

# MANUAL FOR CREATION OF GAMIFIED HISTORY LESSONS

GREM: A Game to Remember, project n. 101091269  
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The manual has been designed to help teachers, youth workers and educators interested in creating engaging gamified educational content while teaching history, civic education and philosophy in high schools.

## Abstract



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# INTRODUCTION

This manual has been created as part of the Game to Remember Project - an international remembrance project aiming at collecting Holocaust and totalitarian regime real stories and transforming them into innovative detective games as alternative educational activities. The long-term aim of the project is to sensitize communities through gamified education so that people are better equipped to react against Holocaust distortion and no longer validate fake news. The gamified approach is to bridge the limits of classical history education with the latest edutainment trends in transferring knowledge, skills and changing attitudes in modern societies. The manual itself is part of the training process for educational experts within the project consisting of a 5-day training course supported by a guide book on how to develop and facilitate an educational detective game.

In order to create a comprehensive guidebook within the "Game to Remember" project we need to build a shared understanding of the two fundamental concepts that lie underneath all activities - human rights education and gamification as an edutainment tool.

The values, characteristics, and principles of both are visible throughout the project in every different stage - training activities, program and methodology, events, etc. Therefore, it is crucial for each of us to have a clear understanding of the basics of both and later on to shape the imagination of how they correlate in an educational context.

# Part 1. HUMAN RIGHTS

## 1.1. Brief walk through facts and history

The concept of human rights has a long and complex history that spans various cultures and civilizations. The idea of recognizing and protecting certain rights inherent to all individuals, regardless of their background or status, has evolved over time. The origins of human rights can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Roman civilization. These societies had various philosophical ideas which sometimes evolved into legal codes in which certain rights and protections for individuals were acknowledged. The American Revolution (1775-1783) and the French Revolution (1789-1799) marked important turning points in the advancement of human rights. Documents like the United States Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) explicitly recognized individual rights and liberties.

There has been a very long way we as humanity have walked until the actual UN declaration of human rights - and unfortunately, we needed to learn many lessons the hard way before making universal human rights documents valid for all people across countries, governments and continents. The aftermath of World War II saw a renewed global commitment to human rights due to the light that was shed on atrocities committed during the war and the collective reflection on leadership, humanity, and peace. In 1945, the United Nations was established, and in 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR outlined a comprehensive set of rights and freedoms that should be protected for all people. Later, building on the UDHR, numerous international treaties and conventions were established to address specific aspects of human rights, such as civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, and the rights of specific groups like women, children, and indigenous peoples. Examples include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both adopted in 1966.

The human rights concept and all accompanying documents have been called by many "a living document process" where more and more knowledge and human progress is reflected within the evolving response to the changing societal norms, technological advancements, and global challenges. Issues such as environmental rights, digital privacy, and LGBTQ+ rights have gained prominence in recent years, expanding the scope of human rights discussions. Different organizations have been formed raising

awareness on problems of marginalized people, their rights, or the lack of access to their rights. Many of those organizations use human rights as their guiding light for strategic conversation with policy makers and external communication to public. A good example of such an organization binding their mission closely with the human rights concept is the European Youth forum – the largest umbrella youth NGO in Europe, where the concept of “youth rights” was piloted in Europe.

Having in mind all the above the philosophical concept of “rights” slowly started to occupy space in legal, political, economic and social context, in different societies that slowly led to problematic self-reflection processes - especially in some of the post-colonial countries, many of which were also the current leaders in economic growth and progress. Of course, it meant that commitment towards human rights-based society starts with honest reflection and many political engagements on national level, before having open a deep conversation between governments on the same subject.

It would be difficult to point to a country as a “human rights” champion, but there is a visible link between lack of democracy, lack of media freedom and violation of human rights. Undisputedly, it would be much easier to point out the regions where human rights are not respected and there are many charts pointing out those statistics and searching for the political reasons behind it.

Speaking about human rights as an international concept and their ever-evolving structure, it is important to underline that in many societies human rights principles put to a test the “Moral vs. legal” aspect of social co-habiting. Generally, it is expected that our legal systems evolve in parallel with our societies, therefore with our morals. Adding the human rights dimension to the legal and political agenda sometimes seems very difficult/close to impossible, in societies where morality is linked to patriarchal understanding of community, families, women, and marriage. And if it is easier to imagine how some civil rights can be easily adapted to most of the population, it becomes difficult to adapt those towards certain minorities.

Another crucial process within the human rights concept is the evolution from needs towards rights. The way political decisions are taken is migrating from “What people need” towards “What people have the right to”. That may seem like a small grammar-like change, but it shifts the political agenda radically. In this evolved context there are still rights holders, but there are also rights-bearers – the people, institutions or entities who are entitled to fulfill their responsibilities, so each individual or group can have access to their rights in reality, and not just on paper.

## 1.2. Principles and values

The principles of human rights gather a set of values that guide the recognition, protection, and promotion of the rights and dignity of all individuals. These principles provide a framework for understanding and upholding human rights in various contexts. While there are several key principles, here are some of the most important ones:

- **Universality:** Human rights are universal, applying to all individuals regardless of their nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or any other characteristic. They are inherent to every human being by virtue of their humanity.
- **Inalienability:** Human rights are inalienable, meaning they cannot be taken away, surrendered, or transferred. No one has the authority to deprive another person of their fundamental rights.
- **Indivisibility:** Human rights are indivisible, meaning that all rights are interconnected and interdependent. Civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights are interrelated and cannot be fully realized in isolation from one another.
- **Non-Discrimination:** Human rights must be applied without discrimination of any kind. All individuals are entitled to equal protection and enjoyment of their rights, regardless of their characteristics or circumstances.
- **Equality and Equity:** Human rights emphasize both equality, ensuring that everyone has the same basic rights, and equity, recognizing that different individuals or groups might require different measures to achieve equal enjoyment of rights due to historical disadvantages or systemic barriers.
- **Dignity and Respect:** Human rights are rooted in the inherent dignity of all individuals. Respecting human rights means treating each person with fairness, consideration, and respect for their autonomy and worth.
- **Rule of Law:** Human rights are upheld through the rule of law. Governments and institutions have a responsibility to enact laws and policies that protect and promote human rights, and individuals have the right to seek remedies through legal channels when their rights are violated.
- **Participation:** Individuals and communities have the right to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives and rights. This principle supports democratic governance and ensures that policies and laws reflect the needs and interests of the people.
- **Accountability:** Governments, institutions, and individuals are accountable for upholding human rights. Violations of human rights should be acknowledged, investigated, and addressed through appropriate mechanisms.

- **Progressive Realization:** While some rights may require immediate implementation, others may be realized progressively due to resource constraints. States have an obligation to work towards the full realization of all rights over time.
- **Empowerment:** Human rights empower individuals to advocate for their own rights and the rights of others. Education, information, and freedom of expression are essential to empowering individuals to claim and exercise their rights.
- **Solidarity:** The principle of solidarity emphasizes the importance of global cooperation and support to ensure that human rights are upheld everywhere. The international community plays a role in assisting countries that may face challenges in promoting and protecting rights.

These principles collectively form the foundation of human rights frameworks, guiding the development of laws, policies, and practices that safeguard the dignity and well-being of individuals and communities everywhere.

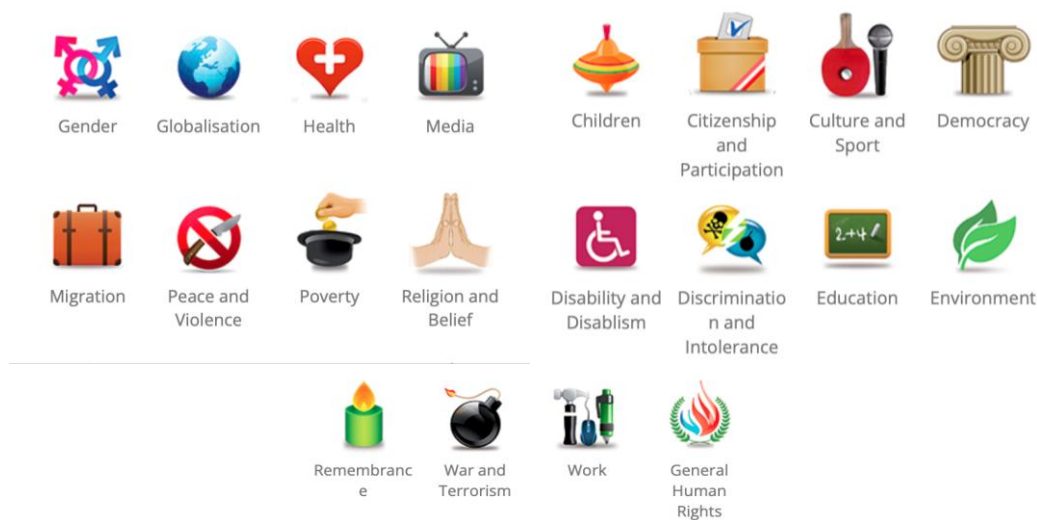


Image source: CoE Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People

Human rights have become such an essential and fundamental part of society's puzzle today in comparison with a century ago, that it would be difficult to imagine an area of our life which is not directly linked with the principles of this concept - education, democracy, environment, mobility and migration, religion, and religious beliefs, etc.

Even if we cannot argue that humanity has achieved immense progress on the subject, we also cannot ignore the fact that depending on where you are reading this guidebook from, the case with you may not be the same. There are nuances in the understanding of human rights these days - from political leaders who openly use hate speech towards

ethnic minorities or refugees but claim to respect human rights, to biased famous journalists who use human rights as a scarecrow when it comes to the political agenda on gender equality. The key part of human rights being indivisible and universal means that who we apply this concept to is not a subject for discussion - we as humanity have already shaken hands on this - everybody! We apply this concept to all political contexts for all people.

### 1.3. Theory, reality, and crisis

If reminding a political leader that they have forgotten to respect human rights today did anything, we would not be here today. Actually, some political leaders consciously and with full understanding do not follow the mentioned above frame, when it serves their agenda and even openly argue its benefit as a complete concept - many of those self-identify on the right spectrum of the political agenda, but in some regions that is not a must and we can see human-rights violators in all spectrums of the political wheel.

*During the global pandemic of 2019-2022 caused by Covid19 we witnessed severe human rights violations of many kinds - disabled people being denied their legal right to access a hospital because they could not be seen as "promising patients" due to their disability; a raise in gender-based violence as many women found themselves trapped in unsafe environments with their abusers due to lockdown and movement restrictions; police brutality against protesters which was not followed through properly due to the sensitive context of anti-covid propaganda, etc. Unfortunately, these examples can go on and can be seen in all societal sectors in most of the countries in the world, nearly 80 years after the "political wave" of human rights appeared.*

*During the invasion of Ukraine by Russia many children's fundamental rights were violated due to the war. Disruptions to the lives of children and families, including displacements from their homes and communities led to a severe impact on the children's lives - interruption of their education, access to proper nutrition and healthcare, separation from relatives and excessive exposure to violence and trauma.*

These two recent examples represent how during a crisis human rights and especially human rights of marginalized and vulnerable communities are the first victim. Of course, depending on the situation we observe different scenarios, but whether the crisis is - natural disasters, conflicts, pandemics, economic downturns, or other emergencies, they all prove to be able to exacerbate existing human rights challenges and create new ones. Crises often disproportionately affect marginalized and vulnerable populations, such as refugees, migrants, the homeless, and those living in

poverty. These groups are more likely to face human rights violations due to their limited access to resources, services, and protections. Crises can also disrupt essential services such as healthcare, education, and social support systems. This disruption can lead to violations of the right to health, education, and an adequate standard of living, particularly for those who rely on these services. During crises, governments might implement emergency measures that restrict certain rights such as freedom of movement, assembly, and expression. While some limitations may be necessary for public safety, there's a risk of overreach that could lead to human rights violations. In times of crisis, there may be a weakening of legal protections and oversight mechanisms, leading to violations of due process and accountability. This can result in violations of civil and political rights. Occurrences like conflicts and disasters can lead to an increase in gender-based violence, as women and girls become more vulnerable to abuse in disrupted environments. This violates their right to live free from violence and discrimination. Crises often result in forced displacement, placing refugees and migrants at risk of human rights violations including exploitation, trafficking, and discrimination – events, which continue to take place much after the crisis has been solved for the general population. Lack of accurate and timely information during crises can impede individuals' ability to make informed decisions about their safety and well-being, impacting their right to access information.

Economic crises can result in job losses, reduced income, and increased poverty. These economic challenges can lead to violations of the right to work, social security, and an adequate standard of living.

And last but not least, the erosion of civic space and the phenomena called “shrinking space of civil society” appears and grows around crisis events. In many crises, governments might use emergency powers to control or/and restrict activism under false arguments, violating the right to freedom of association and undermining civil society organizations.

Addressing the link between human rights violations and crises requires a comprehensive approach that considers both immediate response and longer-term recovery. It's important for governments, international organizations, and civil society to work together to ensure that emergency measures respect human rights and that the most vulnerable are protected during challenging times.

## 1.4. Holocaust – an isolated case or a case-study, repeating itself in different contexts?

The Holocaust was one of the most horrific instances of systematic mass genocide and human rights violations in history. It resulted in the systematic persecution, discrimination, and murders of over six million Jews, along with millions of other targeted groups including Romani people, disabled and LGBTQ individuals, political dissidents, and others. The violations of human rights during the Holocaust were extensive and even though they happened so many years ago the affected communities continue to suffer the consequences.

In massive human rights violation such as the Holocaust, the genocide in 1994 in Rwanda or the mass murders of Muslim men in 1995 in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a collective memory and a collective lesson – regardless of where you live, what you do, what are your political affiliations, etc. When an event holding such ferocious violence occurs it echoes through generations and countries and our shared responsibility as citizens is to understand why it has happened and not let it repeat itself again. The atrocities and war crimes of the Holocaust have been studied excessively but even though there is more than needed academic literature, personal storytelling and documents, there are still people nowadays who are subjected to different kinds of stories about the events.

There are groups and individuals (some of them public figures) who deny or distort the Holocaust, despite overwhelming historical evidence and documentation confirming its occurrence. Holocaust denial is a form of historical revisionism that seeks to deny or downplay the extent of the Holocaust. It often involves spreading false information, manipulating facts, and misrepresenting historical records to discredit the Holocaust as a historical event or its importance. Some common tactics used by Holocaust deniers include: downplaying the number of victims; questioning the authenticity of documents, photographs, and testimonies from survivors and witnesses to undermine the historical record; attempting to shift blame away from Nazi Germany and attribute the deaths to other causes, such as disease or famine, rather than the systematic approach of decisions of the Nazis. Some deniers propagate conspiracy theories suggesting that the Holocaust was fabricated as a means of advancing political agendas or extracting reparations.

Holocaust denial is widely discredited by historians, scholars, and experts who have extensively documented the events of the Holocaust using a wealth of evidence, including Nazi records, survivor testimonies, photographic evidence, and concentration camp sites. Many countries have laws against Holocaust denial due to its offensive

nature and the potential to incite hatred and anti-Semitism. Efforts to combat Holocaust denial include education, memorialization, and promoting accurate historical information. Remembering and understanding the Holocaust is crucial to prevent history from being distorted, to honor the memory of the victims, and to ensure that such atrocities are never repeated ever again.

Having said all that, we must openly acknowledge that conspiracy theories and fake news have affected the way we consume information and form opinions, also the way we reflect on history and events. The critical thinking skills we all need to assess information are not taught at school, not milestones in family time, so in many times people would become part of the problem, without even realizing it. Many global political leaders have fallen victim to that and so have their audiences.

Let's explore the link between conspiracy theories, fake news, and crises. While conspiracy theories and fake news are not the direct cause of crises, they can exacerbate existing challenges and affect effective crisis response. During a crisis, accurate and timely information is crucial. Conspiracy theories and fake news can spread quickly, leading to confusion, panic, and inappropriate responses among the public and sometimes from the institutions, which is even more confusing for citizens. Crisis management relies on trust in government agencies, institutions, and experts. Conspiracy theories and fake news can erode this trust by sowing doubt and skepticism about official information and guidance which leads to mistrust towards the state. Fake news and conspiracy theories can contribute to the stigmatization of certain groups, which can be especially harmful during crises. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, false information about the virus's origin and spread contributed to discrimination against certain ethnic or cultural groups, even though no direct evidence was ever found on this.

Conspiracy theories often involve sensational and fear-inducing narratives that can amplify feelings of anxiety and distress during a crisis. Belief in conspiracy theories can lead some individuals to reject the collective efforts needed during a crisis and even construct a "parallel truth" which contradicts the mass reality. In some cases, conspiracy theories and fake news are deliberately spread to manipulate public opinion, advance certain political agendas, or profit from sensationalized content related to the crisis.

To address the link between conspiracy theories, fake news, and crises, it's important to promote media literacy, critical thinking, and responsible information-sharing. Transparent communication from reliable sources, timely fact-checking, and efforts to counter misinformation are essential components of crisis management strategies.

Apart from those technical and operational solutions, there is still a gap when it comes to crisis, human rights and collective memory and that is the human aspect of it. So far, we have explored the historical, legal and "state" part of it, but what about the individual human - how do we work with each person?

## 1.5. Remembrance as a tool to deal with historical ruptures and prevent new forms of totalitarianism

According to Arendt without memory individuals lose their ability to think, to understand the consequences of their actions. Common memories preserved and passed forward through storytelling, education and political communities are crucial in creating and preserving a healthy political and societal life. Experiences of broad society-shared ruptures in the fabric of historical time - such as the experience of totalitarianism - provide individuals and communities with the resources for fundamental political transformation.

From the perspective of human rights, totalitarian regimes have created and stimulated intensively the loss of "the right to have rights" of minorities, especially in the nation-states of the interwar years of 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. These are large-scale and intensive communal crises lasting many years during and after the specific historic period. They affect strongly and deeply the self-understanding and identity of communities and individuals and require regular reflection on individual and communal memories in order to accept, understand and overcome the past.

German nationalism has been based on nation-state order and system fragmenting society on different ethnic, social and political units being opposed. The successful rise of ethnic nationalisms has proven its weakness and failure historically, with Holocaust being the scariest lesson, and the role of remembrance projects is to take the lessons from this experience and give an alternative for future actions. Here is the role of political, social and educational storytelling to create a link between past, present and future so that we do not repeat historical mistakes.

Remembrance projects are important as they help survivors and next generations to find a way to overcome totalitarian experience without forgetting its brutal lessons. In order to do so individuals need a new narrative that links the past and the future firmly to the present by rejecting the unifying, memory-numbing structures of totalitarianism. So the past becomes an important resource for social and political change. This not only involves the rearranging and reinterpreting formative experiences. It is also a process

of (re)discovery, as events that were previously forgotten are reinvigorated and given new meaning.

This is how the European Integration project has been created after the WWII. Faced with "the threat of total extinction", the old politics of nation-states competing in the anarchic international system had to be replaced by a "new politics" of peace. As Albert Camus argued in 1945, the new situation necessitated the creation of "a true international society" to replace individual sovereign states.

The EU has made an important contribution to the singular focus on totalitarianism in postwar Europe. However, it has not succeeded in saving the memory of totalitarianism from the oblivion of historical normalization. On the contrary, as Paul Scheffer points out, "Nightmare images of a possible return of previous violent conflicts [have become] a distraction." While older generations accept the idea of Europe born out of the rupture of 1945, this narrative has less traction with younger cohorts. Despite its importance for the history of European integration, the EU has not been a coherent "story of peoplehood," existing alongside the national narratives of history. The EU appears to have not been successful enough in overcoming old nationalisms of previous centuries.

At the start of the second millennium, the generation that can remember totalitarianism and the events of the Second World War is no longer active in public life. Whereas previous generations of European political leaders were able to draw on shared memories of the rupture dating back to 1945, the cadre that has come to power since the turn of the millennium does not have access to this reservoir of the shared experience of war. As a result, it has become increasingly clear that Europe "can no longer play the war card" to motivate and justify integration. Ironically, this problem may be related to the industrialist economic foundations of the EU. Despite many initiatives in culture and education, the EU is organized around a Common Market with the goal of increasing productivity across national borders. The increasing embrace of neoliberal economic rights and freedoms by European institutions through what is usually referred to as "negative" integration has made the "fabrication" of a common memory more difficult among younger generations, who have learned to think of the purely economic project. It can hardly be an accident the rise of the first cohort of European leaders who have no personal memory of the Second World War coincides with a return to nationalist thinking and national solutions to current European challenges.

Remembrance could take many forms so that it help new generations connect with the past, put its lessons in present context and shape the future based on the lessons learnt without repeating them. Thanks to the wide variety of remembrance projects - from academic researches, symposiums and networking events to a diverse range of cultural

initiatives and educational campaigns - we tell the stories of history so that they could be remembered.

## Part 2. GAMIFICATION

### 2.1 Non-formal education principles and gamification

Gamification is the application of game design principles, mechanics, and elements to a non-game context to engage and motivate individuals, encourage behavior, and enhance learning or problem-solving experiences. In other words, it involves using elements commonly found in games to make activities that might not be inherently game-like more enjoyable and engaging (for example, in a learning context). Gamification is not an event, but rather a process and even though some can see it as childish, gamification can address serious topics and engage deeper connections between people with opposing views.

Humans are emotional beings. Rational thinking defines only 30% of our decisions and behavior, while emotional factors are responsible for the remaining 70%. This has severe consequences that detective games build upon for educational purposes. Firstly, they focus on the potential of emotional involvement. Secondly, they focus on the appeal of amusing situations (e.g., games), which people usually prefer to ones that are not particularly fun (e.g., memorizing lexical data). Thirdly, they focus on the ability of games to “displace” participants from within their normal circumstances and roles and to “transport” them to imaginary or alternative ones. Furthermore, they focus on the motivational power of being able to “win” a game.

Gamifying a social process and sensitizing participants to a specific social issue is not an easy task and it requires knowledge of both current social issues and concrete technical skills and competences for planning a non-formal educational activity. Lacking understanding of any of those two can not only confuse participants, but also deepen the knowledge gap we are trying to fill with our activity. Turning very serious, negative, and painful historical events such as the Holocaust into educational detective games could be risky as playing games is usually associated with having fun. And people won't find it appropriate having fun with the Holocaust. But this is not the point. The main goal of innovative detective games in historical education processes is not just delivering fun and joy but engaging deeply and provoking participants to associate with the historical period and how it had affected specific neglected groups in their community.

Gamification is a form of edutainment - mixing education and entertainment to better stimulate a learning process. Introducing games throughout educational activities is a great way to add entertainment to learning and this does not mean just having fun - it is about enjoying the process by getting involved, experiencing, experimenting, being

surprised and provoked, reflecting, having AHA moments and through all that getting most of the learning experience.

## 2.2 Types of gamification

There are many ways in which you can blend entertainment and learning at your historical education activity. Among the most popular forms we have seen introduced in learning activities are the following:

- Online games
- Board games
- Detective games
- Theatre games
- Thematic walks

Gamification is a widely used edutainment tool. It could consist of something basic such as adding elements of friendly competition to the learning experience of participants: earning points, moving up levels for succeeding at specific learning activities, passing a quiz-style test, beating an hourglass, and thus highly motivating them. It could go much deeper by turning the whole learning experience into a game where participants must play the whole game to learn. They develop knowledge by absorbing new information on the topic while they progress in the game.

Storytelling is an integral part of gamification as you are building your game around a story or in the case of historical games – around a group of personal stories. Storytelling is a way of engaging your participants with the learning process through empathy and representation. When we use stories in educational activities, participants can recognize themselves in the characters or understand their situation better which makes us win their attention.

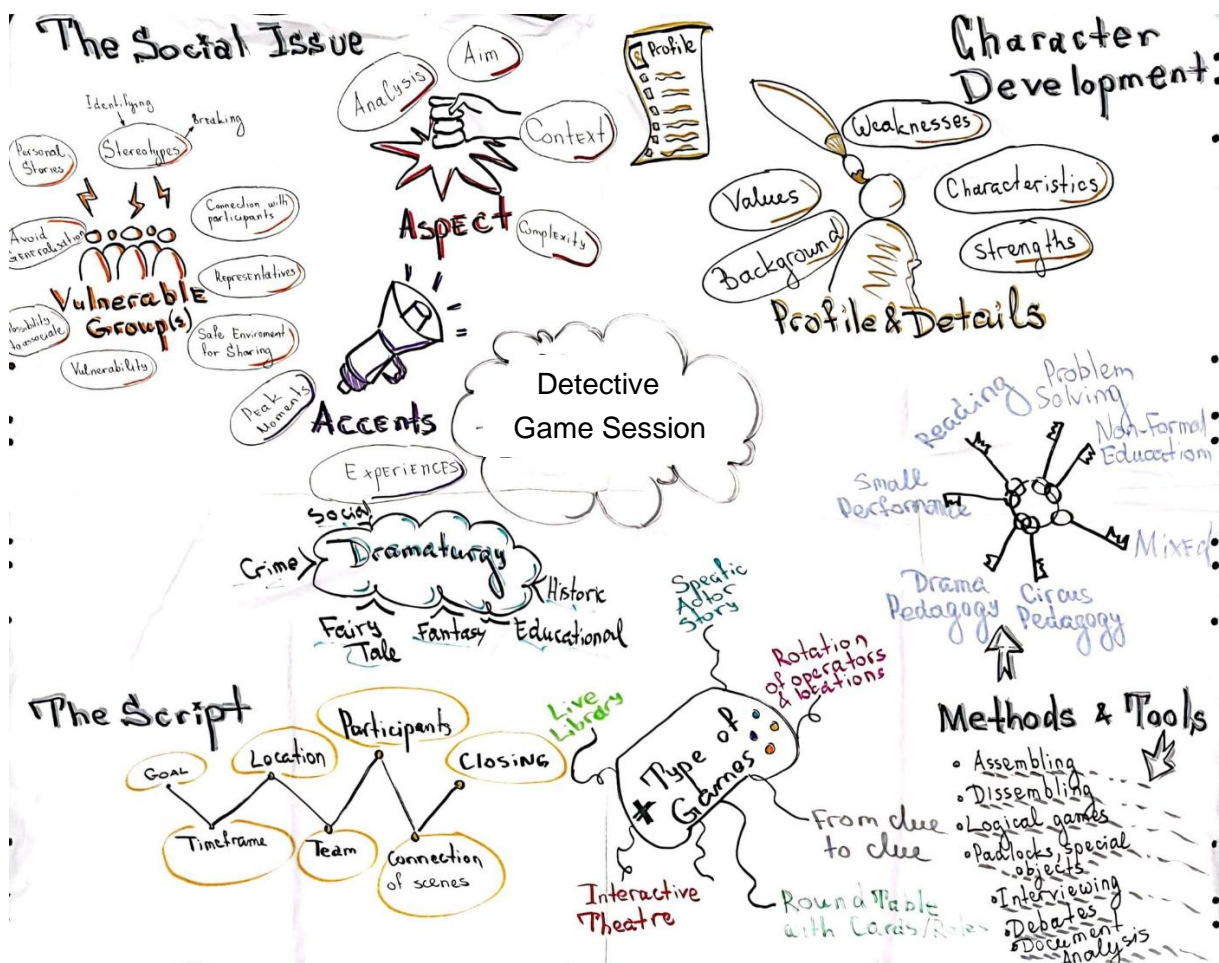
An important thing to remember – gamification is a tool, not a final goal. When developing a game to deliver an educational lesson, it is important to align the game with the learning objectives.

## 2.3 How to develop innovative detective games

Here we take a deep dive into the details of designing, planning, and implementing an innovative detective game within the context of Holocaust, totalitarian regimes, and human rights. But what does it mean innovative detective games? In the context of Game to Remember project we refer to offline detective mystery games, like popular

escape rooms. These games should be based on local stories of success and failure to resist Nazi or other totalitarian regimes in a specific community. The idea of the present manual is to deliver to educational professionals an innovative methodology that will take the participants through a gamified experience in which they will be learning by doing and will bring the Holocaust or other totalitarian regime survivor's testimonies close to the present, including to members of younger generations.

To develop an innovative detective game as a historical lesson you need quite interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in your team and supporters. Your game should be historically correct and informative to deliver a learning moment which means you need a serious research and a good pack of sources for qualitative background information; your team needs a good pedagogical and psychological understanding of the influencing aspect of the game and how it affect participants; and it also needs plenty of creativity and technical skills to invent scenarios, develop and perform game scenes, and create authentic materials.



To do that we need to reflect deeper on the listed below topics and guiding questions:

- Game framework - goal, time frame, location, target group
- Vulnerable group(s) - aspects, analysis, accent

- **Characters development** – personal data, background, characteristics, values, strengths, and weaknesses
- **Game plot** – scenes, sequence and interconnection, detailed script
- **Methods and tools**

## Game Framework

You will develop a game that should be a historical lesson related to human rights violation of a specific group. So, your historical game must find a way to represent not just historical time and its peculiarities but to highlight a specific social issue. Before going to create the most obvious elements of a game – the scenario, the characters, the scenes, etc., you must collect, analyze, and structure a lot of background information that must be transferred to participants one way or another during the game. That is why it is very important to have it clear for your team what is the lesson you want to transfer.



Think about what is your **final goal** - do you want your participants to get familiar with the historical facts and specifics of a certain period, do you want to present them the story of a historical personality, or you want them to understand the importance of a certain historical event from a new perspective? It is very important to clarify that developing a game is a complex thing and you can get lost if you don't know what your final goal is. Creating detective games could be very engaging and attractive process – people get inspired by creating a story, developing tools and materials, getting creative in inventing things, and all that can distract you from properly transferring your historical lesson. So, first things first – set a goal for your game. For example, to help participants get familiar with the Holocaust from the perspective of Romani genocide, its scale and the way it affected European Roma and Sinti communities by presenting in a gamified way testimonials from KL Auschwitz – “The Gypsy Family Camp”.



Once you have the goal of your game and you know what type of social issue you want to tackle, you must consider 3 very practical but important things as the success of your game will depend on that. First, the **time frame** – how long do you want your game to be. Are you planning to make it a school lesson to be played in schools? If so, have in mind the length of the school lessons. For example, in Bulgaria they are 40 min. long. It means that you should either have a very short game or you should be looking for two consecutive lessons to be united so that you have time to prepare, play the game and make a debriefing. Normally, good detective games are about 1 – 1.5 hours, but they

could be shorter or could last more than 2 hours or even half a day if they are very complex, involving many facilitators and different locations. It depends on where you plan to play the game. Put a time limit for your game before starting with script, activities planning and preparation of materials so that you can do something realistic.



The second of the 3 important practical aspects of the game framework is **the location**. Do you have an idea where you are going to play your game? Do you plan to play it in only one specific place and make the game connected to the location or you would like it to be transferable so that you could “travel” with it within different locations? There are wonderful detective games being successful thanks to their location, making them much more realistic and influential. Such an example is a historical game played in the Jewish neighborhood in Budapest, Hungary telling a story about the Jewish community at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The issue with such games is that they depend on the location and can be played only there. On the other side, “travelling” games require a lot of inventory, materials, logistics and preparation so that you can create a realistic atmosphere and set your scenes properly everywhere. At the same time, it gives a lot of flexibility to play your game in different settings and to have a wider impact by reaching more locations and people. Choosing the location settings depends on you, your team and organization capacity and your goal.



The third practical aspect is **the target group**. Who are you targeting with your game? Do you want it to be for the general public and playable by different groups or do you want it to be specifically oriented towards teenagers, elderly people, parents? Having a picture of your target group in mind from the very beginning will make you think of their way of thinking, knowledge, abilities, and maturity so that you can prepare and adapt the game to them. For example, 13 years old youngsters have a limited historical knowledge and almost no connection with survivors from the Holocaust, it means that you should integrate some historical background information in the game and help them gain a common basic understating of the specific historical period and events. At the same time, they are dynamic, emotional, digitalized, and difficult to get focused. Making the game intriguing and fun, using digital tools, or having more physical challenges could help them get involved easily.

Bear in mind the profile of your target group during the overall game preparation, try to imagine how they will digest every information, how they will react on each activity and where they could have difficulties so that you handle all those moments in advance.

Before going forward, let's summarize - if you have followed the instructions up to now, you should have a clear goal of your game, understanding of the social issue you want to represent, and a practical framework to follow including time frame, location settings and target group profile. That is a good foundation to go into the details of the game preparation itself.

## Vulnerable Group

If you want to develop a detective game to represent how human rights of a certain group have been violated under a specific totalitarian regime, you should gain a lot of knowledge about the vulnerable group(s) you want to present. The more information you have about them the better ways you will find to familiarize the participants with the vulnerability issue. Which aspects of the vulnerability of a certain group you would like to present? What kind of preliminary analysis of the group are you going to do and how are you going to provoke participants to analyze the vulnerability aspect? Where do you want the accent to be?

To be prepared for such a thing, collecting vast historical information, plenty of personal testimonies from direct survivors or their families and relatives, documents, evidence materials, is crucial. Historical times are difficult and tricky to represent as there is a lot of subjectivity in interpreting them. Try not to guide people towards generalized conclusions but give them the possibility for different points of view with an option for personal interpretation.

Here are several aspects you should consider when collecting, structuring, and delivering information about the vulnerable group:

- **Subject of vulnerability** - what makes them vulnerable in the context of the historical time you want to present. Avoid generalizing or victimizing the group and try to be as objective as possible. The best you can do here is to make a detailed analysis of their strengths and weaknesses so that you could show the complexity of their life by that time and not just an isolated case of how their human rights were violated. For example, the Jewish ghetto in Vilnius is famous for being quite severe having in mind that at the beginning of the WWII the Jewish population in the city had been about 60%. At the same time, they had an impressive library, their own orchestra, and a good cultural life within the ghetto helping the community to survive mentally and emotionally, as well as stimulating their social life. So, if you want to present the everyday life of Jewish people in the ghetto of Vilnius, you should think of showing the cruel way they have been threatened by the Nazi regime, but you should also think of showing the strength

of their spirit in developing such a cultural life where survival is happening not just at physical level but it is also a matter of human strength.

- **Identifying & breaking stereotypes** - what kind of stereotypes did exist and are still existing regarding this group. Think of specific information, examples and details that can be used later in the game for identifying and breaking those stereotypes. An example: there is this narrative that Bulgaria has saved all its Jewish population during the WWII. By that time Nazi-aligned Bulgaria officially has accepted the Law on the Protection of the Nation introducing impressive legal restrictions to Jewish population of about 50 000 people. But all of them were saved from being deported to German death camps. What is usually avoided in promoting Bulgarian heroism is that Jewish communities in occupied areas by Bulgaria (in present North of Greece and North Macedonia), were threatened bad by Bulgarian military and were all deported to the camps from Bulgarian authorities - about 12 000 people. There is an objective political and administrative reason for that but still it changes the idealistic picture of Jewish people and communities being save all around under the protection of Bulgaria.
- **Personal stories and involvement of representatives of the group** - the more authentic and realistic your game is, the stronger will be its impact. Besides proper historical facts, what can make your game very strong is to create a script based on the real stories of survivors and witnesses of the specific totalitarian regime. Collect personal testimonials of real representatives from the vulnerable group and try to extract the complexity of their profile and what kind of social issue and human rights violation they have been through. Ideally, in social detective games it is wonderful to have real representatives of the vulnerable group playing as actors or facilitators in the game. In the context of Holocaust, it is not very possible but family relatives or other people having connection with real representatives back in time could be an option. Think as well of biographic books of historical personalities. Personal stories can present a certain historical event from a very emotional perspective avoiding the dry historical data presentation that could be boring and distant from the perspective of time. People get impressed by individual stories, the peculiarities of different personalities and how they handle challenging situations - in one word, the storytelling. It is one thing to share a factual information on how Spanish Civil War was affecting Catalonian community - civil groups involved, political views, numbers of people affected, consequence of events; and completely another thing to present a story of a Catalonian group of young people being involved in the Resistance movement and all they have been through - specific fights, love stories, friendship, hiding, chasing, loss of friends, dehumanization of personality by cutting the hair of women in prison, and so on. Personal stories help participants in games to realize how big complex historical event can affect individuals and their lives intensively and deeply, sometimes for a really long

period of time or in a very big scale such as whole families and generations ahead.

- **Safe environment for sharing** – dealing with socially sensitive topics such as violation of human rights is a very fragile and delicate work. You can have representatives of the vulnerable group not just among facilitators but also among participants without knowing it. You can have representatives of a group with a different vulnerability that can easily get associated with the social issue you are tackling. You can have representatives of a community that within your game is opposed to the vulnerable one through abuse, ignorance, or intolerance. All those possible situations require skillful planning and facilitation so that people don't feel bad, frustrated, or unsafe in playing their role or being who they are. How – by being prepared as much as possible in advance. Prepare your team what to do and have a specific plan how to deal with emotional or provocative participants; try to gain preliminary information on who is going to play the game and create alternative scenarios in case of risky participants; and last but not least – have a good set of questions for the final discussion and debriefing at the end of the game – you can always use it to take the maximum of unplanned challenging situations and reflect on them together with your team and participants.
- **Connection with participants and possibility for association** – you will have your personal stories, a wide variety of facts, testimonials, and a bit of storytelling created by you, eventually you will have representatives of the vulnerable group, or plenty of evidence materials (letter, video, audio recordings, newspapers, documents) so that you can present the social issue you want the best way possible. And you must impress your participants, engage them and get them involved. But how? Using the examples we gave in the previous paragraphs, how are you going to take the attention of the 13 years old youngster that is only interested to see the new video of their favorite vlogger in TikTok and get them interested in the social life of the Jewish ghetto in Vilnius in 1943? Integrating information about the vulnerable group is very important but you don't have to underestimate how you provide it to participants and make it understandable and digestible for them. Try to find similarities and common points between the life of people or communities you are presenting and participants. Help them to associate. Life in the ghetto in 1943 could be difficult to be understood by an average European teenager but if you present it from the eyes of a 13 years old Jewish boy trying to avoid restrictions and warnings from his parents to spend some time with friends and do what he likes, it could be easier for attracting attention and engaging.
- **Avoiding generalization in the other direction** – presenting the vulnerability of a group could bring us to the point where we victimize them too much simplifying reality which is a form of manipulation for participants. Not all representatives of

the vulnerable group were violated or at risk, not all of them are just good people being victims and not all representatives of the oppressive side are bad people. Black and white contrasting of historical events and situations is a tool of propaganda and if we want to use gamification to educate people and make them sensitive about vulnerability in society, we must avoid this approach and present reality in its complexity. Simply said, we should provoke critical thinking. For example, Jewish ghettos had their own Jewish police collaborating with the Nazi regime. Sometimes representatives of this police were much crueler to their own community members than Nazi police representatives. There are plenty of stories of Nazi regime members secretly helping representatives of Jewish communities or other minorities. Integrating such an information in your game could help participants avoid the generalized conclusion that all Jews were good people in a bad situation and Nazis were just bad people.

A hand-drawn table on a piece of paper. The title 'Vulnerable/Presented Group' is written at the top. Below the title, the table is divided into two columns: 'Strengths' on the left and 'Weaknesses' on the right. The table is currently empty.

Vulnerable/Presented Group	
Strengths	Weaknesses

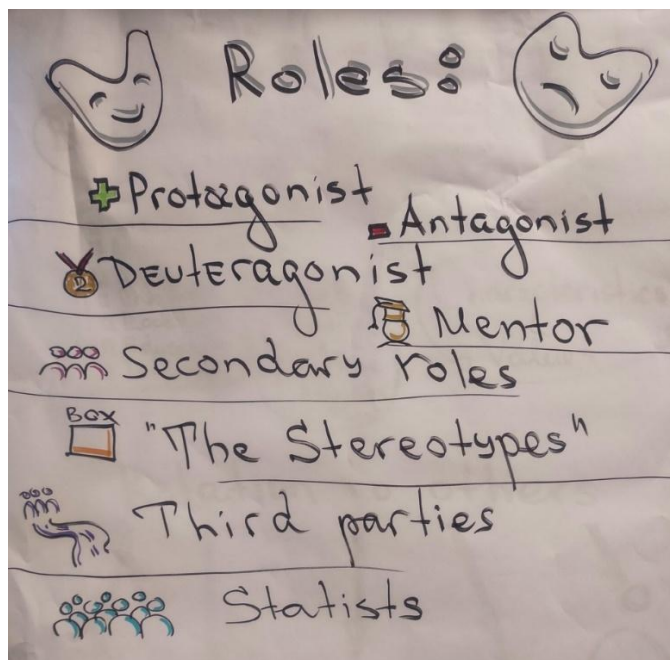
## Character Development

Up to now we should be well prepared with a good game framework and solid background information about the social issue, the vulnerable group and all the aspects of the historical time we want to present to participants. Now we should “dress” all this framework and historical content into “a fancy dress” so that we could attract our participants’ attention and get them impressed.

Let’s the creative work start! We have a story and some characters to develop. Creating a character which is believable for the group is crucial for the game and its impact later. Storytelling through a character is one of the most efficient ways to impact a person’s understanding of a social issue. Besides, game characters are a wonderful tool to transfer historical testimonies of survivors to participants in the game. Character is the

mental, emotional, and social qualities to distinguish one entity from another (different people, social groups, political views, etc.).

If we want our game to be a strong story, we should have strong characters in it. There are some types of characters every story should have and here we will list the most popular ones. Bear in mind that you are not obliged to have all of them or to have an actor for each character you want to involve in the story of your game. It all depends on the amount and capacity of your team, the framework of your game and what you want to do. Sometimes, characters can be present in games without being played by a person - their presence is presented by letters, phone calls, messages, videos and other people's stories about them. So, let's see what type of characters we could have and then we will pay some attention on how to develop them:

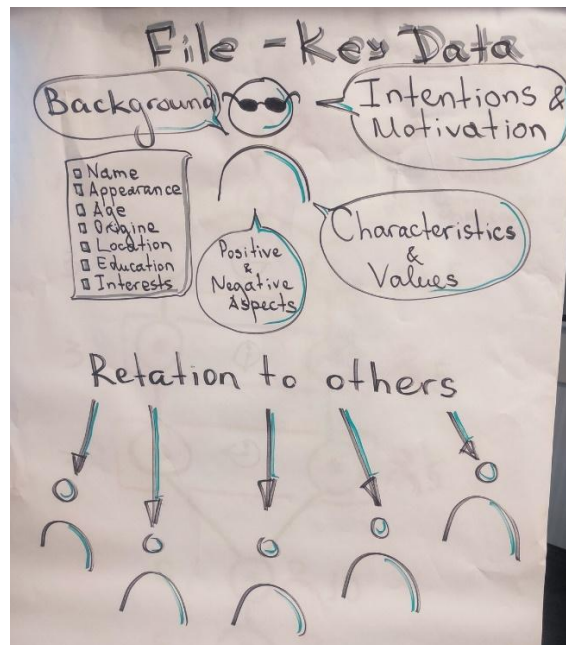


- **Protagonist** - this is the main character and the whole story is happening around him or her. In a story focused on a social issue the protagonist gives you the opportunity to present your vulnerable group with a specific face and personality.
- **Deuteragonist** - this character is secondary by importance after the protagonist and has a very important impact on the story development. Could be the best friend, the colleague, the one that the protagonist usually go through everything with. They usually underline, highlight or compliment very well the protagonist's profile and characteristics.
- **Antagonist** - the reason for the whole drama of the protagonist. It could be a person, but it could be also a challenge, a problem, a dilemma. In the most obvious and flat examples, the antagonist is the enemy the protagonist is fighting.

- **Love Interest** - self-explanatory, the love of the protagonist. The main role of such a character is the additional humanization and personalization of the story, giving an extra emotional influence on game players.
- **Mentor** - the person guiding the protagonist through his or her way. Their role in the game could be helping with the storytelling and reflection, giving additional clues or information, as well as presenting additional personal stories and testimonials through one more character.
- **Secondary characters** - they are part of the drama or the adventure of the protagonist (more than two would make things too complicated). They help you integrate additional information, peculiarities and examples in the script and can be a tool to transfer key information related to your final goal of the game.
- **"The Stereotype"** - secondary roles who represent stereotypical values and positions in society for the specific time represented by the game. For example, the old Spanish lady in the grocery shop of Barcelona in 1935 during the Spanish Civil War commenting after two Catalanian youngsters how "redneck" it is to speak in Catalanian in public spaces.
- **Tertiary Characters** - they are not part of the story or the roadmap of the protagonist, but they bring some knowledge, skills, attitude representing the time.
- **The extras (The walks-on)** - we don't need to know anything about them. They have very short presence and its just to fill in the space.

As we said before, you don't need to have all those types of characters, especially to be represented by a separate actor from your team. But the more from them you have, the more vivid the storytelling of your game will be. And each character type gives you an opportunity to integrate more real stories and testimonials in the game plot.

Once you decide how many characters you would like to develop depending on your objectives and team capacity, you will have to build detailed individual character files for each of your characters. It is a lot of work that sometime could seem useless as probably about 10-20% will reach participants, but it gives very good preparation and confidentiality for your actors and facilitators. It is also a good risk prevention tool for dealing with well-informed participants asking too many questions. What do we need to prepare:



- **Background Information** - here you should prepare a basic profile as if you are a police officer. It should contain a full name, description of the appearance of the character, their age (ideally date of birth), origine and family details, current location, job, education, and interests. Some of those details could never go out to participants but if you have a curious person around asking a lot of questions, you should be prepared for the unexpected and the information should be preliminary synchronized between you and the rest of the team of facilitators and actors. To be ready for improvisation is also important but is risky as no one else on your team will be aware of what you have just improvised.
- **Main Characteristics & Values** - there are no specific obligatory questions fixed here but the more details you invent about the personality of the character the better and more realistic it will be presented by its actor. It could include things such as social status, political and spiritual views, go into details about goals, ambitions, skills and talents, and end up in peculiarities like friends' profiles, social life, personal traits, joys and fear.
- **Positive & Negative Aspects** - which are the strengths and weaknesses of the character, what are they good at and what brings them out of control? Which is the dark side of their profile and how can it be shown to participants?
- **Intentions and motivation** - your characters are part of a story related to a specific historical process and social issue and you must think how you express it through their appearance in the game. How do your characters relate to the topic, what are their intentions, positions and motivation related to it? How are they going to show it?
- **Relationships between characters** - it is not just about building individual character profiles. It is very important to build the relationships between those

characters and plan how to demonstrate them in the game - who knows who, do they like each other, what's their relationship development, what type of dynamics we want to show in the game in terms of relations?

## Game Plot

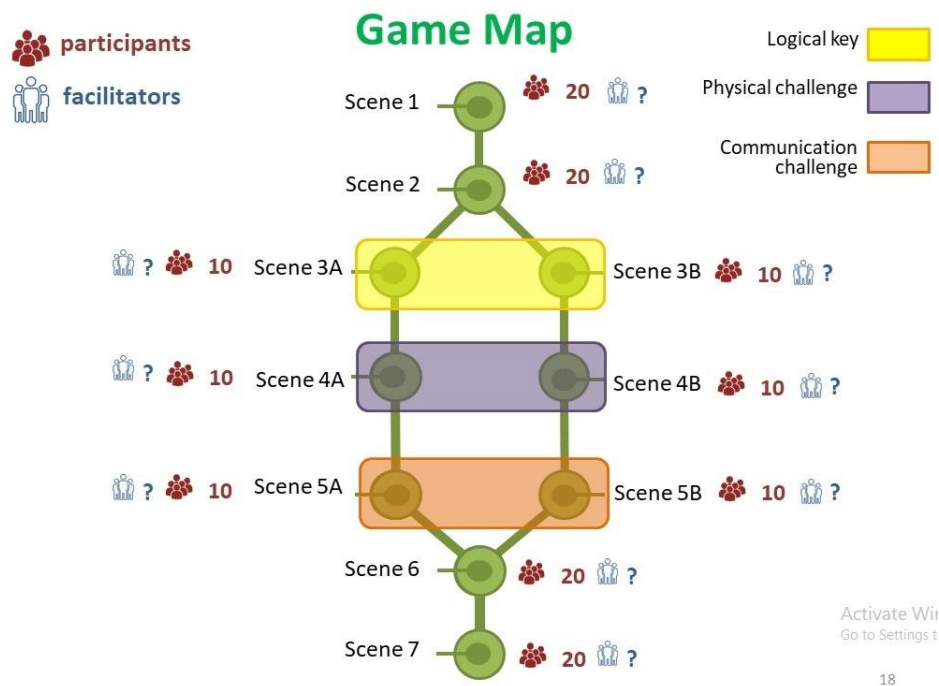
We added the character profiles to all the game framework fundamentals we have developed up to now and what is left to be done is the game plot development itself followed by the fine-tuning of the different methods and tools to be used throughout the scenes. Plot is the order in which things move and happen in a story. This includes the script of the play, the map of scenes, sequence and connection between them and a detailed description. Besides going through all those steps, we need to clarify the dramaturgy of our detective game. Options are:

- Crime (could be also a positive crime)
- Fairy tales and magic stories
- Science fiction based on real elements
- Historical game
- Educational game
- Sensitizing game
- Drama pedagogy
- Mixing some of the above-mentioned

How many scenes we are going to have in our game depends on several factors - total amount of time we count on, amount and groups of participants to be involved in the game, capacity of our team as well as the capacity of the location and finally - minimum amount of information to be delivered related to the historical and social lesson we want to deliver. Still, there are some obligatory scenes we must consider having and anything extra we want to develop should be integrated in between.

The first one is the opening or introduction scene - how do you meet participants and make them enter in playing mode. Usually, here you have the delivery of the common basic background information, the splitting of sub-groups in case you plan one and any other foundational element you need in order to start. Then you would need at least two scenes to give time to participants to get involved, to escalate within the game story and have some shift in the game plot that would provoke surprise or AHA moment leading to the discovery or culmination of the playing itself. Final obligatory scene is the closing and debriefing - closing the playing part of the game, bringing participants out of the playing mode, and guiding them towards a group reflection and facilitated discussion about the main topic of the game - the social issue presented. Scenes could go much more than the described 4 here. They could be 3 or more between the opening and the closing and could differ between different groups.

Here is an example of a game scenes mapping:



Here are some guiding questions while developing the scenes and the mapping process:

- **Script of play** - Describe the journey scene by scene and plan each step of the “way” and all the “checkpoints” our group needs to move past to finish the game. Why is the script looking like this? Can we make it more interesting? Is it too complicated? Will it be clear for all team facilitators and actors, and can it be tracked in real-life?
- **Map of scenes** - Which scene order makes scenes the most? Why? What do we need in each scene and why? Is there a “must” in each scene we cannot move further without?
- **Sequence and connection of scenes**- What is the thin red thread that makes the link between all scenes? How do we make sure we have that in each scene?
- **Detailed description outline** - Each scene requires a detailed explanation for the people who will be organizing it, that must consist of each scene goal, description of surroundings, challenges on the spot, keys, materials to be used, etc.

The sequence and relation between the different scenes really depend on the specific type of game you want to apply in your gamification process. There are plenty of game formats that could match your detective game scenario and will ease the process of planning the scene format and connecting the scene with one another. Here some of the most popular types of games and their brief description to give you an inspiration:

- **Interactive theatre with investigation** - it starts with a performance after which something is happening (you have an action and then it stops). There is a surprise element, and the public is engaged from the beginning.
- **"Live Library" Type** - based on the Council of Europe method of people playing books with different stories. The stories of the different "books" are interconnected, and participants should collect all stories and find the connection between them. Each "book" contains different parts and elements from the whole story. It additionally gives objects that later can be connected by participants.
- **Starting with the personal story of a specific actor** - the story itself could be anything (even science fiction). Mixing reality and fantasy is quite appropriate for teenagers.
- **Rotation of operators and locations** - more than one location allows big groups to be split in sub-groups, to discover different objects or information in separate spaces. Groups could also run one after another to collect stories (leaving an object or a person to pass forward the story)
- **From key-to-key process** - each scene offers participants a specific key to be unlogged or discovered and if they succeed it brings them to the next scene where there is another key or challenge to be overcome.
- **Round table with play role cards** - all the game is happening at the table with people receiving different roles and pieces of information which they should play with together with the rest of the group to solve the game.
- **Mixed** - of course, all the above could be combined so that you make your game dynamic and engaging, especially if you have many scenes and different groups.

## Methods and Tools

The final but very important element of game development are the different methods and tools you are going to apply in each step of your game plot and the scene mapping. These are your weapons to provoke participants to go from one scene to another, to make your game scenes seem more realistic and provoke participants to step into role the role of investigators.

When choosing our methods and tools we have a lot of questions to reflect on - what are the educational functions of the methods and tools we have chosen? How do these methods correlate with the game goal and the participants' needs? We don't have to forget that the final goal of our game is not just to have fun and play but to teach something. Have we chosen the "right" amount and combination of tools. For example, too many puzzles in a short amount of time will not spike curiosity, but bore the group, too many group discussion activities will leave shy participants behind, etc. The "right" combination of methods and tools requires a good understanding of non-formal education, group dynamics and experiential learning. "Too many fun games" will not

bring awareness unless the games and activities are carefully planned to build upon results of the previous one.



Detective game methods are related to how participants investigate information, objects, and events to move forward in the game and collect or relate different elements from the whole picture. Examples of such investigating methods include:

- **Reading and collecting information** - like a book.
- **Small performances** - like a theatre.
- **Drama pedagogy** - like drama theatre or dramaturgy lesson.
- **Creative physical tasks** and circus pedagogy (social circus)
- **Problem solving** - different brainstorming tasks.
- **Methods from formal and non-formal education** - quizzes, scoring, tests, play roles, case studies, crosswords, etc.
- **Mixed** - you have no limits in the methods you decide to use and combine in your game as far as they engage participants and help them move forward.



The game tools are the smaller possible element to be planned and prepared in the game that is used either to guide participants throughout the game, to help them solve challenges and tasks or simply to get them intrigued and involved in the game helping them to associate with the atmosphere and historical time. Here you have some groups of tools to consider:

- **Assembling and disassembling** - such as puzzles, pieces of a picture or a text, elements of an object and so on. It could be professional detective game tools, or something created by your team.
- **Logical games** - guiding questions with missing information, a chess game bringing some answers if you play it properly, and so on.
- **Logs and special objects** - mystery boxes, secret deposit boxes, objects with hidden openings, etc.
- **Debates and interviewing** - related to interacting with prepared facilitators and actors to guide participants towards the right direction.
- **Document Analysis** - authentic documentation analysis can bring some realistic atmosphere to the game and at the same time be a source of additional information to participants.

- **Associations** - either with pictures or with words, they could be used to guide or solve a challenge.
- **Online tools** - websites or social media profiles prepared especially for the game, QR codes, videos, and anything else that could be somehow adapted to the game context.

No matter what type of methods and tools you decide to use in your game, they should be put in the context of the game and the topic. Using a tool just because it is attractive and cool without relating it to the game could spoil the process and keep participants away from associating with the detective role they should enter.

Another important thing to consider is mixing the methods and tools. Don't go all the time with assembling and disassembling tools. Going from scene to scene try to combine different challenges - physical followed logical, creative followed by communication one. This will keep a good game pace and at the same time will give options for different profiles of participants to get activated and involved in the game.

## Part 3 CASE STUDY: GAMIFYING THE REVIVAL PROCESS IN BULGARIA

In order to use gamification in the context of the current human rights circumstances, we need to acknowledge that we may work with people who most likely have been exposed to the general narrative of fake news and conspiracy theories. That characteristic of the target group may be an isolated case or a predominant number of the people in our group.

Designing any non-formal education method requires the ability of the trainer to take the group on a journey and sometimes an even more complicated goal- to design a group journey while predicting the journey of each individual participant. This requires a lot of planning, which can only be efficiently done if we have a good understanding of the group/individual needs.

Introducing a pre-questionnaire or if possible, having a needs-assessment session can give us information of the background of our participants, but we must remember that sometimes our biases are so deeply embedded in our thinking that even we don't realize we are biased. Gathering details about our participants' media habits, cultural preferences and societal beliefs can be beneficial only if we ask open mindedly and without stereotyping on our behalf.

Flexibility is key here, because we can design a "perfect" scenario which makes sense for us and our educational team, but if the participants need something else (with less challenges or more discussions f.e.) the flexibility this situation needs should come from the educational team.

Integrating the human rights values in a game may sometimes be difficult with certain groups, due to their background or their current beliefs. We can simplify the human rights concept without compromising with the values within.

Here we are presenting you a real gamification of a historical moment related to human rights oppression within a totalitarian regime - the Revival Process in People's Republic of Bulgaria (a communist regime) in the late 1980s. At the end of this part of the manual you can find more detailed information about the period itself. What follows next is how the game has been prepared by the team of Infinite Opportunities Association in 2020 as part of The Detectives Project so that all facilitators involved in the process have the same understanding on what is the game about, how the different stages are organized and interrelated and what is their role in it. This structure could help you imagine how

to prepare your scenario and materials for your game and synchronize the information between all team members.

## **I. General introduction and information**

The game is planned for youth and school groups of 20 people in a mobile version, so that it can quickly adapt to different spaces and conditions. Three independent spaces are needed for its implementation - one (maybe outdoors) for initial meeting, orientation, splitting into groups, final meeting and summary, and two separate rooms, further adapted with our materials/decor, for independent work of two groups .

### **1. Goal**

The main focus of the game is historical and educational - to acquaint the young generations with the peculiarities of the Revival process in Bulgaria and to raise the sensitivity of the participants regarding various ethnic tensions existing in the country and the foundations for their occurrence. Additionally, the game aims to identify and break the stereotypes that exist regarding the relationships of the different ethnic groups in the country.

### **2. Vulnerable groups:**

The main vulnerable group that the participants will get to know are the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria - direct victims of the Revival process in the 1980s, and as an addition, the problems of the Roma community and harassment and domestic violence against women will be intertwined in the game.

### **3. Scenario/story, methodology, tools:**

The gamification process will combine three dramaturgical forms - Historical Play and Fantasy (due to participants traveling back in time), and Sensitizing Play due to the social goals and focus of the game and the Detectives project that the game is created within. The game will start with a personal story of one of the actors in the team (Iliyana), after which the group will divide into 2 sub-groups, which will continue in the form of interactive theater with investigation (observation of people and scenes from the past combined with the process "Turnkey").

A wide range of tools are provided to accompany each of the groups through the process of solving the riddle - reading, collecting and analyzing documents; small productions to provoke association and indicate keys; solving problems through logical games and special objects; and incorporating online tools to leverage participants' strengths and keep them engaged.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

The groups - schoolchildren or youth - are gathered in advance with the condition that they will be introduced to events from the recent history of our country 30+ years ago, which have not yet been well researched and analyzed. Through the opening character

of the game - Ilya Zhendova Hristova, they will get to know the peculiarities of the Revival process in Bulgaria and the specific history of her uncle - Zahit Izmail Gunai (Zahari Ivanov Georgiev).

- Character profiles and background information

## ZAHIT ISMAIL GUNAI/ZAKHARY IVANOV GEORGIEV

- Where and when he was born: 1946 in the village of Zernevo, Dobrich district,
- Mother: Zeyneb Gulsever Gunay, Father: Ismail Ahmed Gunay. Sister: Ayshe Ismail Gunai 1961 (mother of Ilya Zhendova Hristova)
- Education: high school - Tervel, higher education - Turkish philology at Sofia University;
- Job: Turkish language teacher, after the ban on studying Turkish, began to teach Bulgarian;
- Social status: has a house in the village of Zernevo and agricultural land that he cultivates. An average citizen for his time with a basic salary and additional livelihood from his own production
- Political views: not clearly expressed before the Revival process, after it has a clear human rights position and fights for fair and democratic processes
- Spiritual Views: Muslim, not very religious, but holds and respects Muslim culture
- Goals, ambitions: to provide a good life for himself and his loved ones. To have a meaningful function in society, to be enriched by good contacts with diverse and quality people. Dislikes ethnic divisions
- Skills, talents: writes poems and sings very well
- What kind of friends he had: he had friends of Turkish, Roma and Bulgarian origin.
- Best friend: Sebaidin Todorov (mixed parentage, mother of Roma origin and father of Bulgarian origin) and Georgi Dzhagalov (Bulgarian). They grew up together as children in neighboring houses on the same street
- Marital status: widower, no children
- Personal Traits: Sanguine
- What angers him: ignorance in conversations with acquaintances and strangers; stereotypical patterns; injustice
- Joys: good social gatherings with quality communication, good books, time with friends, playing cards
- Fears: loss of loved ones, fear of heights.
- Physiological parameters: Height: 174 cm.; Weight: 65 kg.; Chest circumference: 105 cm.; Physical development: normal; .../Contents to contents of health card./

## ILYA ZHENDOVA CHRISTOVA

- Born: Dobrich in 1995.
- Mother: Ayshe Ismail Gunai. Father: Zhendo Hristov Hristov. Sister: Olya Zhendova Hristova
- Education: secondary special - operational accounting at FSG "Vasil Levski", Dobrich; studied Social Pedagogy at Veliko Tarnovo University
- Work: works as a personal assistant to a child with special needs;
- Social status: good income, no own property
- Political views: Democratic-minded
- Spiritual views: Christian, not particularly religious
- Goals, ambitions: successful career, to create a happy family
- Skills, Talents: Organizational Skills, Activist, Dexterity
- What kind of friends she has: she has a very wide range of good acquaintances from Bulgaria and abroad
- Best friend: Magdalena Manolova (has antisocial and intolerant behavior, communicates only with Ilya), Stiliyana Stefanova (shares Ilya's ideas for ecological development, has a friend Ercan - of Turkish origin)
- Marital status: living with a partner on a family basis, not married, no children
- Personal Traits: Sanguine
- What angers her: social inequality, inaction, manipulation and concealment of the truth
- What makes her happy: successes, achieved results
- Fears: failure, loss of loved ones.

### The other characters:

- 2 facilitators - roles and specifics: friends of Ilya, help her in the investigation;
- The police inspector - angry, punctual, obeys the rules that are ordered to him;
- The friend of Roma origin Sebaidin - good, wants to help, faithful friend;
- The Bulgarian friend Georgi - looking for his own benefit, turns against Zahit.

## III. The game

### 1. Start

4 people from the team - actor (Ilya), presenter (Steffi), 2 facilitators (one for each group)

The group is gathered in one place (in a classroom, in a semicircle) to get acquainted in an interesting way with a recent period and events of our history, about which they know little. Representatives of the Infinite Opportunities Association opened the meeting and briefly but attractively introduced the topic of the Revival process - first with questions about what the participants knew about it, then with the main elements of the process - name change, pressure, camps, exodus, the Great Excursion of Turkish people. Given the intended age of the participants, the goal is to ensure that everyone has at least a basic understanding of the Revival Process before they set out to investigate any of it, so that they don't end up completely uninformed.

After a brief introduction to the topic by a representative of IOA (for example Steffy), the group is prepared to go deeper into the topic in an attractive way through Ilya's personal story. She presents her story in search of help to finally unravel it. Ilya is a child of a mixed marriage, whose mother of Turkish origin spared her a lot in terms of the Revival process and the ethnic tension between Bulgarians and Turks, for the sake of family tranquility and the peace they found with her father. She came across the subject near a family property in the village of Zernevo, which he decided to farm with her friend. When working with some of the property documents, she saw that the house had a second heir besides her mother - Zahit Ismail Gunay. Thus, she finds out that she had an uncle who disappeared in the 80s and since then there is no information from him. She's gone looking for clues on her own but hasn't found much and needs to unravel the mystery to find out what had happened.

The last traces of her uncle that Ilya finds are from her mother's memories and the old house in the village. In 1985, her uncle suffered a serious accident, which is why he was admitted to the hospital in Tolbukhin (Dobrich). During this time, the process of changing the Turkish-Arabic names of the Bulgarian Mohammedans to Bulgarian was already actively underway. Ayshe - Ilya's mother was notified of the accident, at the beginning of her visits, her brother was difficult to contact. She didn't get to see him often because of her studies. During subsequent visits, first there were representatives of the People's Militia who did not allow access to her brother's room, and then he was missing from the hospital and there was no information about his discharge. It was like he's gone. Ayshe didn't have the opportunity to travel much, as she lived on her own (their parents were dead), she managed to reach the village of Zernevo once, where she didn't find her brother, but the neighbors tell her that he has returned. She later receives a telegram from him that he is physically fine but is worried about the things happening around him. After that, the proceedings surrounding the Revival process became very turbulent and Ayshe lost track of her brother. She couldn't find him, any information about what happened to him, never heard from him. She had spent a lot of time going to institutions over the years, but finally gave up.

The two keys that Ilya has at her disposal are: the data for the period of the accident and hospitalization, from which everything starts, and a key to the old house in the village of Zernevo. She shares with the participants that she has found a one-time opportunity to go back in time and asks for their help to join her in the search to make the most of this chance. The group of 20 people is divided into two sub-groups of 10 people each - one sub-group is taken to the Local People's Militia Directorate to search for documents and evidence of what exactly happened to Zahit in the hospital and after, and the other moves to Zahit's house to look for clues there.

**HINT! An option is for the two groups to keep in touch with radio stations (with restrictions on how often and when they can be used - for example, the time portal is one and both groups must take the time travel pills at the same time). This will help keep track of each group's time progress and move relatively together, and having an additional station can orient incoming actors how the groups are going.**

## 2. Scenes

People's Militia (Room 1)	The house in Zurnevo (Room 2)
<b>What happened in the hospital and immediately after?</b>	
<p>The group travels back in time with magic pills (a white tic-tac) and goes to the People's Militia Directorate to search for documents and evidence. They are accompanied by a facilitator who gives them the magic pills and transports them back in time, warning them that they will see different people and scenes in the past, but have no opportunity to interact and interfere with them because they cannot change the past. They can only be observers.</p> <p>They enter a police office where there is an inspector at a desk talking on the phone (with cord and pulley) with papers scattered in front of him. Everything happens at the time when Zahit is in hospital. The participants hear the conversation on the phone, from which they find out that the renaming is going on in the Tolbukhin area and there are problems with Turkish citizens. They find out about some secret operation in the hospital and available documents, but the inspector interrupts the conversation, locks the documents and leaves the room.</p> <p>The scenario of the phone conversation should be well thought out! See an example see a translation in English directly after the script - Material 1. Phone Call.</p> <p>The phone call in Bulgarian.</p> <p><b>Key:</b> Here we use a box with a key, but the key is additionally hidden in a wooden box with a specific opening to challenge the participants.</p> <p>We combine copies of original documents (for authenticity) + additionally created by us, through which it is understood that they took advantage of Zahit's inadequate condition in the hospital to change his name, therefore they did not allow his sister and kept her away - so as not to awaken memories. He was renamed</p>	<p>The group travels back in time with magic pills (a white tic-tac) and goes to Zahit's house in Zernevo to find out what happened to Zahid. They are accompanied by a facilitator who gives them the magic pills and transports them back in time, warning them that they will see different people and scenes in the past, but have no opportunity to interact and interfere with them because they cannot change the past. They can only be observers.</p> <p>There is no one in the house at the moment, but it is evident that it is occupied and someone has been here recently. The radio plays music from the 80s. The facilitator encourages the group to look around. There are scattered newspapers, documents, photos, personal belongings on the table and cabinets. At the top of the table are some distinctive photos (Example: Material 4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photo of Zahid's sister as a student (Ilya's mother) - on her back is written "1980. Last year in high school - Ayshe Ismail Gunai"</li> <li>• Black and white photo of several young men. On its back, it is written in handwriting: From left to right: Sebaydin, Georgi, Ibryama, Vancho, Borcheto, Yosif and I, 1981. With another pen, the same handwriting, but more pronounced (apparently written at a different time) it is written: "When still we were divided into teams by cards, not ethnicities, and Zachary was gone!"</li> <li>• Photo of a Muslim family "A family meeting in 1971."</li> </ul> <p>Suddenly there is a loud knock on the door and an overexcited man (Vankata) suddenly enters the room. Shouts loudly: Zahit! It's Sebaydin! I'm alone! Are you here, man?! Where did you disappear again?!</p> <p>He enters the room and walks around chaotically. He sees the pictures on the table and takes the one with the friends. He looks at the inscription on the back and says aloud: "Hey, you won't swallow this Zachary! You'll burn for him, damn it!" He looks over the other documents and leaves.</p>

<p>Zahari Ivanov Georgiev. That name will appear in the other group, but they won't know who it is until the two groups meet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report on the case of Zahit created by us (see an example in English as a Material 2 after the script)</li> <li>• Copy of the original order for the Renaming action by regions from original documents in Bulgarian - how the renaming process should be applied region by region (example: Material 3 after the script)</li> <li>• Reporting note for action in Tolbukhin region (document created by us)</li> </ul> <p>At the end of this scene, the participants should be aware that the renaming process has begun, with Zahid being renamed Zachary, his condition in the hospital being abused and his sister being sidelined. He is then discharged from the hospital as Zachary and taken home by the policemen.</p>	<p>Key: On the way out, upon slamming the door or banging the wall with a fist from Sebaydin, from the upper part of the door frame/from a picture on the wall (according to the conditions of the room), a leaf tied in a roll like a scroll falls. The scroll contains a code of words and phrases (a play on book titles from the house library). Unraveling it leads to a specific book in which documents and letters are hidden.</p> <p>old photos + hidden code + books</p> <p>From the letters found in the book, the participants understand that Zahid was in hospital and was pressured to change his name, he lost contact with his sister. There is a letter to her in which he vents his anger against the authorities for the revival process. The letter succeeds in putting in a tight historical order what happened. He does not mention exactly how he was baptized. There are documents requesting the cooperation of Zachary, (a teacher at Zahid's school in the village to help with the renaming of the education system), which gives the impression that Zachary may be a collaborator of the authorities.</p> <p>At the end of this scene, the participants know that Zahid was forcibly rechristened in the hospital, that he is strongly against trials, and that there is a certain Zachary at his school, from whom the authorities expect cooperation. The Facilitator helps to sneak in suspicions that Zachary is the enemy.</p>
<b>Scene 2. 1986 - 1988 - Belene</b>	
<p>The group moves 3 years forward in time (green Tic-Tac- candy) with the help of the facilitator.</p> <p>The participants understand that Zachary will be sent to Belene work camp because one of his friends has betrayed him that he is resisting the trials that are happening in the country. In the end it turns out to be Georgi, but let the clues point to Sebaydin. This is how we will touch on the topic of Roma and stereotypes. Following Carey's suggestion above: after the transition from 1985 to 1986-88, a secretary enters the office, leaves a package on the desk, and leaves. On the package it says: Case</p>	<p>The group moves 3 years forward in time (green Tic-Tac- candy) with the help of the facilitator.</p> <p>The participants open a diary from the school for the new Bulgarian teacher Zahari. They discover Zahit's farewell letter, which was intended for his friend Sebaydin - in which he says that he always wanted to do something to protect Georgi's wife, who was the victim of constant harassment by her husband. But because Georgi was his friend, he did nothing. He reveals Georgi as a real traitor. He also says it's time to say goodbye because they warned him that the authorities are looking for him. Here we are tackling a bit the topic of domestic violence.</p>

<p>476/1986 Zahari Ivanov Georgiev STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL! Inside there are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tape recorder - Zahid's conversation with an unnamed friend arguing and discussing conflicting positions on the Revival process</li> <li>• A small box of Zahid's belongings - the box with a secret lock should also appear here with keys and documents.</li> <li>• Order for 10 days of solitary confinement in Belene Camp- for Zahari</li> <li>• Other documents (for more authenticity - from the original documents: Reference-analysis by State Security Escape abroad and search, Reference on the contacts, main activities and movement of Zahid</li> </ul> <p>Key: Recordings from the Dictaphone with cassette + personal belongings + solitary confinement order</p> <p>At the end of this scene - The participants know that Zahit was sent to Belene Prison because he was betrayed by his friend. They suspect the traitor is Sebaydin. They build awareness about the processes that took place in Belene.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sebaydin's letter</b></li> </ul> <p>Georgi enters and starts searching. He digs everywhere and gets angry that he can't find anything. He pulls out the suitcase from somewhere, opens it on the ground, sees that it is empty and gives up. All the time he says: "<i>There must be traces somewhere - a diary, documents, something... Everyone says he must have left traces</i>" This will provoke the participants to continue searching after he leaves. If they do not orient themselves to the suitcase, the facilitator helps them.</p> <p>We'll do the double bottom with wrapping paper on top of a suitcase-sized piece of cardboard, like upholstery that's easy to repair and tear once they figure out there's something underneath. There will be the diary, secret letters, clippings from articles, a letter from the people in the village modeled after an original letter from the Personal stories collected.</p> <p>The log will have basic information, but also coded parts - in order to read them, they will have to crack the code.</p> <p>Key: The Secret Diary + The Double Bottom Suitcase</p> <p>At the end of this scene: The participants know that Zahit was sent to Belene camp, they know that Georgi betrayed him, and that Georgi was an abuser. They are still wondering who Zahit is and what his role is.</p>
<p><b>Scene 3. 1989 - The Big Excursion and the permanent move to Turkey</b></p>	
<p>The group time travels via red Tic-Tac given by the facilitator.</p> <p>Zahit left Belene and after a few months was deported to Turkey. During these few months he created a plan of action to resist the revival process. The police found out, discovered the plan and decided to extradite him to Turkey.</p> <p>In this scene - Participants are directed that all the answers are hidden in the letter they have to find. A policeman enters the room with the letter and calls someone: The letter was thrown hastily by policemen on the table with the words: "Hey, that's what Zahid hid before he left. After leaving Belene, he only creates problems. Who knows what he has planned,</p>	<p>The group time travels via red Tic-Tac given by the facilitator.</p> <p>Here we direct the participants to another denouement so that when they get together in the room they can discuss everything and put the story together.</p> <p>It's a very fast scene here because the last pill works for a short time. They just find a recipe for reading the letter with the blank pages and have to go through a physical challenge to get out - to get a match from a hidden place high up, with a marker low leading to it</p> <p>.</p> <p>Zahid/Zahari comes, says two or three monologue parting words, looks at the mirror, marks on it the</p>

<p>then we will look for clues. Now those of the resistance are approaching, let's seal the room under repair so no one can enter it, that's where all the evidence is. And let's go see what's going on outside"</p> <p>It's a very fast and quick scene because the last pill "works" for a short time. They only find the letter with the blank pages and have to go through a physical challenge to get out - a spider web on the door.</p> <p>Key: A physical challenge to get through the web without touching it (so as not to change the past).</p> <p>The Invisible Ink Blank Sheets (Invisible Ink Recipes)</p> <p>At the end of this scene, the participants exit in the fastest way possible. Their adrenaline is up, they have a letter and gather in the common room to read it. They know that Zahit has a changed name to Zahari, they suspect Sebaydin of betraying him and that is why they sent him to Belene. They understand that he got out of there and went somewhere.</p>	<p>place of the match in the mirror reflection and leaves.</p> <p>Optional scenario twist - Aishe enters and the lights are off, the electricity is off. She began to search and says: <i>I know, brother, that we have an explanation, you can't just leave the village like that. What happened to you - why did the name Zachary even appear in our family. Your friend told me you left explanations. A letter that, if we don't happen to meet, I'll find you. Neither the letter is there, nor you. He had a favorite box in which he hid everything - where is it?</i></p> <p>The box is somewhere high up from where the participants have to take it down. Aishe enters with a lantern and then hears a crash, as if someone is coming. She decides to run away and leaves the lantern in the room. The participants take it and navigate the room with it. They must take the box and escape. Can Aishe give a little more description about the box so it makes it easier for them.</p> <p>Key: A match hidden over a tall cupboard, that can be seen in the mirror. The riddle of reading invisible ink, placed in a Zebra match to heat the letter with it later.</p> <p>At the end of this scene - Participants have instructions on how to read the letter. They know Zahit is gone. They are still wondering who Zachary is.</p>
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**Scene 4. Figuring out the riddle - Back in 2020 r.**

The two groups come together, unravel and read the secret letter from Zahid to his sister and find out the whole truth. They share with each other what they discovered, who thought what was going on.

*Dear Aishe,*

*I'm going after you. I was told that you were sent to Turkey and I am coming to you. I have nothing left here. At first they changed my name while I was in the hospital. I had no choice, you know what happened to our neighbors who resisted. I decided to keep quiet, but the pain was too much. Therefore, I planned to gather a resistance group to oppose the atrocities of the Party's activities. So they took our history, they want to erase our culture and traditions in the name of the homeland in which we were born and raised. This breaks my heart. But I feel greater suffering from the activities of my friend Georgi. Do you remember him? He and Sebaydin grew up together. When I organized the resistance, I told Georgi, and he told the militia, then they came and arrested me. They sent me to Belene. We had no right to anything there - no name, no history. We lived as strangers in the lands of our ancestors. Grief seized my soul. Those terrible days prompted me to go forth to seek retribution.*

*I wanted to have the right to be myself again - with my name Zahit, and not with this made-up name Zahari they gave me.*

*Since then I've done my best to stop these cruelties to people, but I'm tired now. I wanted to come to you, but when I inquired I found out that they forced you to go to Turkey. And now I come to you. I am writing this letter because I do not know where I will find you and if you come to the house where we grew up and see this, then I have been lied to and forced to leave my homeland.*

**Facilitated group discussion for finalizing the research, debriefing, reflection and closing of the game**

**Needed items for the rooms and scenes**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old dial phone</li> <li>• Copies of the original orders of State Security</li> <li>• Additional "authentic" documents made by the team</li> <li>• Document box/safe</li> <li>• A box of Zahid's personal belongings</li> <li>• Order for 10 days in solitary confinement in Belene - Zahid.pdf</li> <li>• Cassette recorder - recorded conversations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picture/other wall object with hiding places behind</li> <li>• Old suitcase with double bottom</li> <li>• Secret Diary</li> <li>• Old photographs from the period - Photo Friends 1981.jpeg,</li> <li>• Muslim Items - Buhur Lamp &amp; Rosary + Small Oriental Rug, Quran/Quran Portions</li> <li>• Old radio</li> <li>• Multimedia for broadcasting scenes and images on the wall</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Material 1: Phone Call**

*- Yes, Comrade Chief, we have read the order.*

*- In our region, there are 500 people with Turkish-Arabic names who are about to be rechristened. Now the officers are distributed and the Renaming continues apace....  
(pause)*

*- It is complicated, there is resistance in the operational activity.....(pause)*

*- As you ordered, we banned speaking in a language other than Bulgarian on the streets, in restaurants and schools. We follow the instructions and if there is resistance, we do what is necessary. Yesterday we sent some of our people to take care of the cemeteries - they destroyed the plaques with Turkish names. We will restore the country and erase the Turkish! We have established checkpoints so that there can be no mass events on August 5-8, when it is Eid al-Adha. I'll send two of our men to check on organized activities. I will mail you the report, but there are positive trends. However:*

*(Here you can read part of the report "Reference DS Monitoring Bayram celebration")*

*"The analysis of the information received at the Ministry of Internal Affairs shows that the mass-political and explanatory work during a Muslim religious holiday, despite its scale, did not fully play its role. The fact that the religious holiday as a whole passed without the*

*traditional solemnity and display characteristic of past years should not be taken as awareness as a result of the explanatory activity, but as an unconscious reaction caused by fear and respect and by the peculiarities of the current operational and political situation."*

*- Regarding the other question, chief, I will tell comrades militiamen Stavrev and Dimitrov to go to the hospital to finish the work on the issue with Zahit. He is one of the problematic ones and it is good to deal with him before it is too late. Did you send the documents? Okay, I'm going to the post office and I'll call you back later.*

## **Material 2. Reporting Note**

TOP SECRET!

I AFFIRM:

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Asst. Minister at M.V.R. for D.S.

/G.Kumbiliev/

Sofia, 6.3.1985

Ministry of the Interior - 5 "Otechestvo" St

REPORTING NOTE

RE: The situation of ZAHIT ISMAIL GUNAY

Today, 06.03.1985, the person ZAHIT ISMAIL GUNAI suffered a traffic accident, due to which he was taken to the hospital of the town of Tolbukhin. There, it was established that the person was in an inadequate condition as a result of a concussion. His memory loss is also observed.

In connection with the renaming order by regions, with which our regional administration is well aware, it was decided to record the person as ZAHARI IVANOV GEORGIEV in the hospital register. In this way, the transition to the new name will be facilitated at this opportune moment. In order to adapt the person more successfully, his sister Ayshe Ismail Gunay is not allowed to visit him.

The person is to be accompanied to his home in the coming days. His sister and his entire family are also about to be renamed. The persons are being sought.

NO CONTACT WITH THE RENAMED ALLOWED.

PREPARED BY:

Art. Investigator:

/B. Dimitrov/

ACCEPTED:  
KRDOPBGDSRSBNA  
DECLASSIFIED  
§ 17  
from ZDRDOPBGDSRSBNA  
Gen. mayor:  
/ At. Kadyrev/

### Material 3. Original order for renaming action by regions

КРДОПБГДСРСБНА ДЕКЛАСИФИЦИРАН § 17 от ЗДРДОПБГДСРСБНА
--

СТРОГО СЕКРЕТНО!  
Екз. № 2

Във връзка с провежданите мероприятия за подмяна на турско-арабските имена оперативната обстановка в страната е сложна. Тези мероприятия почти завършиха в Южна България. Продължава да се работи по отделни лица от Старозагорски и Сливенски окръзи.

#### КЪРДЖАЛИЙСКИ ОКРЪГ:

Обстановката се нормализира, активизира се работата по издотвянето на нови паспорти. Изяснена е дейността на обектите по ГДОР "Наивници", намерени са инкриминирани материали, написани от главните обекти и днес ще бъдат иззети.

#### ПЛОВДИНСКИ ОКРЪГ:

На 21 т. месец имаше организирани групи от по 200 човека в Пловдив и Асеновград. Водим на контрол сигнал за наличие на нелегална организация в с. Долни Воден. Лице от с. Куклен е близка връзка на обектите на ОУ-МВР-Кърджали по ГДОР "Фургона" за нелегална организация. То възнамеряваше да организира група около себе си, която да предидвика масови безредици. Въпреки оказаната им помощ ОУ-МВР Пловдив все още не работи активно по тези случаи. Не информираха хя своевременно за групите в Пловдив и Асеновград и взетите мерки. Изпратен е оперативен работник от VI у-ние, който на място им оказва помощ.

Material 4. Photos



## HISTORY AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE REVIVAL PROCESS

*30 years since the beginning of the Transition*

*At the end of 1989, the leadership of the governing Bulgaria BKP admitted: "The revival process is a gross mistake and a perversion of the constitutional rights of Bulgarian citizens."*

*This was the biggest disgrace that the modern Bulgarian state committed on a part of the Bulgarian population. The "revival process" expelled hundreds of thousands of Bulgarian citizens from the country. He caused enormous damage to the Bulgarian economy, left behind vast wastelands, a ruined financial system and hundreds of broken human destinies. On December 29, 1989, a decision of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the BKP threw out the "Revival Process" and the government of Georgi Atanasov announced the right of Bulgarian Muslims to restore their traditional names.*

### THE BEGINNING

Five years before that, on December 10, 1984, by order of the Minister of the Interior, Dimitar Stoyanov, he ordered the district administrations of the Ministry of the Interior and the first secretaries of the Central Committee of the BKP to prepare the renamed o to "Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in all districts where there is such a population".

The implementation of the "Revival Process" was connected with party and operational preparation by the BKP and the Ministry of the Interior.

The beginning was made on June 19, 1984 with a decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the BCP "For the further unification and inclusion of the Bulgarian Turks to the work of socialism, to the politics of the BKP." The document expressed concern over "the continuing isolation of the Bulgarian Turks, the manifestations of pro-Turkish nationalism, religious fanaticism and domestic conservatism." It was decided "to speed up the development of the areas with a compact mass of Bulgarian Turks, to settle specialists from the country in these areas, to develop the Turkish intelligentsia, to encourage the system of mixed marriages, to make communication in the Bulgarian language mandatory in public places and to stop the construction of new mosques."

According to gen. Georgi Milushev, the last UBO chief, in the fall of 1984, the district chiefs of the 10 regions with "Islamized" populations were summoned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The then Minister of Internal Affairs, Dimitar Stoyanov, gave the following instructions: to start the renaming, but only in compliance with the principle of voluntariness and "proven Bulgarian ancestral roots". The events that will

be held only in Southern Bulgaria (excluding Northeastern Bulgaria) have also been outlined.

On December 10, 1984, an operative of the Ministry of the Interior was organized. It received "verbal information from the head of the VI Department of State Security, Lieutenant General Petar Stoyanov, about the progress of the work on renaming Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin."

The same lieutenant general was given the following instructions: "To do the necessary, through the heads of the OU-MII and the first secretaries of the BCP, to start renaming Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in all districts where there is such a population, with a view to the work of completed within a specified time."

It was ordered "to take serious measures to prevent any excesses in connection with the renaming of Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin, which would bring our country into disrepute before the outside world."

## **CHANGE OF TURKISH-ARABIC NAMES WITH SLAVIC-CHRISTIAN**

With this decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in December 1984, the implementation of the program for changing Turkish-Arabic names to Bulgarian (Christian or Slavic respectively) began. The next stage in the implementation of the "Renaissance Process" was the changing of the names of the Bulgarian Turks, first in Southern and later in Northern Bulgaria.

The campaign began at the end of December 1984 and ended in February 1985. First of all, personal names were changed in Kardzhali and Hackiv districts, and then in North-Eastern Bulgaria, to that the possible "provocateurs" were already arrested or mobilized for military training.

I am repeating the already worked out scenario: the cells are blocked by the forces of order (militia, MIA troops, border troops) and intimidated by shooting in the air, they bring in the tanks and non-transporters. It was forbidden to leave the settlement, telephone connections were cut off, identity documents were taken away, and people were forced to sign declarations that they had no relatives in Turkey and did not want to emigrate, but voluntarily changed their names.

Name cards were distributed to choose a new name. Some of the people have looked for possible connections with the Turkish names. In some villages, where people knew about the change of names in advance, they fled to the forests and mountains, hid for several days, but soon because of the cold weather they were forced to return to their houses and obey the militia.

## **RESISTANCE, PROTESTS AND ARRESTS**

In a number of settlements of the country, the Turkish population organized protests against the renaming, and in others everything happened quickly and without incident. In the settlements where there was resistance to the change of names, during

the clashes with the army and the militia there were not only wounded, but even killed. Others died as a result of the mental abuse during the renaming.

During the "Revival Process" not a small number of Bulgarian Turks were arrested and sent to prisons or camps. The reasons can be divided into three groups: political, criminal and personal.

Opposing the change of names and organizing conspiracies against the state can be defined as political. The current honorary chairman of the DPS, Dr. Ahmed Dogan, at that time a graduate student in philosophy at SU, created a powerful illegal organization against the totalitarian power of the principle of "war by peaceful means" against the trampling of the rights and freedoms of the Bulgarian Turks, for which he was sentenced to 10 years in prison, 9 months of which he served on death row. Most Turks who resisted the renaming are educated people, part of the intelligentsia. They claim that at that time they tried only with words to stop the "revival process" and to "reason" the rulers.

According to the farmer Tsenko Barev, in April 1986 there were only about 1450 Turks in the prisons in Sofia, Pazardzhik and Stara Zagora. About 5,000 people were concentrated in the camp on Belene Island. According to Turkish data, the total number of Turkish political prisoners amounted in April 1986 to 10,000 people.

## THE HORROR: ASSIMILATION and CAMPS

The stories about what happened there are shocking. The horror was not only for the inmates, but also for their families, who were not allowed to see each other. Relatives often traveled hundreds of kilometers to see the prisoners, only to be turned away.

Usually, from one or several villages, the rulers or the militia chose a more educated person, whose arrest intimidated the population. In this way, they suppressed the protests and ensured the peaceful conduct of the "Revival Process".

It is noteworthy that most of the convicts were teachers or people with higher and semi-higher education. But there have been separate arrests of completely illiterate and apolitical people who to this day cannot explain the reason for their arrest and imprisonment. Those Turks who managed to avoid prison were fired and displaced inside the country. The exodus from the native places was related to the authorities' desire to displace the compact Turkish population for easier assimilation. After leaving Belene, those arrested were also not given the opportunity to return to their places of birth, but were sent to other parts of the country. Campers and their families were not allowed to work, which condemned them to a miserable existence.

The party's active and administrative machinery was working at full speed: in the extremely short period of the campaign, the personal documents of over 800,000 people were changed. As with the pomace, the names of the deceased relatives are not forgotten, and the Muslim cemeteries are destroyed on the way.

Even at the very beginning of the "Renaissance Process" there were trouble and victims. The most violent protests were organized in Benkovki, Kardzhali, Momchilgrad,

all of Gruevo (Momchilgrad), Dzhebel, Krumovgrad, etc., with armed forces scattered elsewhere. In Yablanovo (Kotlenka), the locals blocked the roads to the village, which was taken over by the tanks. There are also noises in Targovishtko and Shumencko. The number of the wounded remains unknown, as well as the number of those killed: 7 ethnic Turks, among those who took part in the "revivalist" campaign, 24 only in South-Eastern Bulgaria, according to the information of the DPC. Most of them die later than the beatings planned for them, thousands are sent to camps and prisons, entire cities are interned.

### **310,000 BULGARIAN TURKS HAVE CHANGED NAMES, states the headquarters of the Bulgarian Communist Party**

On January 18, 1985, at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the BKP with the first secretaries of the district party committees, it was reported that so far the names of 310,000 Bulgarians had been changed. Turks, and for the first time he talks about the "Revival Process". The term was officially used by the secretary of the Central Committee of the BKP and future minister-predecessor Giorgi Atanatsov in a report delivered by him at the meeting.

The campaign was seen as a "historical act that erases the last mark of Turkish slavery on the power of our people", and the renaming in Orelovsky was called "restoration of Bulgarian names". The Central Committee of the BCP sends the material "Strengthening the unity of the Bulgarian socialist nation, its ethnic homogeneity" to the party leaders. The aim of this act was "final and irrevocable separation of this population from Turkishism and clarification and strengthening of the Bulgarian national consciousness". According to Todor Zhivkov, "they are not part of the Turkish ethnic group, but assimilated Bulgarians during the five centuries of Turkish slavery".

On January 28, 1985, a meeting was held in the Central Committee of the BKP with the party active from Sofia. The beginning of the Revival process was announced at it, the purpose of which was to restore the Bulgarian national consciousness of those renamed and to integrate them into the Bulgarian nation. The name change was followed by the introduction of bans on speaking Turkish in public, practicing Islamic customs and rites, listening to Turkish music and wearing traditional Muslim clothing.

For their realization, the "Ideological Policy" department of the Central Committee of the BKP has prepared a program "For decisively raising the level of ideological work among Bulgarians with restored names".

In it, the specific measures for the development of the process were identified - confirmation of the new Bulgarian names, propaganda of the thesis about the Bulgarian origin of the Turkish population in the country, strengthening the study of the Bulgarian language and enforcing its use in public places, overcoming the influence of Islam through systematic political working with imams, building common cemeteries, stopping circumcision and related holidays, severely punishing circumcisers and parents who circumcise their children," etc. Thus, along with the imposition of the new

Bulgarian names, the BKP has banned Muslim customs and rites, listening to Turkish music, and wearing traditional clothing. The demolition of mosques has begun. In this way, the communist ideology has made an attempt to eliminate the traditional elements in the Turkish culture and assimilate this population to the "socialist way of life".

The changes that occurred as a result of the "Renaissance Process" met the negative reaction of the Bulgarian Turks. The attitude towards the ban on speaking Turkish in public places is particularly negative: At the same time, the last two periodicals in Turkish are Bulgarianized, the radio broadcasts in the local language are stopped, the removal of Turkish toponyms continues, etc. n.

If, however, the renaming of the pomacs from the beginning of the 70s was successfully hidden by the international community, the "regenerative process" did not remain without criticism. The situation is obviously complicated by the fact that in this case there is also another "mother state".

### **Where is Ankara and what's its role?**

The second half of the 1980s was the time of a real diplomatic and propaganda war between Sofia and Ankara, although bilateral relations did not stop. The two countries did not miss the opportunity to denounce the case at international forums such as the UN, UNECCO, the Council of Europe, and before the allies of the Warsaw Pact, etc. ethnic group of NATO. While Turkey criticizes the brutal violation of basic human rights in Bulgaria, the latter refers to the problem of the Kurds, the invasion of Cyprus, the Armenian genocide, etc.

During all this time until November 1989, Todor Zhivkov and the leadership of the BKP expected the foreign political situation to calm down, referring to the delicate position of Turkey regarding the Kurdish opposition. But the confrontation also includes the Western media and human rights organizations, which publicize the trampling of the rights of the Turkish population in Bulgaria. On the other hand, the Soviet Union is reserved, especially the enterprise of Mikhail Gorbachev "perestroika".

Relations with Turkey will not normalize even after the signing of this purpose of the bilateral protocol in Belgrade (February 23, 1988). Something more: the internal political context is also sharpening, since the newly produced "citizens with restored names" do not accept the thesis of the Bulgarian origin.

### **The "Revival process" delivers nothing from the expected results**

At the beginning of 1989, the Bulgarian party-state leaders began to realize that the "Renaissance Process" was facing failure. Despite all the measures, speaking Turkish in public does not stop and even becomes demonstrative, "Bulgarians with restored names" use their birth names instead, continued the wearing of the usual Muslim clothes and the celebration of religious holidays and rituals.

In May 1989, a conference of the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe (forerunner of the OSCE) was held in Paris, dedicated to the problems of human rights and the free movement of people across borders. The representative of Bulgaria is Petar Mladenov and he announces that in fulfillment of the commitments undertaken by Bulgaria on May 10, 1989, the National Assembly adopted amendments to the laws on the passport regime, Bulgarian citizenship and the Criminal Code. The law on foreign passports enters into force on September 1, but events are developing rapidly and the issuing of passports to Bulgarian Turks begins earlier.

On May 29, 1989, Todor Zhivkov gave a big speech in which he emphasized the Bulgarian origin of the Turks, but gave them the right to choose whether to leave Bulgaria temporarily or permanently. The statement was broadcast on BNR and BNT and marks a sharp change in the attitude of the authorities, since before that the Turks were resolutely denied the right to define themselves as such.

### **The "Blg Excursion" and the aftermath**

On June 3, Turkey opened its border and this led to a massive wave of migration in the summer months of 1989. Anxiety, nationalist passions and xenophobia were stirred up throughout society.

On June 7, at a meeting with the political elite, Todor Zhivkov left no doubt about the meaning of the looming mass exodus. "The riots in the country stopped after this exhibition (from May 29). We are on the brink of a major exodus psychosis. How should we assess this psychosis? "We need such psychosis, it is welcome. I'm going to tell you something that we keep secret. If we do not remove 200-300 thousand people from this population, after 15 years Bulgaria will not exist. It will be like Cyprus or something similar," says Zhivkov to the party and state delegates..

However, despite assurances from the rulers, Turkey is not ready to accept a large wave of emigrants on its territory. Chaos reigned on the Bulgarian-Turkish border and on August 21, the passage of vehicles and people was stopped by the Turkish authorities.

Economic and social problems appear in Bulgaria, as whole villages and districts are completely or partially depopulated. Local industry is experiencing difficulties, as well as large industrial enterprises in the country and in transport, where Bulgarian Turks also work. The Bulgarian authorities have to organize the harvest in the depopulated areas with the help of foremen - soldiers and students. The issues surrounding the movable and immovable property of the emigrants, livestock, withdrawn savings, regulation of exported goods and sums of money are discussed. Measures are being taken so that the homes are bought by the municipalities and not by private individuals.

On August 1, 1989, a protest declaration of the Club for Support of Glasnost and Reconstruction against the expulsion of the Bulgarian Turks was submitted to the National Assembly.

Between the opening and closing of the border on the Turkish side, from June 3 to August 21, 1989, about 360,000 people managed to emigrate, although by the time Zhivkov was removed from power, about 40,000 had returned to Bulgaria before the expiration of the the three-month visas issued to them. By the end of 1990, over 150,000 of the emigrants returned to Bulgaria.

### **The political rationale behind**

According to the Bulgarian Turkish settlers, the "Renaissance Process" was a consequence of a long-standing, gradual and well-prepared policy of integration and assimilation of the individual ethnic and religious minorities in Bulgaria.

According to the organizers and researchers, there were several reasons for holding the "Revival Process" in the 1980s. The change in the policy towards the Bulgarian Turks was influenced by the successful renaming of people from mixed marriages, the pressure of local actors, the collapse of the hope that an agreement could be reached with Turkey on the complete emigration, the nationalist propaganda of our southern neighbor, and finally - the danger from the "Cypriot variant" in Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian authorities point to the demographic boom of the Turkish population as the most important reason for the name change. According to Amnesty International, in the early 1980s, about 900,000 ethnic Turks lived in Bulgaria. According to Turkish government statistics, their number in the country amounted to over 1.5 million people. The rapid increase of the Turks was perceived by the rulers as dangerous for the Bulgarian nation, and they considered a plan to reduce it. Since the Turkish side refused to accept more emigrants, the only option was the renaming of the Turkish population in order to integrate them into the Bulgarian nation. The Bulgarian government only waited for a favorable moment to change the names of the Bulgarian Turks in order to minimize the protests from our southern neighbor.

The convenient situation occurred in the early 1980s. At the time, Turkey was gripped by a powerful Kurdish, labor and student movement. In terms of foreign policy, the country has had problems with Greece, Iran and the EEC. Taking advantage of the situation in Turkey, the Bulgarian authorities have started the "revival process".

### **Impact and aftermath**

The results of the Revival process are numerous and completely negative not only for the Bulgarian Turks, but also for the entire Bulgarian society. First of all, the "Renaissance Process" leads to the closure of the Turkish community and its return to its past and roots. As a result of political pressure, the group's resistance

forces have awakened and it has tried to discover the truth of its origins, return to religion and restore forgotten traditions. This counteraction inevitably had its impact on the identification of the Bulgarian Turks. They have begun not only to feel, but also to publicly declare their belonging to the Turkish and Muslim community.

The international support that Turkey has provided has also reinforced their perception that it is the "motherland" that protects its people. For the Bulgarian Turkish immigrants, the main result of the "revival process" is the restoration or, more precisely, the "clarification" of Turkish ethnic and cultural self-awareness.

Secondly, the negative impact of the "Renaissance Process" on inter-ethnic relations in the country should be pointed out. Although a large number of Bulgarians did not agree with the changing of the names of the Turks, political events led to conflicts between the two groups. This is confirmed by the opinions of the Bulgarian Turkish immigrants in Turkey. According to the migrants, the Bulgarians also opposed the "Renaissance Process" and did not agree with it. However, historical events managed to separate Bulgarians and Turks, who until then lived together in peace and understanding. The reason lies in the participation of many Bulgarians in the conduct of state policy towards the Turks.

After the change of names and the ban on the practice of Muslim customs and rites between the two ethnic groups - Bulgarians and Turks - a barrier has been erected. They were suspicious of each other and blamed each other for various things. This division was also fueled by the authorities, which continued with the ideological propaganda about their common origin.

Bulgarian Turkish immigrants defend the view that the "Revival Process" was the main reason for the "Great Excursion" in the summer of 1989 and their emigration to Turkey. According to them, another result was the collapse of the communist regime in the country. The Bulgarian Turkish immigrants claim that the assimilation policy and the flagrant violation of human rights in the country created resistance forces in society, which led to the overthrow of Todor Zhivkov in November 1989 and the beginning of the democratic transition. The general opinion of almost all Bulgarian migrants in Turkey is that the implementation of the "Revival Process" had a negative impact on the development of Bulgaria. Despite the categorical position of the Bulgarian side regarding emigration, a change in the views of the rulers was soon imposed. The reason was the mass dissatisfaction with the "Revival Process", which came to light only in the spring of 1989. Peaceful demonstrations, marches and hunger strikes in Northeastern Bulgaria have had an impact. There have been demands for the return of Turkish-Arabic names and emigration to Turkey. In some places there were clashes with the police. The number of those refusing to work has gradually increased. Agricultural work was abandoned, the rhythm of production in industry and construction was disrupted, separate acts of sabotage were committed. The activity of the international community was activated, which protested against the assimilation campaign carried out against the Muslim population in the country. The pressure from the Turkish side, which raised the question of a new emigration agreement, has also intensified. The Bulgarian leadership has been deflecting the requests.

However, on May 9, 1989, the National Assembly passed the Law on Foreign Passports. By virtue of it, Bulgarian citizens have received the right to leave the country and reside temporarily or permanently in another country. As a consequence of this law was the opening of the borders announced by Todor Zhivkov on May 29. The emigration of all Bulgarian Muslims who "want to temporarily go to Turkey and live there" was allowed. In this way, Bulgaria has allowed the Bulgarian Turks to leave the country as "excursionists".

In order to avoid the emigration of Muslim Bulgarians, the rulers take extreme measures. On June 16, 1989, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the BKP established a Coordination Council chaired by Dimitar Stoyanov. Its main goal was "to dissuade those who wish to leave the country, not to allow the departure of Bulgarian-Mohammedans - Pomacs" to Turkey.

Despite the well-known organization of the "Great Excursion", chaos ensued in the country. The plan to relieve the tension in society by emigration was not justified. Misunderstanding and confusion ensued, and production came to a standstill. Considerable sums were withdrawn from the savings banks. Suitcases and bags were bought. Some of the emigrants sold their properties for next to nothing in order to have the financial means to leave Bulgaria. Others have left their houses to relatives or even unattended in the general mess. Some of the emigrants have had to pay for their education, which they have not yet completed, in order to obtain diplomas. Those Turks who had installments for cars were not allowed by the state to take them and they were forced to sell them to a Bulgarian friend.

The end of the "Great Excursion" was set on August 22, 1989. Turkey closed the border and announced the introduction of a visa regime for emigrants from Bulgaria. In two months, the number of Turks who left the country was between 310 and 370 thousand people. According to other data, about 152,000 Bulgarian citizens who left for Turkey recently returned. In the latest published Turkish government statistics (June 2001), 258,060 Bulgarian citizens obtained Turkish citizenship in the summer of 1989.

## **Assessing the situation**

In the report of Alexander Lilov before the Plenum of the Central Committee of the BKP in December 1989, it was stated that the main motive for the emigration of the Bulgarian Turks was the forcible implementation of the "Revival Process" and its impact on the sense of belonging. For most of the emigrants, the "Great Excursion" is an effort to preserve ethnicity, an attempt to destroy the Bulgarian rulers during the "Renaissance Process".

On November 10, 1989, Todor Zhivkov's regime fell. The new reformist leadership of the BKP hopes to distance itself from the shameful "Revival Process", with the party itself denouncing it and transferring the responsibility to the ousted Zhivkov. For his own political survival, but also for the danger of ethnic clashes, on December 29, 1989. The plenum of the Central Committee of the BKP decided to restore the names of the Bulgarian Turks and assessed the "Revival Process" as a "campaign for the forcible

creation of an "ethnically monolithic Bulgarian nation". It is recognized that "perversions of the constitutional rights of Bulgarian citizens" were carried out and the whole process was a "gross political mistake of Todor Zhivkov's authoritarian regime".

The contradictory reactions in society in the first years after November 10, 1989 show that the Communist Party, although already with a new name - BSP, failed to stand at the head of the process of rethinking the "Renaissance Process", although on January 18, 1990 a new step was taken in this direction with the arrest of Zhivkov and other figures of the former leadership of the state, accused of "incitement to national enmity".

The Cabinet of the BSP headed by Andrey Lukanov is also taking concrete steps to legally overcome the consequences of the "Revival Process". On March 5, 1990, a law was adopted that regulates the procedure for the return of the names of the Bulgarian Turks, and on August 1 of this year, with a government decision, the first step was taken to restore ownership of real estate to those who emigrated in 1989.

### From pain towards forgiveness

However, the wound from the "Revival Process" has not subsided, even 30 years after its denial. The change of birth names and the forced expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Bulgarian citizens to Turkey is one of the most shameful episodes in modern Bulgarian history. The pain doesn't go away. The pain doesn't go away. The memory does not fade. To this day, however, not a single one has been punished.

But no one is looking for revenge either. With the philosophy "let the perpetrators of this crime be ashamed of themselves", the Bulgarian Turks continue to live in our country in understanding with the rest of the Bulgarian citizens. "The biggest punishment for these people is to know that we are part of our homeland and there is no force that can oppose us to the Bulgarians". , and Turks - to take an oath that this crime will never happen again.

In 2018, Polish historian from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, Tomasz Camusella, published his study, "Ethnic Cleansing during the Cold War. The forgotten expulsion of the Turks from communist Bulgaria in 1989". According to Kamuzela, what happened in Bulgaria in 1989 was precisely ethnic cleansing. He also emphasizes the fact that in 2012. The 41st National Assembly adopted a Declaration announcing "the expulsion of over 360,000 Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in 1989 as a form of ethnic cleansing carried out by the totalitarian regime". Kamuzela is convinced that the crime of "ethnic cleansing" and the role of the Turkish-Muslim dissident movements in bringing about the end of socialism in Bulgaria should be included in the textbooks in order to counteract the oblivion and lay the foundations for a successful reconciliation.

### II. HOW THE REVIVAL PROCESS BEGAN IN NORTHERN BULGARIA

What was the situation on the eve of the forced name change of Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin in Northern Bulgaria, reveals an archival document of the former State Security, which desebg.com published online.

It is a top secret summary of the events in the districts of the country since January 23, 1985.

The document notes that in connection with the measures for "replacing the Turkish-Arabic names, the operational situation in the country is complicated."

It is emphasized that the shift is almost finished in Southern Bulgaria, while work continues with individuals in Sliven and Starozagorsk Districts.

The information about the situation in the districts of Northern Bulgaria, where there is a Turkish minority affected by the "revival process" carried out by the communist regime led by Todor Zhivkov, is valuable.

In the top secret summary, specific data is indicated by districts, with Shumen district listed as the most problematic.

The document is included in the collection "State security - the change of names - the revival process 1945-1985", volume 1, edition of the Commission on files, 2013.

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