

Lesson Script – City and War

This lesson is intended for high school students 16 year old and older, some of its elements could be used for younger students. Primarily it should be used by teachers in Kosice/Slovakia, however especially personal testimonies could be adapted in other countries as well.

Aims of the lesson:

- To analyze effects of WW2 within city environment
- To identify kinds of persecution people faced during WW2
- To analyze and examine historical sources

1. Recap (5 minutes)

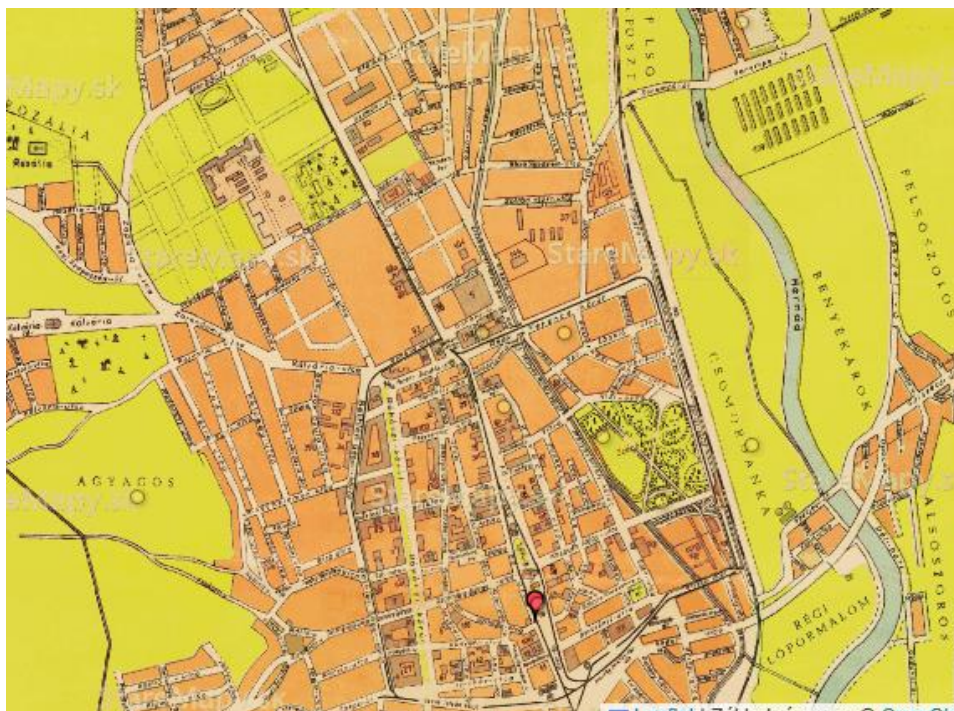
The lesson will begin with a brief recap and discussion about what kind of forms of political systems have already been studied, students could/ should mention for example Greek city - states, Roman kingdom, republic and empire, medieval european kingdoms, european empires during modern age, French republic during the revolution, formation of the USA, formation of new democratic states after the WW1 Finally emergence of the totalitarian regimes in Europe during midwar period should be mentioned by the end. Every idea should be captured on the board.

After discussion teacher will prompt students to fill in following table capturing state/regime changes that city Košice (today second biggest city of Slovakia) went through during the first half of the 20th century.

1. Before WW1 Košice were part of /Hungarian Kingdom/.
After the war city became a part of /Czechoslovakia/
2. In november 1938 after Vienna Award Košice were awarded to
..... /Hungary/.
3. In 1945 when /Czechoslovakia/ was restored, Košice became its part.

2. Motivation (10 minutes)

First teacher will introduce main aims of the lesson, what students can expect that will do. later phase students will analyze map of Kosice from 1942. At the beginning teacher should ask how to say in Hungarian „street.“ Their task will be examine names of the streets, they should notice that one of the street was named after Hitler. This could lead to discussion about how street are named after(in) famous people. They could pull up google maps on their phones and compare this part of the city and mark differences – e.g.: street names, greenery, how much was built. ... Alternatively method of see – think – wonder could be used.



3. Main part for the lesson – Exposition (25 minutes – 10 minutes reading + 10 minutes working on questionnaire + 5 minutes available for discussion) At first, students will read introductory text:

„Until the summer of 1944, the Jewry of Košice constituted the second-largest Jewish community on the territory of today’s Slovakia. According to the Hungarian census of 1941, 10,079 Israelites lived in the city, making up more than 15% of the population. (277 people of Jewish origin belonged to Christian denominations.) Košice played a specific role in the logistics of the Holocaust in Hungary. The city was the site of a ghetto for the local Jewish community, a collection camp for the Jews from Abaúj-Torna County, as well as a major railway junction where all but a few of the transports sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp passed through.”

Veronika Szeghy-Gayer. Mapping the tragedy of Jews in Kosice (1944), p.9.

Later on students will read testimonies from people living in Kosice/East Slovakia during WW2 which document, often tragic stories but also diversity of fates.¹ It is necessary to be very cautious when discussing such sensitive topics with students, to create open atmosphere in classroom and leave space for questions that will probably arise.

„In 1944 I fled to Budapest, obtained false documents and carried out anti – fascist activities there under the protection of the Swedish Red Cross. In May 1944 the Germans took my parents to concentration camp. I then worked for Russian intelligence I then returned to liberated Košice, where I have lived since 1926. My brother returned from Auschwitz in February 1945.“

„ ... I was first placed in a labor camp in Hungary and from there transferred to a concentration camp in Germany. My entire family was deported to Germany, from where only I and my sister returned. Upon returning to Kosice I found my apartment completely empty.“

„My whole family was deported to concentration camp. My wife and son died, I have returned sick.“

„ ... I was with my parents in hiding since april 24 1944. We have never been deported.“

„ ... On November second 1944 I have been deported with my husband to concentration camp Mathausen, from where I have returned back to Kosice on fourth of June 1945. To this day I do not know if my husband is dead or alive. They took our clothes, all the paperwork such as trade license, proof of permanent residence, citizenship and cash.“

„ I had a general store for 18 years until 1939 in Kosice ... when Hungarians took away my business. Not only was I never publically active in any political party, but I was also not member of any political parties, associations or unions. Regardless of the fact that during the Hungarian occupation all political parties were anti-Jewish, so I could not be a member of these. I never went to a café or social gatherings. I was only a member of a trade board as a merchant and devoted myself solely to my family and trade. ... Upon my return home I have lost my wife, kids and everything which I have acquired through many years of work. I couldn't find any business equipment, supplies, furniture, nothing at all. ...“

¹ These stories were collected within long term archive research conducted in Archive of the city of Kosice and are part of the fund that contains requests for the confirmation of the political reliability after WW2 which was necessary for many official acts – people needed these confirmations to get job, apartment, passport, pension and so on. Names were intentionally omitted.

After reading previous texts students will fill in questionnaire

Question	Answer
What kind of role Košice played within deportation system of persecuted people during WW 2?	
Around what time deportation took place?	
How some of the people survived?	
What kinds of persecution could people potentially faced?	
What could people feel during such challenging times?	

4. Verification (+5 minutes depending on the time left.)

Teacher will ask students to sum up in few sentences how they think life could be for people living in Kosice during WW2.