who have received various awards and honours for their actions, but in my opinion, everyone who has lived their era and managed to take care of themselves and others is a hero. Because there are no little heroes.

Adéla Hlízová

MOTHER

I'm looking out of the window
And spot my little treasure there
My face forms a smile
Right after replaced by desolating fear, that robs me of the air

The danger feels so close, better toe the line
Behind that great wall, they slaughter without a cause
Oh, you poor child of mine
Be careful, or you'll end up in their dreadful claws

Leaving her here everyday
Not having enough food
After work running home, praying all the way
Please, dear Lord don't let her life be devalued

Unable to give her a peaceful childhood
The sound of her hungry stomach rips out my soul
It's all given, but I want to do the right thing, as one should
If I don't, will her destiny be empty and dark hole?

Stiff and worried all the time
What about her future? Did I give her enough nurture?
Her beloved father's death was result of a war crime
Ugh, those people lack virtue

I have to survive
Be there for her, lift all the bans
I'll always care, as long as I'm alive
They won't get her life in their repulsive hands

Andrea Stanislavová

BETWEEN SHOTS

Child raised between shots
Waking up in bed every morning
How much time he has left
Who will hear his voice
When he screams more and more
However, the others hear nothing at all
She is alone among the people
A heart full of hope
He's looking for reasons to laugh
While laying a flower on the tomb
Being afraid of living in his own country
Where the truth makes you lie on the ground
And for a few sentences
You won't see this world anymore
She wipes the tears from her eye
When the gate closes
And then in one minute
When it gets stuck on the fence
But what the eyes do not see, that does not hurt the heart
But what if there are no more eyes, but there is still something to see

Although this was not our first intention, the illustrator of the turbulent story of Mrs. Květa Turková was the etheric observer of details, Katarína Stohrová, who has been currently studying at a bilingual secondary grammar school for the fourth year. Although music is now her greatest passion when it comes to art, she still devotes herself in her free time to pencil and brush strokes. Art and creation itself give her a feeling of freedom, because there are no rules and boundaries applied. Of course, she also had a free hand in creating illustrations for the witness's story. "I was mainly focusing on minimalism and each drawing has its connection with the story. I did not want my illustrations to have a negative undertone in them, therefore I paid attention to positive things." Katarína commented on her work.









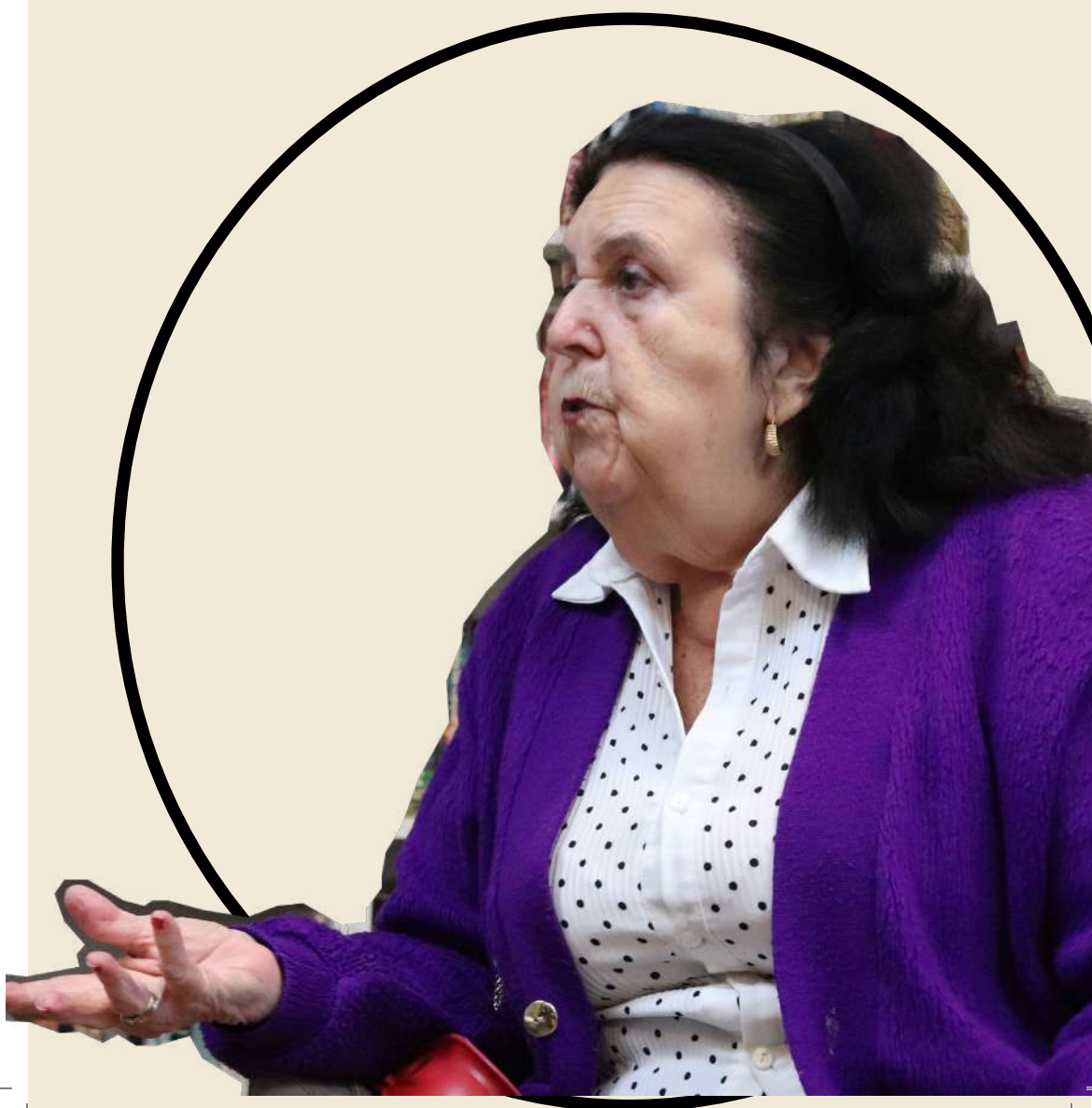
Viktoria Bárová (on the right) was interested in the story of the witness, how openly she was able to talk about her life



The pre-Christmas literary reading also featured a short story by Adrián Adamík, a student from the Slovak secondary grammar school, read by the workshop lecturer Lukáš Vydra

Květa Turková

Mrs. Květa's memories are full of dramatic events, but also of vitality

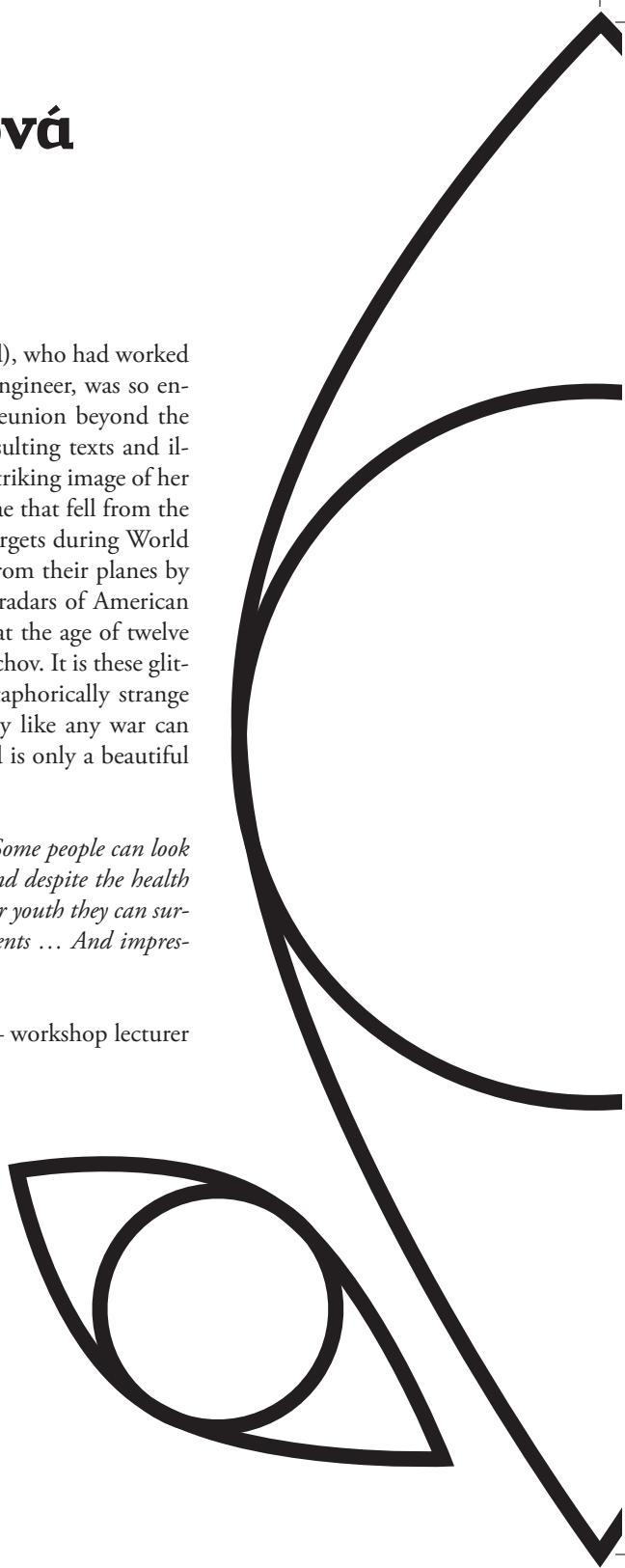


Milena Šídlová

The story of **Mrs. Milena** (87 years old), who had worked on the radio for 40 years as a sound engineer, was so engaging that the listeners requested a reunion beyond the project time frame. Judging by the resulting texts and illustrations by Matyáš Slabý, the most striking image of her memories were the silver tinfoil lamellae that fell from the sky during the raids on the strategic targets during World War II in Prague. They were thrown from their planes by the German occupiers to confuse the radars of American enemies. Mrs. Milena collected them at the age of twelve with her friends on Černý Vrch in Smíchov. It is these glittering stripes that have become a metaphorically strange paradox in the narrative that a tragedy like any war can unexpectedly bring - a devastating raid is only a beautiful celestial theater in children's eyes...

"Youth does not have to depend on age. Some people can look so lively and energetic even in old age and despite the health problems that afflict them, that with their youth they can surpass even the renowned youth of adolescents ... And impression like this Mrs. Milena gave us."

Ivana Myšková – workshop lecturer





Milena Šídlová in the Czechoslovak radio at the mixing desk in 1958

Today seemed to start even more commonly than usual. In the morning, my mother prepared a slice of bread with lard and a glass of milk. After breakfast, I put on my favourite red skirt which I got from Aunt Jarka for Christmas and tights which were patched several times. I got my mother's baked miracle for a snack and the last apple we had at home. At school, I got a straight A for reciting the lyrics of the song Sieg Heil Viktoria, which we had to memorize by April 18th. Like every Monday, I went with my friends Bohdanka and Jakub to the playground near Černý vrch. I was playing hopscotch with Bohdanka when Barbora Dvořáková from 6.B ran up, leaned against a tree, gasped, and then stuttered intermittently that we had to go and see something immediately. We wanted to know what but she didn't answer so we decided to follow her. So the three of us went out on a small hill where we go usually sledding and we looked around.

All the children from the playground were standing around us, looking up at the blue-gray sky with amazement on their faces. Slowly I looked up at the sky and saw the extraordinary spectacle. Airplanes were flying overhead. It was weird. Instead of the bombs falling from them, which often made us hide in shelters, strips of some shiny papers poured down, playing with all the colours in the reflection of the sun. It was beautiful. Everyone was just watching in silence the strange flying firework.

It didn't take long time and the military planes disappeared. There was a strange silence that was broken by a sudden rain. Together with Bohdanka and Jakub, we ran down the grassy hill until we got to the playground. We took our schoolbags and ran home. Bohdanka lived nearby so she was the first to leave, Jakub left right after her, I ended up walking alone in the rain. Even though I knew that my mother would be pretty angry that my clothes were wet I didn't run I was just wandering along well-known road with my eyes fixed on the ground. Suddenly, at my feet, I saw a large piece of that mysterious glossy paper falling from the sky. I bent down to get a better look at it. I knew it wasn't a piece of paper, but a tinfoil that my dad had once told me about. I picked it up and tucked it in my jacket pocket. I was so excited about the glittering souvenir that even the icy drops of rain stopped bothering me.

When I got home, my mother was standing in the doorway with a towel in her hand. She sighed and led me to the bathroom. She wrapped me all in a towel so I looked like a strudel, kissed my forehead, and went to the kitchen. I was sitting on the corner of the bathtub for a moment and then I remembered that I had brought something home. I crept quietly down the hall and carefully pulled a silver piece of tinfoil from my pocket. I looked at it again. I liked the way it was shimmering beautifully in the lamp light.

I went to my room and hid my catch in a box under the bed. I lay down and thought for a while longer about today's ordinary unusual day. My eyelids were heavy and I immersed in a deep sleep.

Marie Pallová

THE LIFE OF A SLOTH IN THE TOTALITARIAN NARNIA

Mr. Sloth opened his eyes as the wind blew, warming him sweetly.
Having his place, having his corner, what a thing this is! What a line.
He had seen many leaves before, after all, the vulture didn't look at him.
Far as he could see through the sleepy eyes, the world withered, the streams clouded,
neither fish, nor water, floating as they could.

-
Look! A singing nest, wake, yawn, and sit.
Open your eyes, wake up, there is no dream, there won't be any.

-
Crawl a bit, the trees will fall apart, yikes, the leaf has sores, cover, destroy, away with it.

-
The sun will brighten, let's go down, perhaps our view of things will change.

-
Splish splash! Splish and splash. A tiny drop, this teeny tiiny, silver and glittering.

-
Swallows fly somewhere, vultures fly elsewhere.
Do you like it? Come on, they'll clap, a tear has dropped.

-
Knowing that, Mr. Sloth wouldn't climb to the ground. The vultures would follow him,
as the annoying moths would not climb less. They would return less.
Even the return to the tree was bitter, Mr. Sloth did not know: to stay or to leave.
So he went to sleep, closed his eyes, yawned and fell asleep.

Michaela Bárová

21/8/1968

Red, everywhere is red
flags are rolling around
rolling on the heavy armour
armour-dances
all those red dances

She-herself among the crowd
ant with purpose
the only purpose- to reach the anthill

But this anthill is invaded
Red ants has arrived
And now,
She-herself among the crowd
Has nowhere to go
Just running around

The anthill hungers peace
Will it?
Peace,
Will it ever come?

Confused
Empty faces
Why did they come?

Go away!
Go back from where you've came
Distraught
Confused
Empty faces
Nothing for you here happening

Ruled by peace
No revolution
No disobedience
Only existence
The one that remains

Existence – the one wearing human face
And hope
The one - burning

Ornela Grecmacherová

ABOUT THREE EAGLE FEATHERS

I hope I make it, I sighed and rolled over for the third time. What time could it be? It's still dark outside, but I've been listening to sparrows for a while. I don't think I'm going to fall asleep again, so I sit on the bed and I start to think of how to handle those rules, wondering whether to give up. But after a while I say to myself that I have been going there voluntarily so far and I can't just give up! It's just stress because you haven't done it yet, don't panic Milena, you can do it. I was trying to calm myself down.

“Good morning,” my mother suddenly came into my room and yanked me out of my thoughts. I was staring at her for a moment until I switched from my thoughts to reality and wished her good morning back with a stuttering voice. She could see it on me. She could see that I was stressed. She approached me and gave me a sweet kiss on my forehead, stroking my hair and I felt a momentary reassurance and motherly love. After a while, she got up and handed me the precious slice of bread she had been saving for me for this situation, so that I could relieve the stress with food. It has always helped her, but I didn’t really believe it. I obediently took the bread and I started to chew it slowly, thinking again about what awaits me. I only had a few minutes left, so I crawled into my room for a bit. I pulled out a small piece of paper from under the pillow, on which was written with ink in children’s writing what I was currently afraid of. There were three sentences. There were three sentences I was afraid of. With a deep breath, I folded it twice and put it in my right pocket. I said goodbye to my mother and headed down the hill, with a large backpack on my back, through the long street to the local store, where the meeting took place. I was there among the first and I immediately stood aside, away from the main event. I was thinking again about my big day, which was exactly today. The bus journey to Znojmo was long, but I shortened it by talking to Eva, who was seventeen. Eva had a kind of positive effect on me. She calmed me down and gave me a decent dose of confidence. Getting off the bus, I no longer walked with my head down, instead, I walked with a smile and determination for a new adventure that I have to conquer

We sat in a large hall where the guides emphasized the rules and gave us some advice. Then there was a space for questions, and after a while I thought: it’s happening. I got up and packed my twine, a pocket knife and a bottle of water. I came out of the building and I started looking around. So, where would you like to go Milena? To the left, or right? Straightforward or backwards? I was hesitating for a moment. So I closed my eyes and started turning around on one spot. I counted to fourteen and while opening my eyes I staggered. Ok, I’m going that way. I was still looking behind me, but no one was there. I was walking through a rather dense forest and I was watching each tree to see if there is anything lurking for me from behind them. I was walking for about half an hour. According to my guess, my father couldn’t lend me his watch because he was fighting at the front. I stopped by a large tree. It took some time to set a fire, but after a while I managed it. Oh, I’ve started to be hungry, but only two hours have passed, so I still have twenty-two more left. Well, I have to hang on, I thought. After a while I happily thought that I’m pretty good at it. It was slowly getting darker, it had to be around half past eight. I put out my heavily set fire with a little bit of water. I lied down and covered myself with a piece of blanket. I also had a book which my father kept on the cupboard. As it was forbidden to have lanterns, I couldn’t read it. I was thinking about different things, I found out that it was not as terrible as I expected when suddenly a strange whisper ripped me out of my thoughts.

I sat down and I was trying to be as quiet as possible. After a while it stopped. I calmed myself down with the thought that the sounds were just leaves. I lied down again and

when I was trying to fall asleep I heard: "Hey, are you sleeping?" It came from the outside. I quickly sat down and rubbed my eyes to see if I was dreaming. I shouted out of fear: "What do you want and who are you?" Then a thought flashed through my mind, that if it's someone from the supervisors, I'm in a curse. "Hi," he said again. I was so scared and I asked again: "Who are you?" "Booo," he shouted, "I'm Marek, how are you managing it by yourself?" I was looking at him with fear in my eyes. I didn't want to say anything, I just disagreed. He asked again, "Why don't you talk to me? You're here for the first time, aren't you?" he laughed out loud. I was looking at him but still didn't want to tell him anything. After a moment of silence, he began again, "Don't be silly, you can't live a day without words, I'd go crazy." I'm begging. He was smiling, looking into my eyes slowly moving towards me and whispered: "Don't be shy and say your name at least." I hesitated for a moment, but after a while I felt I could trust him, so I told him. "Ohh, nice to meet you, Milenka."

"At first we started talking about the scout, then about books, and later on we found out that we live close to each other. After a long talk, I felt it would be a great friendship, and I thought it was mutual. We were just looking at each other for a moment, then I yawned deeply, and he realized I was tired. We said goodbye and he slowly got lost in the dark forest. I don't even know how I fell asleep and it was morning already. I didn't know what time it was, but my stomach was really rumbling. I only had a few hours left. I was sitting, drinking the last drops of the water I had left in the bottle, thinking of my new friend. I slowly started packing my blanket. I was thinking about the whole night ... But, I think I did it quite well. I lay on the grass and took a deep breath, smiling at the high trees above me being happy for my new friend. I couldn't wait to come home and talk to my mom. Suddenly my stomach rumbled, and I thought of the slice of bread I probably missed the most. I picked up my backpack and walked slowly toward the camp. I've been happily murmuring a song and jumping on the way back to the camp. I heard some children voices in the distance, yes, just a little and I'm there. Our leader ran up to me with a piece of bread and a medal in her hand: "Congratulations, Milenka, you did it!" She disguised me with my first medal, which I was really proud of that time. But then it dawned on me that I hadn't fully accomplished everything for hundred percent. The medal on my chest was burning a little bit. I started to blush. I bowed my head and walked away in my thoughts ... Until I met Marek and suddenly I stopped thinking about my doubts. When I got home, I told my mother everything that had happened on the scout. I mean, not completely everything. I skipped the part about how I cheated a bit, after all, she doesn't have to know everything. Mom was happy having me at home. In the evening under the lamp, I counted the days until the next summer and wrote them on paper. With various thoughts in my head and paper in my hands, I slowly fell asleep.

I still have been meeting some people from camp until today. We like remembering these times. Every half a year we have a meeting in Tersovny's house and I'm still looking forward to it, the joy can be compared to the joy I experienced during the following scout camps.

Kateřina Vanžurová**RED AND GRAY**

She pulled the scarf closer to her neck with her left hand. In her second hand, she had a string bag. The scarf was red-blue, nice, but it didn't warm her up much in such cold and damp weather. She got it from her husband for Christmas. He got it for her from Božena Ježíčková, who bought it in Tuzex. The street was empty. The wind swept the last remnants of the leaves along the cobblestones across the whole sidewalk. Sometimes the leaves were caught on a street lamp, or a granite curb, or the wind carried them further beyond the horizon. In the town square, that shone and burst with colours during my childhood, there were only a few people. They blended with the surrounding gray. There only parked a green car opposite the post office in which a motionless man was sitting with a hat. Two old grandmothers were scurrying across the square. They never went alone. She waited with greeting until she was only a few steps away. They both returned the greeting, one of them added a little smile, she didn't dare to do anything more. The man with the hat saw everything and what if...

She knew both old women, one as an acquaintance and the other, the one on the left, as a neighbour. She called one of them as an aunt even though she wasn't her parents sister. She wasn't their relative at all, but how could she call her as a child? Comrade was not common back then ... The wind blew again. The tip of the scarf pressed against her lips smeared with a red lipstick, and it left a perfect radiant imprint of her lips on this red and blue scarf. She swallowed the curse and put the half full string bag to her other hand. That beautiful scarf cost Jarda a lot. She should look after it. She won't have money for a new one this year. And even if she did, she would rather buy Anička, her little treasure, the dream doll, which she admires through the shop window with the other kids. She said she will sew dresses for her and read from the painted collection of fairy tales that she got from her grandmother for her birthday this year. She took the string bag with her other hand again. There were a kilo of carrots and a half a kilo of parsley in it. Also apples, beautiful and smelling sweet, for Anička's trip with pioneers. There was not a large selection of vegetables right now. But it doesn't matter, they'll manage somehow, as always. Only the milk made her sad, she went for it almost over half of Vršovice and it was no longer in stock. No wonder, the milk was healthy and the children liked it. It was no longer the disgusting, bluish and thin like they bought after the war. In the line at the butcher's shop, she met Lida Vávrová, Karolínka's mother, who you played in their house last week and who Anička can't get enough of. Karolínka is a good friend of Anička's. She is from seamless family, they agreed with Jarda when they listened to the girls' conversations in their living room. Kája taught Anička very useful things in pioneers. She had known Kája's mother for a long time, from parental meetings, but they did not see each other often enough to decide whether she liked her or not. Lida was telling her the news,

so the line in front of her was getting shorter. At the butcher's, she bought exactly what she wanted. She said goodbye to Lida with the promise that she would sometimes stop at hers for a coffee and she hurried home. The wind was still stronger and the air was cold. The street she had been walking on almost daily for several years was suddenly making her goosebumps. As if the weather decided to gobble up even the last warm colours and turn them into different shades of gray. She turned the corner as she had a thousand times before and did not allow her eyes to look at the house. She knew what she would see. Bullet holes on the dark facade of the roofless house that stood there waiting for salvation. There was no need to remember the dull pain. The war ended years ago, the evil was defeated and she is well now. It thundered. She tried to hurry up, she was almost running, the heavy string bag banged into her calf every other step. She got to a crossroads. When she goes to the left, she may make it home and avoid the storm. It takes ten minutes longer along the street on the right, but she walks only along this one and not the other. She went to the left only once, and then her mother scolded her with saying that the street was cursed with powerful spell and that she should not walk on it. The sky was illuminated with a thunderbolt and the first raindrops covered the dusty ground. She hesitated for a moment before running. That cursed street hasn't changed at all. She tried to look only in front of her, not to notice the surroundings, to get home quickly. The long cobbled street was deserted. No cars and trash cans, no painted man on the sidewalk drawn with a stolen chalk from school, which would now be washed away in the rain. No thunder was heard here either. She felt that no matter how hard she tried, she would not hear the drumming of the rain on the roofs. She wasn't running anymore. Slowly, very carefully, she was approaching the center of the street. There where the paving stones were placed, as if they were placed there later. The rain was so heavy that it created a kind of curtain. The memories brought her back so vividly that at that moment she would have sworn peacefully that the situation she had witnessed was repeating itself again. There, behind a curtain of rain, she saw them, impoverished, taped with the letter N on their hands, pulling stones and masonry debris, the blood on their hands, the back and face shining in that gray. The rain spilled the red stain on her scarf, the string bag was lying on the ground for a longer time. Apples, beautifully smelling sweet, battered on the cobblestones, and in a moment her knees and palms fell to the ground, followed by her tears.

Tuzex = shop during communism with luxury imported products

Vítězslav Mrhálek

HOPEFULLY NOTHING BAD WILL HAPPEN

During that few days she spent at home, she didn't even know exactly why this is happening. It has been rumored that it is about suppressing a counter-revolution. Everywhere were some soldiers and tanks. But they weren't their soldiers ... When she tried to get to work at the usual time on Wednesday, she didn't fight her way there at all. The streets were full of people ... tanks and soldiers ... and no trams were driving. People were talking excitedly, trying to figure out what was happening, but no one really knew anything. What was more also radio went silent. She only heard from others that there was a shooting, where someone had been killed... As she entered the radio, she noticed that there were more people than usual. Soldiers, basically boys, were lying on the ground, and next to them toys and other things from broken cabinets nearby. She came to hers. Nothing was gone. -. She only had there some of her clothes, a pen, and a notebook. Nothing they might be interested in. She took what she needed and went further into the building, where there were only employees running around. Only today radio started broadcasting again. "Good morning," came from behind. She turned and saw Mr. Vysoky. "Hello, don't you know why the soldiers are here?" "If you mean here on the radio, what I heard it is because they have nowhere to move them. But if you think why there are Warsaw Pact soldiers in our country, there was a brief report in the newspapers that they had been invited by the government to suppress the counter-revolution. "" Ah, I hope nothing bad happens, like some battles. " So far nothing bad has happened, so it could stay that way ... But my wife told me that our neighbour's friend said someone had been shot. "" Oh, I hope it's just a false rumor. "" I hope so, too. Now, as we broadcast again, maybe we will find out more. Although who knows, censorship has tightened again. "" And why we weren't broadcasting? The whole time the radio was closed and the soldiers were around... " "What I was asking around, I heard that in radio there was shooting as if there were hidden enemies ... But why was it closed for so long, I do not know ... maybe soldiers destroyed some important equipments." An angry voice of the boss came from across the hall, "Hey! Vysoky! What are you doing there?! You're supposed to be here, damn it!" "I'm sorry, I'm leaving. " He turned to Mrs. Šídlová once again, " Goodbye for now, "and took a brisk step toward the boss. Meanwhile Šídlová had left for the technical department. There she sat down to the counter and started working.

After an exhausting night shift, she headed back home. She found out almost nothing new. Hopefully nothing bad will happen ...

Matyáš Slabý is graduating in graphic design this year. Like most boys, he was interested in war as a child, especially in conflicts, battles, and weapons. He read about it in books, saw different documents, and even took part in reconstructed battles with his father. At first the meeting with Mrs. Milena Šídlová, showed him in more details what life of ordinary people looked like during the war years. He was most impressed - as were the other participants in the workshop - the story about the American air raid, which she and her friends were watching, that time Milena was pupil. Together they were dazzled by the beauty of the glittering tinfoil that was falling from the bombers on Prague. "Capturing this moment was a great challenge for me, because I realized that I had to make sure that the result should have looked like tinfoil and not like ash or something like that," Matthias explains his artistic motives.





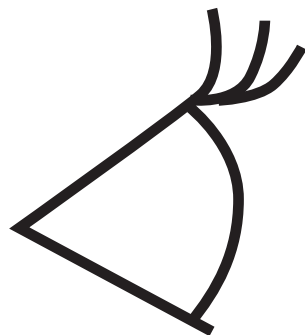
Thanks to the playfulness of Marie Pallová, a mysterious poem was created, which pleased the youthful soul of Mrs. Milena and would certainly be able to attract even the youngest readers.



The workshop lecturer Ivana Myšková and Mrs. Milena share their experiences working for the Czech Radio, even though they each worked in a different position and at a different time.

According to the workshop leader, the pleasant atmosphere of the meeting was marked by the relieving lightness that radiates from the witness





Ing. Jaroslav Votýpka

Among the five interviewees was only one man, and yet **Mr. Jaroslav** (87 years old), who lived for almost forty years in Canada. Rarely in memory of emigration talk about serious things. The other stories were humorous and no one had a chance to get bored for a moment. Each of the participants in the workshop chose one story to process, which together form a mosaic-like story. The positive approach to life was very inspiring for the listeners. It was clear from his memory that he fondly remembers the years he spent in Canada, but that at the same time he could start his life even after his return to the Czech Republic. Where would it ever occur to him that at the age of eighty-five, he would start playing in theatre and performing in front of an audience! In short, every day will bring something new and there is still something to look forward to.

“Mr. Jaroslav won us over from the first moment with his optimism and sense of humour. We have probably all realized that it is wrong to live our lives too seriously and it is even worse to take yourself too seriously! His unexpected passing affected me a lot, because even after the project meeting we were in contact and I was always looking forward to his talking about the adventurous transatlantic life. I’m so glad I had the opportunity to meet him. I’m just sorry, there won’t be another meeting”

Eva Skalová – workshop lecturer



*Jaroslav Votýpka was never afraid of life's challenges.
Many of them were offered to him by the wild Canadian
nature*

**Eliška Jarošová, Dita Schimperková, Daniela Helcmanová
and Adam Kováč**

ON THE CHRISTMAS MARKET

“I’ve had lived in Canada for 39 years and there wasn’t a moment when I would regret it.”

It was a snowy Advent Sunday and I decided to tidy-up a little bit before the Christmas. Therefore, I grabbed a vacuum cleaner and started to get rid of all the dust and dirt in my apartment. After all, my son with his family would come to visit me after a year, and I didn’t want them to think I am scumbag. While I was vacuuming, I turned on the radio and started to move to the beats of music. I did everything better when the music was on. I was vacuuming near a chair when I noticed a paper lying under it. I knelt down and pulled it out. It was an invitation to flea market taking place at the square today. The invitation probably fell there some time ago and I forgot about it. As I looked at the invitation, I got the urge to visit the market. “I could buy some presents there,” I thought. So, I went there right away. I walked around all those stalls with pleasant smelling food, mulled wine and souvenirs. People around me were coming and going. It was harder for me to break through the mass of people, but I didn’t care. With peripheral vision, I noticed a golden colour, what made me stop immediately and turn around. Several people bumped into me. They mumbled something annoyingly but I couldn’t care less. I was just gazing at the beauty. I was looking on that long, golden strapless dress with a bow at the waist. I recalled the moment I thought I had long forgotten. We were young, me and Elizabeth. That other night, she wore a similar dress and shone brighter than all stars in the sky. There was some slow sentimental music playing in the background. She adored this kind of style, but I suffered every time I heard it. We danced together at her uncle Franklin’s ball, whom I met when I moved in with Liz. He was such a grump, but he would organize beautiful balls, which I, as a lover of ballroom dancing, could not miss. “Watch out, Edo,” Liz admonished me as I stepped on her foot for like millionth time. “I’m sorry,” I apologized. “I’m just crazy about you and I can’t believe that a woman as beautiful as you are is mine.” Elizabeth laughed as if I said a brilliant joke. While laughing, she tilted her head back just like small children would do. That was one of the many things I loved about her. “I belong to no one,” she said with a smile. Liz has always been a very quick-tempered and proud woman. The other men in town warned me about her. “She’s a feminist,” they said. “Get your hands off her while you can.” But I liked her honesty and audacity. I loved how she fought for women’s rights and didn’t want anyone to own her. I loved her wildness. A crowd of German tourists woke me up from a pleasant daydreaming, when screaming at each other across the square. I was back at the Christmas markets. I continued walking through the market, thinking of my grandson. That little scamp was coming to see me again after a year, and I knew I had to get him

some special gift. I visited a lot of shops and stalls full of beautiful and new toys, but I didn't find anything significant. I was kind of worried because I was approaching the very end of the marketplace and still hadn't found what I was looking for. I suddenly noticed a small and inconspicuous stall which didn't look like others. This particular stall wasn't decorated with typical lightning, there wasn't even any pleasant smelling aroma coming from it. I wasn't sure what fascinated me about this stall but I headed toward it. It was a wooden shack and in front of it there were boxes full of jumble, especially of old toys. "Good evening, sir! Just take a look. You never know where you find a treasure," the salesman called up on me and I obeyed. I started going through one box, and when I thought all of my efforts were in vain, I saw a small and bright red car at the very bottom of the box. I pull it out eagerly and noticed that it was a beautiful replica of the Ford Anglia I once owned. I began reminiscing with a smile. Back in times, everyone wanted a car, but not everyone could afford it. Fortunately, I was lucky enough. A good friend of mine sold it to me, and I never regretted a single coin I spent on it. My Ford was made of an old iron, but it was the best companion I could ever wish for my travels! My Ford drove me through mountains, forests and sandy beaches, simply everywhere where my adventurous heart has led me. That's why I was quite surprised and amused when I heard how my red companion ended up. My friend John came to me and said: "Ed, what the hell did you sell me?!" "Well, I told you I didn't know how much it would last," I said. "Yeah, but I never imagined that it would break down in the middle of a straight road. The engine fell out. After all, I had to start laughing and at that moment it was clear to me that I had to buy it for my grandson, and hope that he would experience the same adventures with him as I did. Soon it was time to go home. As I was walking home, I saw Mrs. Magdalene from a distance on her evening walk. As I was approaching closer, I noticed Tobi running towards me. Although, he chewed my favourite slippers last time, I didn't care at that moment. I had a smile on my face and I felt great. "Good evening, Mrs Neighbour." She didn't even have time to answer because I was already taking the keys out of my pocket. I was looking forward to the warmth of home and a hot cocoa. As I was walking up the stairs I whistled my favourite salsa rhythm. As soon as I entered the apartment, I picked up my sailor's cup, made cocoa in it, and sat down in a rocking chair. I fancied eating fruit cakes with cocoa so I decided to bring myself one. I took a pen and a paper. I had a lot of things on my mind and heart and after an hour two letters for my sons were laying on my desk. I took one last sip and my eyes slowly began to close.

Rafaela Safina, who is graduating in graphic design this year and the contemporary witness Jaroslav Votýpka were joined with an optimistic view of life and also the joy of learning new things. She is also attracted by continents other than ours in Europe, so one would expect something typically Canadian to appear in the illustration, probably wild nature. But the opposite is true! The author chose a detail that does not reveal the story in the slightest, but it is a symbol of nostalgic but warm memories of youth. "I used to dance and it was my dress that reminded me of those times. When drawing, I accentuated elegance and light, which represent the dazzling beauty of the woman from Mr. Votýpka's memories," explains Rafaela.





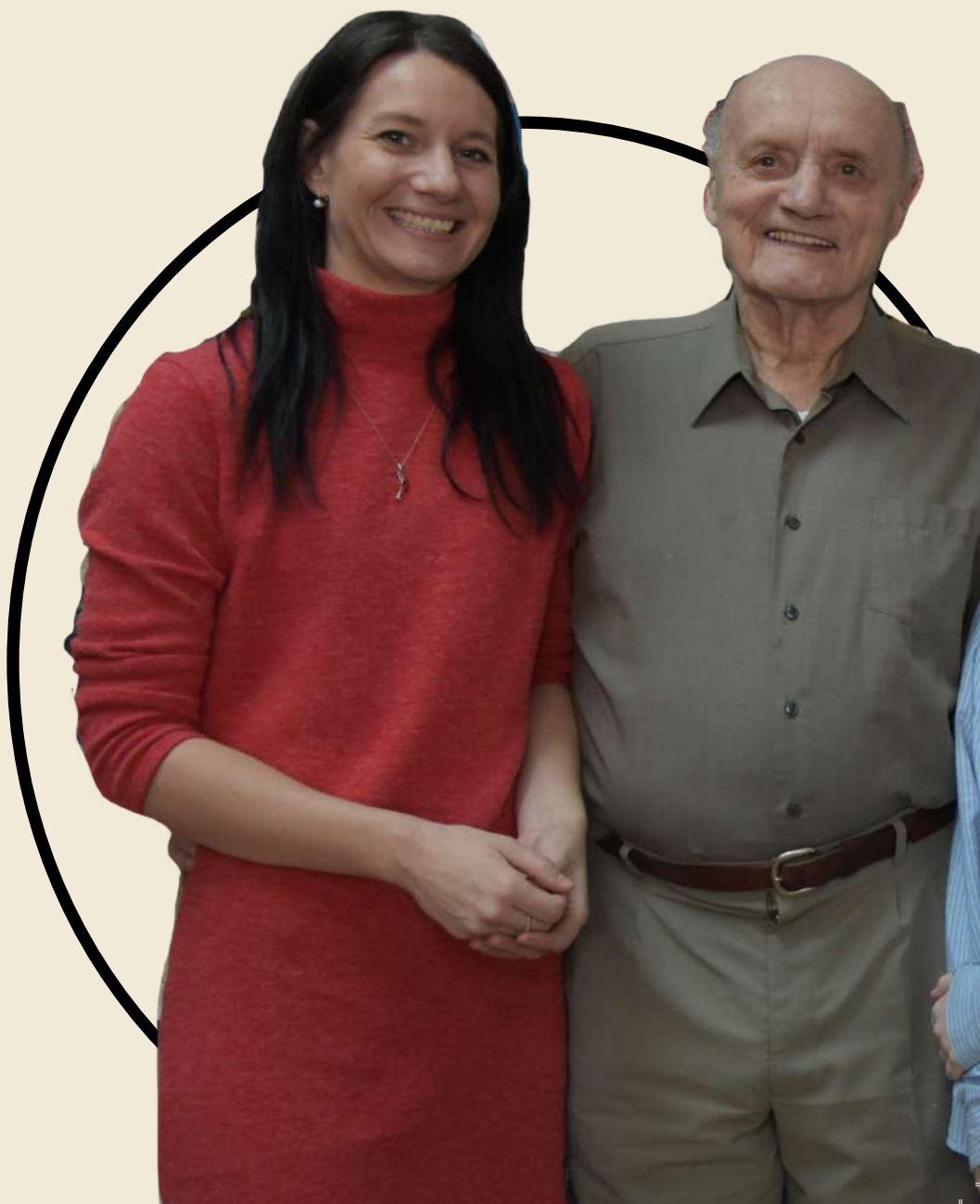
The story of Canada was both engaging and fun for young listeners. Who will also visit this place in their lives?

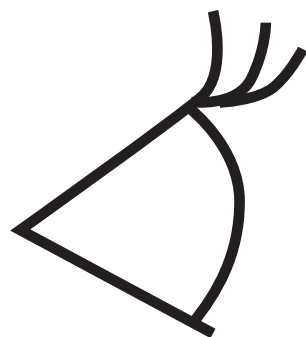


A surprise goodbye from workshop lecturer made the lover of the homemade cakes a great pleasure

Jaroslav Votýpka

*Mr. Jaroslav always felt really good in the company
of beautiful women*





PhDr. Jana Kobzová

Mrs. Jana's (65 years old) story was engaging and extremely erudite. Her hobby, since her childhood, was history, which she finally managed to study despite the political obstacles. The theme of her narration was mainly the experiences around the Velvet Revolution, which the witness perceives as the culmination of a longer process, not a matter of one day, as some young people sometimes mistakenly think. High school students then reflected, among other things, on the concept and meaning of freedom. What happened "only" thirty years ago is hard for them to imagine. They also realized that freedom, unfortunately, is not a matter of course. Each of the six listeners wrote about it. In November 1989, they also created short poems, the so-called limericks, and a joint Czech-Slovak dialogue.

"It was a great intergenerational experience for all of us. And for the high school students and teachers from Rožňava, Slovakia, were with us, it was also an international experience. A pleasant creative meeting with Mrs. Jana and with receptive, talented high school students. Told in one word: Joy! I thank Mrs. Jana for her helpfulness, for her engaging narration, for her always precise readiness on the historical topics, and even for the proofreading the texts."

Marta Dietrich Dvorská – workshop lecturer



Jana Kobzová at the international meeting of media representatives, which took place several months before the Velvet Revolution. The second from the left is the director of the Czechoslovak Television, Jan Zelenka

CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1989

Daniel Mikula

Eighty-nine that year
no one was seen at home
The clinking keys in the square
they were all starving for happiness
they wanted to change the world

Everyone had had enough
they all lacked humanity
They called for a change
Each in his own name
It was the only option

Ingrid Jendreková

It's buzzing in the square
hope abounds in my heart
It will change or not
faith still lingers in us
They don't make us sheep

Lenka Jakubíčková

There is no place in our school
for you at all - that's for sure
You are not a pride for our party
don't say anything in defence
Take care of your nest

Travel and live - she would love to
as long as she can, and is young
She was demonstrating for freedom
The StB dragged her behind the pub
It was terror and not government

Magdaléna Goligovová

She was in the square then
Her husband was punched
They said a revolution
is to support evolution
Yeah, I call that luck!

While having a beer
he had a pif on all of them
He didn't say a word
otherwise he would say a lot
And so he stayed in the barn

Irena Vintrová

Beautiful flowers,
from a young girl.
Why do you reject them?
Why do you deny them?
Like certain offences...

Natálie Velebilová

When the Communists were here
nothing was entirely certain
What will happen to us?
Shall we call ourselves sir?
And is everything clean today?

CONSIDERATIONS ON FREEDOM

OR THINKING ABOUT THE PETITION OF SEVERAL SENTENCES

Lenka Jakubičková

I think that a person who has never experienced freedom cannot fully understand how essential it is to feel safe in your country, to be able to express your own opinion and show the world who you really are. We, who were born into a free country, sometimes forget how lucky we are. Maybe we could stop saying that we can't, because the fact is that we can. It is enough to want it. There is no one who forbids us from realizing our dreams and wishes.

Ingrid Jendreková

Freedom

A word so easy and undemanding encounters a number of ambiguities and limitations in a person's life. It is a matter of course for our generation, but our grandparents know how to appreciate it. Freedom of opinion, freedom of movement between countries... Freedom. This magical word can be understood in different ways. My definition of freedom is the ability to express my feelings, opinions, thoughts, to travel - where and when I want to, without restrictions and the feeling of being blamed, to do whatever I can think of. The feeling of danger, fear intensifies the effort to break free from the chains of the regime. By oppressing human desires, nothing has ever ended well. Desire has always won, and it is no different today. If I want something, I go for it. And even that is a feeling of unlimitedness.

Daniel Mikula

Freedom is a very wide concept for me. For young people it is certainty, but I know that older people value it more. History has written a lot, but I've survived just a little bit from it. As a younger generation, it comes to me normally when I can say what I think and I can go where I want. There are other factors, but from the point of view of freedom, these are the main ones for me. I can't imagine how I would have lived and behaved in the days of our ancestors, when it was not a matter of course (certainty). The daily activities I do would be different or maybe that would not be at all. It's a difficult idea, even impossible, and I'm happy that I don't have to deal with it as a reality. It is strange to think that I could not talk about what I want. Without communication, we are even not people.

Without traveling the world would be black and white. All those happy memories in those few years of being would not happen, and that would be terrible. It's the same with opinions. To use the opinion of only one person and to obey him would be frightening. Unfortunately, sometimes it was like this, but people fought for their freedom. They were driven by desire, want and in the end it won over everything that was against it. That is why I am happy that we live in freedom and at least for the most part we can do what we enjoy and we can make our own decisions.

Irena Vintrová

Freedom. What it is? Is it something you own, feel, or is it just a thought? Can it be recognized as something that everyone can say what they want even if it would hurt people around us? We can say what we want and no one would arrest us for it, kill us, but we are still silent, why? Maybe there is still some fear of the past political regime in us? Or is it fear of the people around us and of what they might think of us? Can we consider leaving our country as a freedom? Even if we don't leave it because "we don't have the money" or "we don't have the time"? Can you consider it free to work wherever we want? Even when we are working at one place, where we don't like it? Can you consider that we can choose any college we like as a freedom? Even if some of us don't get in, either when the ones get in but they will no longer be interested and "cut" with it, or to fail and throw them out? Freedom has a very broad sense. It involves a huge number of things, but at the same time so little... Freedom is not granted to everyone. Not everybody has the opportunity to be free, not everyone lives in a "free" country.

Natálie Velebilová

Freedom - a very complex and at the same time so a simple word. We have had freedom as such for 30 years, but do we really have it?

The first thing that comes to my mind when I say freedom is the freedom of speech. Basically, we can say anything and we are not in danger of being locked up or even killed for our opinion. But even so, some people are afraid to say anything at all, to express their opinion there, where they are not feeling well, and they are afraid of what others will say. I think we have these days really great freedom, we can just gather ourselves and travel wherever we want, which was not so easy before. At the same time, the school denies us some freedom. They tell us to touch the stars, and then they tell us where to sit, when to go to the bathroom and what to think. But despite some denial of freedom, I think we have much more freedom than people used to have or people in other countries, and I am grateful for that.

Magdaléna Goligovová

Freedom. It is easy to lose and hard to gain. Some are born into freedom, others are not. We live in an unjust world, where the innocent finds himself in liberation after birth and the other loses his freedom in a foolish way. In my opinion, freedom will never be balanced in the world, it will not be the same for everyone. But even some free people, within the social dimension, are not always really free.

Freedom is also internal. A man, free in his own country, can be a prisoner in his mind. His own thoughts and emotions have power over him, and he can't control it.

So the truth is that even if at first glance one who may seem free is not really free.

**Magdaléna Goligovová, Lenka Jakubíčková,
Ingrid Jendreková, Daniel Mikula**

VIENNA SACHER

"Mom, we're going to Vienna to have a Sacher one day."

"Please don't fantasize. It's impossible."

"Stop it, nothing is impossible!"

"I won't live until that day anyway."

"Don't worry, it's going to be soon," I was trying to convince my mommy, but even I wasn't entirely sure. Hope drove me forward. People were rioting, the system was falling apart but the doubts were still persisting. After all, so many years of fear and dictatorship... I longed - like many others - for freedom of speech, for open dialogue without limits and for open borders. It didn't last long and my secret wish came true (at least the open borders) and the promise I made to my mother could now become a reality. I started my old Škoda MB 1000 De luxe and ran to my mommy. "Mom, we're going to have Sacher!" Mom just waved in disbelief, but obediently got into the car. The journey was smooth and fast and soon we found ourselves at the border. We were stopped by customs officers. Mom was startled and stiff, but I remained calm. They only wanted to see out passports. In addition, they were very friendly: "We wish you a happy journey and a pleasant stay in Austria." Mom was in shock. Beyond the borders, tears of happiness fell out of her eyes and they accompanied her all the way. Despite her tears she saw and

commented the great difference between grey Czechoslovakia and colourful and blooming Austria: "Maybe soon it will be so colourful and arranged in our country as well." As she enjoyed the classic Viennese dessert - Sacher, which she had last eaten as a child in Austria-Hungary, she touched my hand: "I didn't believe I would experience a miracle like this!"

**Ingrid Jendreková, Daniel Mikula, Magdaléna Goligovová,
Lenka Jakubíčková**

DEMONSTRATION (CZECH-SLOVAK DIALOG)

- Boy: Stop! Wait!
- Girl: I want to know what is going on.
- Boy: Do not go there, you are putting your life at risk.
- Girl: But I am not afraid. So what, I will have bruised shoulder.
- Boy: If only that.
- Girl: In the worst case, I will hide at someone's doorway.
- Boy: You might not have enough time, they are everywhere and there is a lot of them.
- Girl: Oh, please. Even if - whatever. I want to hear Kubišova singing.
- Boy: In the radio, you can, too.
- Girl: I want to hear it right here, right now! And I want to hear everything and everyone.
- Boy: Do not be silly! Water cannons are there, you will get wet. And what if they take you and expel from the school?
- Girl: Ou, please... I do not like that school anyways. Listening to Marxism-Leninism, comrades and their speeches, who would be into that?
- Boy: If you are so stubborn, well go then, but watch your tongue, there are many state security guards.
- Girl: I am familiar with that. I will be careful.
- Boy: Well, if you insist, go. You will remember my words.
- Girl: You will remember me!
- People: Truth and freedom wins! Do not fall for premature excitement! We are done, Miloš!

Irena Vintrová

MY EXPERIENCES FROM 1989 - DAILY NOTES

November 17, '89

Yesterday I went from Prague to Jindřichův Hradec to visit my parents. We spent hours talking about what has been happening in Prague since January this year. My mother was afraid that I would get involved in some kind of trouble. She heard various horrors on the radio, and God knows what her neighbours and acquaintances had told her. We had switched on the radio as a background of our conversation. Suddenly the song fell in silence and a breathless male voice spoke. He announced live what had happened in Prague. There was noise and voices in the background chanting: "We have bare hands!" and other various slogans. The parents held hands and listened intently to the radio. After the news ended, a song from Marta Kubišová was heard on the radio. I wanted to go to Prague immediately, but my parents started to persuade me not to go there, that it was dangerous and they could seriously hurt me. And so I complied with them, today I will stay here with my parents and the next day I will go to Prague to help.

November 18, '89

I went to Prague in the morning, I said quick goodbye to my parents, my mother didn't want to let me go despite my conviction that I would be fine and stay away from the centre of events. The journey ran very fast and I finally stood in front of the Czechoslovak television where I worked. Chaos reigned inside the building. People were running everywhere with papers, boards and other various things. I was immediately interested in how I can help, where is my presence needed. In the end, I found the right place. I wrote about what was happening, sent it abroad and waited for people's reaction. I was willing to wait for hours, it was worth it.

Indefinite day in indefinite month, '90

They accepted me! They took me to college! I am so happy. Finally, I will be able to study. Economy will be probably difficult, but certainly not as difficult as "History and archiving and auxiliary historical sciences" in Karlovka. I'm looking forward to the professors and the surprise I have prepared for my mother. (She will be definitely excited). This year will be the best year of my life!

Magdaléna Goligovová has been studying bookstore and publishing for the fourth year. Even though she draws just for fun, she gladly took on the artistic formation of the story of Mrs. Jana Kobzová. She tried to empathize with an energetic lover of history who longed for freedom of speech and travelling, but both were impossible at the time of normalization. And so she has no choice but to dream about it and give her dreams outlines at least with a pencil on paper. Because she wanted to take her mother to have a real Sacher in Vienna, it occurred to me that it could be a good symbol of her idea of freedom - Sacher cake, which is brought to them by freedom itself on a tray, explains Magda, who got through Austria to the United States during her creative fantasies.

Students of graphic design - Denisa Teplá and Lukáš Suchý - incorporated Magdaléna's drawings into a stylized photo.





It was important for Mrs. Jana to explain to the audience that life before November '89 was full of fear and anxiety



In the workshop of Marta Dietrich Dvorská, all participants tried to write a limerick or playful poem with five verses with a rhyme structure a-a-b-b-a

Jana Kobzová

*It is important for the workshop lecturer and
the witness to be able to listen*



In Conclusion

The project *Let's learn to read, with reading we learn* was my another experience with creative workshops at the DUKE Náhorní Secondary School. I always wonder if my joy from teaching how to create poems, short stories and games won't surpass the joy of students, who you bring to the dark forests of their own imagination, give them a flashlight and roughly indicate the direction: they always come out of this forest of uncertainty, one by one, with arms full of pure masterpieces. This time we launched into something completely special: our source of inspiration were clients from ROSA, that implies people who were born in the first half of the 20th century and because of that they were able to tell us their own stories and their journeys, which were often intertwined with utter incredibleness.

Tim Postovit, workshop leader

The meeting with contemporary witnesses left a deep mark in the hearts of all that were involved. We really appreciate that they let us take a look into their lives. We listened to their life stories and it left us breathless. Their lives were like fragments that fit into a greater puzzle of history that students learnt mainly from textbooks and teachers' stories.

Lýdia Kalinová, teacher from a partner school

It was fascinating to hear that people, whom I sat in the same room with, have experienced the ups and downs of our history. I'm sorry that many of my peers are not interested in listening to the older generation. Personally, I think that what the witnesses would tell you is not the history from the textbook, but the history of life.

Kateřina Vanžurová, pupil and participant in the project

The project participants asked the witnesses questions, some of which they never asked themselves, which surprised and amazed high school students. And it was the mutual astonishment and the effort to intersect several different life perspectives that was the deep meaning of our meeting, for which I thank the organizers very much!

Ivana Myšková, workshop leader

When I started writing the grant application in December 2017, I had no idea how many unexpected hardships we would have to deal with. I will mention only a few. Our international meetings were influenced by sudden illnesses and ailments of participants and lecturers. For the first time after several years of experience with school cooperation projects, we had to change dates of visiting a partner school due to a pandemic. We also changed the date of the baptism of this collection and cancelled other partial activities at the school. Unfortunately, the hardest thing to deal with was the unexpected loss of two witnesses, who were full of vitality and positive energy. Their loss seemed to symbolically confirm with what they both tried to tell us during the meetings: we should enjoy every day joys, even of those days that are filled with work, because life, despite all the difficulties and obstacles, is a gift. They who realize this are happy persons. And they were both Anna Habersbergerová and Jaroslav Votýpka. Let's be inspired by them...

Pavína Vočková, project coordinator

P. S.

It doesn't matter in which situation we are now, but it's always important to have around us people with whom we feel good. The Erasmus+ program brought Eva Szanyiová into my life, and I would like to thank her for her excellent cooperation, and I am looking forward to more exciting trips in the future maybe we'll go in the past.



Next time the Black Peter in the form of the eighties will probably not be mine



Thanks to Zdenka Šedřová, Eva tried the reputed wave from the First Republic for the first time

FACE TO FACE

The collection of students' texts inspired by
WWII witness' stories

Arranged by Eva Szanyiová

Proofread by Eva Szanyiová and Marian Moravčíková

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