

## **PŘEMYSL PITTER (1895 – 1976) – EUROPEAN HUMANIST AND CHILD RESCUER**

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**Abstract.** The Czechs have given the world many important personalities, including pedagogues. In addition to the well-known Jan Amos Komenský (1592 – 1670), we can also name Gustav Adolf Lindner (1828 – 1887). But for a long time another important pedagogue personality of the 20th century, Přemysl Pitter, remained unknown to the world. In today's world of intolerance it's worthwhile to pay attention to the activities of a man who cherished the values by which he lived his life: "Without love, without human compassion with one another, nothing will stand" (Pitter 1974). These are the words of the humanist Přemysl Pitter, a Czech Protestant-oriented thinker, educator, writer, publicist, radical pacifist, and social worker. He founded the famous Prague educational institute "Milič House" during the Second World War, and despite strict prohibitions, he visited and supplied the Jews during that time. After the war, he applied for confiscated castles around Prague, where he took care of impoverished German, Jewish, Polish, Czech, and other children. There was no word of him for many years. But why was his birth declared a UNESCO anniversary? Why did he receive one of the highest state awards of the Czech Republic from President Václav Havel? This text addresses such questions.

**Keywords:** Přemysl Pitter; Milič House; Operation Castles; social work; pedagogue

### **A man of tolerance, humanity, pedagogue and childcare worker**

Přemysl Pitter was born on June 21, 1895 in Smíchov, Prague, into the family of the director of a printing house. All six of his older siblings had already died during childhood. The eldest sister, Žofie, died at the age of ten, less than a year before Přemysl was born. Přemysl himself was born a very weak child. In 1906 his father set up his own printing business in Spálená Street, where he was joined three years later by Přemysl. His mother died in 1911, and after studying typography in Leipzig in 1911 – 1912, his father also died in 1913, resulting in Přemysl having to take over the business. At the beginning of the First World War, he enlisted in the army as a volunteer. There he underwent a great spiritual

conversion and became a pacifist and a pious Christian. He promised God that if he survived, he would dedicate the rest of his life to caring for children and those in need (Kohn 2000, 155). He was sentenced to death for desertion but escaped (Kosatík 2009, 38). He returned from the war with malaria and became a vegetarian during treatment.

From 1920 to 1921 he studied at Hus's Faculty of Theology at Charles University in Prague, and from 1924 to 1942 he published the magazine *Sbratření*. In 1926 he met the Swiss Olga Fierzová, who became his lifelong friend and collaborator. In 1933, he opened the “Milíč House” in Prague for extracurricular work with children. During the 1920s and 1930s, Přemysl devoted himself to the promotion of pacifist ideas, for which he was repeatedly punished by the court and the societies he ran were persecuted. One of them - the Movement for Christian Communism – was quickly banned by the First Republic authorities (Vojáku 2009, 91 – 93). At the turn of the 1930s and 1940s, he opposed antisemitism and published articles in defence of the Jews in *Sbratření*. During World War II, despite a strict ban, he visited and supported Jewish families and their children, for which he was interrogated by the Gestapo; he openly admitted that he was helping the Jews, but he was not arrested. However, many of his collaborators ended up in concentration camps, and some did not return (Pasák 1995, 85).

After the liberation of Czechoslovakia, Přemysl was appointed a member of the social commission of the Czech National Council where he organized “Operation Castles” (1945 – 1947): in the state-confiscated castles of Štířín, Olešovice, Kamenice and Lojovice along with the Ládví boarding house he set up sanatoriums, mainly to assist in the treatment and recovery of Jewish children returning from concentration camps. Later, Přemysl, who sharply criticized the inhuman treatment that the Czechs committed in their internment camps against the Germans, included German children in his efforts. This brought him considerable difficulties, hatred on the part of many Czechs, and even accusations from the National Security Directorate.

After the February coup of 1948, Přemysl and his colleagues began to be persecuted. Olga Fierzová, who travelled to Switzerland to attend her sister's funeral, was no longer allowed to return back home to the country. Milíč House



Source: pitter.eu

was placed into receivership by the state, limiting its educational function, and in 1951 Přemysl had to leave the director's position. In addition, from 1950, he had to face the constant scrutiny of the State Security. Therefore, on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1951, he fled to West Germany with the help of Fierzová and other friends. From 1952 to 1962, on behalf of the World Council of Churches, he provided pastoral and social services to refugees in the "Valka refugee camp" near Nuremberg. In 1963 he moved to Switzerland (Pitter 2011, 134). In Zurich, he founded the Czechoslovak Society for Science and the Arts, Hus's Choir of Czechs and Slovaks, and a Czech school, and from 1962 he and Olga published the leading exile magazine *Hovory s pisateli*. He died in Zurich on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1976.

In preparing this text, the common research method of retrieving archived materials and all available resources is used. The majority of the resources relating to the topic of Přemysl Pitter is was able to obtain from the *Archive of Přemysl Pitter and Olga Fierzová* in the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius in Prague. The archive gathers all available information about the life and activities of Přemysl Pitter and is divided into two parts. One part is the Swiss archive, which was transported from Switzerland in the 1990s and consists of 242 cartons. Researchers can look into documents related to Přemysl's religious, social, organizational and pedagogical activities and his participation in various movements and societies. There is also the personal correspondence of Přemysl and Olga. We can find here many manuscripts, photographic material, his literary output, and other writings. We also find similar archival material in the Czech archive. There are 27 cartons. In both archives you can find remarkable documents about "Milíč House", and "Operation Castles" (fifteen cartons from the Swiss archive).

Monographs and anthologies, websites, documents, and the contemporary press, etc., have become an important source of information for understanding the historical context and the period after the end of World War II and for learning about the history of the Czechs' coexistence with the Germans, as well as Přemysl Pitter's life and work. I consider the memories of Přemysl Pitter and Olga Fierzová "Nad vřavou nenávisti" (Pitter, Fierzová 1996), the monographs of Tomáš Pasák on Přemysl Pitter (Pasák 1995; Pasák, Pasáková 1997) and the proceedings of papers from international scientific conferences and seminars to be the most important.

It was very inspiring and emotional for me to meet with Přemysl Pitter's two co-workers from "Operation Castles". By using the method of oral history I recorded valuable memories of the then nurse Blanka Sedláčková and the educational care taker Helena Kláková, who were so deeply influenced by "Operation Castles" and meeting Přemysl that they dedicated their lives to working with children.

### **The beginnings of work for children: Prague Milíč House<sup>1)</sup>**

As a member of Youth Care Association in Žižkov, Prague, Přemysl Pitter got acquainted with the lives of poor families with difficult living conditions,

as well as healthy and socially endangered children. His work was focused on preventive care of children, although healthy, but often neglected by their parents (Pitter 1938). For these children, P. Pitter began, with his co – workers, to organise various activities, regularly attended by hundreds of children. Therefore, it was extremely important to ensure the building of a place, where children could be provided with out-of-school care. The building of the Milíč House was financed from donation of friends and voluntary collections. The Milíč House was opened on December 24, 1933. It was a bright, spacious, one-storey house with a garden. In 1936, the building was completed. The Milíč House, as a childcare facility, was unique not only in Czechoslovakia, but also in the world.

Children could spend their free time in the Milíč House with various activities, such as singing, art and handicrafts, table games, physical games, theatre play, German courses or cooking, outdoors sports games and gardening. Popular were festive celebrations. Tours were organized, sometimes children visited theatre or observatory. Besides educative care in the spirit of Christian morality (Pitter 1934), children were also treated with health care – including vegetarian diets. Teachers, such Ferdinand Krch, Mr. and Mrs. Rott, worked with children free of charge as volunteers. As far as possible, food and clothing were distributed among the poorest families. Many children lived in poor conditions and needed a change of the environment. In 1938, a year – round sanatorium was set up by Rokycany. Prague Milíč House was based on voluntary cooperation and solidarity (Faltusová 2008).

Here we can attach a personal memory of the writer Jan Štěpán of Milíč House and the sanatorium in Mýto u Rokycan. *“It was before Christmas in 1938, when I and my parents came to Milíč House for a Christmas bazaar one Advent Sunday. I spent two war holidays, in 1940 and 1943, with other children in a tent camp in Mýto u Rokycan. My parents also belonged to a wider circle of Přemysl's friends and I had the opportunity to get to know the rare atmosphere of Milíč House and the mythical sanatorium, and especially to get to know the narrowest circle around Přemysl and Olga, and others”* (Štěpán 2003, 25).

In 1934, the children of German emigrants, who had to flee from Nazi Germany, were placed in this sanatorium. At the time of German occupation, the house became the centre of secret support for persecuted Jewish families. The activities of the Milíč House as a shelter were, after February 1948, restricted by communist power and after some time violently ended.

The building was used since 1953 as a one – week youth club. Since 1976, the building serves as a kindergarten. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the house, the Přemysl Pitter Memorial Corner was set up in the room where Přemysl lived and where he had a study<sup>2)</sup>. Here we can find his typewriter, decorations, books, and a number of photographs.



Source: pitter.eu

**Figure 1.** Milíč House today

### **“Operation Castles” (1945 – 1947)**

*“Operation Castles served as a way towards hope and reconciliation. Shortly after the end of the Second World War, in mid-May 1945, Operation Castles began, which, with its uniqueness is one of those revolutionary acts that have been written in golden letters in history. It crossed the borders of Czechoslovakia, and soon Europe – and at the same time there was silence about it in communist Czechoslovakia” (Štěpán 1994).*

After the war, when the chaos and persecution of the Germans prevailed throughout Czechoslovakia, Přemysl learned thanks to the renewed broadcast of Czechoslovak radio, that the concentration camp in Terezín was calling for help. It was overcrowded with Jewish prisoners and plagued by a typhus epidemic. Přemysl probably thought that he would meet some children in Terezín whom he knew from Milíč House and who were gradually leaving with a summons to the transports, where the address Terezín was most often given. The most important thing was to get the children out of the typhus camp as soon as possible. Therefore, it was first necessary to find a “quarantine house” for their accommodation. Milíč House was not a suitable choice, and the sanatorium in Mýto u Rokycan was too small. Přemysl was accidentally made aware during a visit to the office of the Czech National

Council that there were three confiscated castles that would suit his intentions, all of them located a little to the south of Prague. Their names were Štířín, Olešovice, and Kamenice, confiscated originally from the property of Baron Ringhoffer. Přemysl went to look at the castles and then acted as quickly as possible. He took over the properties on behalf of the Ministry of Health, with the proviso that they would be converted into sanatoriums for Czech children returning from the concentration camps. His first collaborators were those who attended Přemysl's sermon at Milič house (Kosatík 2009, 195 – 197).

The castles were emptied, and furniture from the former *Hitlerjugend* barracks was brought from Prague. It was also important to establish contacts with the original staff at the castle and with people in the area. In an effort to prevent Soviet troops from looting the castles, Přemysl marked some of the locks with a warning that there was a typhus quarantine currently in effect. One week after the official takeover of the castle, the first forty children of various nationalities were transported to Olešovice. After a long time, one of the direct participants revealed that even then Přemysl did not follow the regulation that he should take care only of children of Czech nationality. Not only were there Jewish children, but also children from the German children's home in Rumburk, for example. They were evacuated by the Germans ahead of the approaching front together with their German educators. The operation of the sanatorium in Olešovice was officially started on June 27, 1945. The financing was similar to those in place at Miličov House. Those who worked in the Operation were volunteers, and other costs were covered by Přemysl from his own resources, mostly from an inheritance from the woodcrafter M. Seifert. Later, only Přemysl was paid by the Ministry of Labour. After the beginnings in Olešovice, some moved to Štířín Castle. It was harder to resume operations here. The castle itself was much more ostentatious than Olešovice, so it became a target for looting by Soviet soldiers. The castle was also an interesting property, and therefore attracted the attention of the authorities and interested parties. Despite these problems, a sanatorium was built here with the help of many of the locals. A group of about fifty German children aged around fifteen were the first to be transported here.

Medical care for the children was needed. It was decided that a hospital would be set up in a villa opposite the Olešovice castle. It was headed by one of the most important people to take part in "Operation Castles", the Jewish doctor and woodcrafter Emil Vogl<sup>13</sup>). In June 1945, Přemysl went to the Podolsky sanatorium where Emil Vogl was being treated and tried to persuade him to build a medical facility in Olešovice. Přemysl was successful in doing so. It is very difficult to imagine the thoughts of a man whose family was murdered by the Nazis, and yet who then treated all the children under his care without distinction, even the German ones. (Kohn 1995) *"Together with Vogel, for example, he discovered the artistic talent of the then sixteen-year-old Yehuda Bacon (Lajsková 2017) and arranged*



*lessons for him in Prague with the painter Willy Nowak. When Bacon left for Israel in March 1946, he took with him letters of recommendation from Pitter and Nowak, which opened the road for him to Max Brod and Hugo Bergman and through them to a scholarship to the Academy of Fine Arts in Jerusalem; the later world-famous painter was born” (Kosatík 2009, 200).*

The third castle obtained to help children was the castle in Kamenice. This was arranged at the time when the expulsion of the Germans from Czechoslovakia was in full swing and with it came a lot of suffering, especially of children. Přemysl himself witnessed many times the lynching of the German population, including burning on the streets. In many cases he was risking his safety and perhaps even his life to help them. He also reached one of the internments centres at the Rais School in Prague Vinohrady (Lajsková 2015, 118). Here he witnessed hell on earth. There were over a thousand people, mostly women and children. People had to be stacked on bare ground, no hygiene, and infectious diseases spread very quickly there. According to the orders, the Germans were to receive the food rations that the Jews received during the war. Infants who did not receive milk died of malnutrition. Přemysl contributed to the dissolution of perhaps the worst of the thirty internment camps for Germans and collaborators in Prague. This was a camp at Sokol Stadium. Thousands of people lived there on the bare ground in the open air (Pitter, Fierzová 1996, 159 – 161). After these horrific experiences, the castle in Kamenice was intended for German children, the children of collaborators, and children from mixed Czech-German marriages. This activity, helping German children, brought disapproval both among the locals and in the contemporary Czech press. Přemysl therefore wanted the children to go to Germany as soon as possible. In the end, these children would paradoxically remain for the longest time in his care.

The children were mostly brought in Hitler Youth uniforms. If it was possible to work with German children, and in some to awaken the destroyed human sensitivity, it was done mostly with the help of Czech educators or women from mixed Czech-German marriages. Sometimes problems arose, such as when a group of German boys intentionally started a fire in the castle park. An investigation was launched, with arson suspected, but in the end it was discovered that the boys behind the conflagration had merely been smoking in secret, and that the fire had been started by accident.

The last building to be put to use within the Operation was a smaller chateau in Lojovice. This is where the most severe cases among the youngest children were treated. It was here that Dr. Vogl treated and saved the lives of children who were exhausted and starving. Despite all efforts, seven German children died here. Because the Catholic priest from Popovice refused to bury these German children, Dr. Vogl had to bury them himself.

During the whole time the center of the whole Operation Castles was Milič House. The main office, from which the day-to-day operations were managed, was established in Olešovice. According to the original plans, it was mainly

Jewish children who were repatriated here, undergoing a medical examination and receiving better quality meals and clothes. For many, this was the first time in several years that they had been treated so well. Resocialization was then to follow, focusing mainly on direct and informal contact with the environment and caregivers in the spirit of Christian idealism, as seen in Milíč House. *“Even Pitter himself probably didn't imagine (and couldn't imagine) the life experiences of his “basement children” they had had so far”* (Kosatík 2009, 202 – 203). Both Přemysl and the children experienced various surprises. The Jewish children experienced care and love again after a very long time. Přemysl and his co-workers again faced deep suffering which they could hardly lessen. Horrible experiences did not fall within the normal scales of human behaviour. These children could not be helped through the use of some simple pedagogical methodology. For them, it was necessary to use Přemysl's procedure – that is, self-involvement, without a pedagogical methodology. *“Whoever wanted to help had to venture into the same world without rules in which these Jewish children had lived in the concentration camps for years and meet their souls where the “experience” of wartime Prague and the Auschwitz gas chamber was no different. Pitter believed that some such common space must exist, that a profound subject that everyone could talk about, regardless of Terezin and Auschwitz, persisted”* (Kosatík 2009, 203). The weight of this fact was revealed in an interview on a topic he often thought about, the afterlife. Přemysl's idea that death was easy was at odds with the experiences of children who had known it in concentration camps in a completely different form, where death was much fiercer and scarier.

Exceptionally, there was a religious misunderstanding between Czech educators and Jewish children. At this time, when things were much worse "outside" between the Czechs and the Germans, these misunderstandings were significant. Moshe Traub, one of the Jewish boys who lived in Štířín, recalls that some boys were afraid that Přemysl would try convert them to Christianity. But Přemysl had no intention of doing that. When he told the children stories from the Bible, it was only to strengthen their own faith. Moshe Traub himself recalls that in September 1945, he showed interest in visiting the synagogue in Prague, as the holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were approaching (Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement). Přemysl immediately agreed to the visit; the boy received money and was able to go (Kohn 2000, 277 – 278). It is also clear from this story that Přemysl had a positive attitude towards Judaism and did not intend to convert anyone to another faith. Another interesting experience, described by Sinai Adler and which also occurred in Štířín and had its continuation after many years, was the following misunderstanding. Sinai Adler was a pious boy, so he wore a covered head while eating. One Sunday morning, Přemysl came to visit. He entered the dining room where the children were eating. He approached Sinai Adler and took his cap. Adler was so taken aback that he couldn't even explain why he had had the hat on in



the first place. That's what the nurses told Přemysl later. The story continues after twenty years when Jewish children from the castles invited Přemysl and Olga to Israel. Přemysl planted a tree in the Alley of the Righteous in Yad-Vashem. He also met Sinai Adler in Tel Aviv, who in the meantime had become a rabbi and was traditionally dressed. Přemysl approached him and asked if it was him. When he said yes, Přemysl apologized to him for taking the hat from him at Štířín all those years ago. He hadn't forgotten it despite the passage of time and had waited for an opportunity to apologize to him. Adler was very moved (Kohn 2000, 152). *"If these were the main mistakes and if they were sufficiently reflected upon, the inhabitants of the castles probably lived closer to heaven than to earth"*<sup>4)</sup>.

Many of the memories and experiences of the children who stayed in these castles have been collected. For example, Michal Beerová recalls that they were taken care of by a young Czech women in Štířín, and the first memory was of a shower. *"After three long years there was a bathroom with white tiles, hot water and the list goes on, then dinner, in post-war Europe, when there was really a shortage everywhere, Mr. Pitter managed to get us not only bread, but I think also buns, butter and eggs and we got semolina; paradise on Earth. Us basement children, of course, snuck a piece of bread in our pockets and in the evening under our pillows, because who knows what will tomorrow bring"* (Kohn 2000, 69). She writes that the castles were very attractive, with many works of art everywhere and a large library where the children could go to read. The author of those who cared for them, remembers only Olga Fierzová and Miluška Teichmanová, but that they had been treated with kindness throughout.

German children who were rescued from Czechoslovak internment camps were able to meet these special members of the "hostile" nation. And to ponder the question of how it was possible that Přemysl Pitter, whose many friends had perished in the Nazi concentration camps, was helping them so devotedly and caring for them so much. It is possible to look at Operation Castles as a an unrepeatable psychological experiment with the soul of post-war Jewish and German children, after what they had experienced, communicated with each other, grew close and then evolved friendships (Štěpán 2014, 31). *"From the Czech side, Operation Castles was the offer of a hand of unconditional humanity, a selfless offer and hope for reconciliation. Only the communist coup in 1948 meant that this hope and offer could not be used to reconcile the two nations"* (Štěpán 2014, 32). We can also say, following Přemysl's actions, according to the legacy of Jesus Christ, that Operation Castles does not cease to bear witness that such actions are not utopian, but can be made real. *"And that it is possible to build bridges of understanding and reconciliation of entire large groups and even nations!"* (Pitter, Fierzová 1996, 163).

Přemysl himself, the Czech Albert Schweitzer as he is occasionally called, had no problem with the Beneš decrees<sup>5)</sup>. During the war, he selflessly helped Jewish families and began to help Jewish children immediately after the end of

the conflict. Přemysl did not hesitate to accept German children into these “castles of hope”, because, he believed, children are always innocent. Suffering is not tied to nationality, ethnicity, or ideology. Přemysl not only gave his “children” the confidence that they could cope with their lives, but he was able to overcome the sources of hatred in them and with them. The power that allows such an act Pavel Kohn referred to in this particularly restrained way: *“It's a secret, I think, coming from beyond our world”* (Krieger 2003, 8 – 82).



Source: pitter.eu

**Figure 2.** Children from concentration camps, Castle Štířín, 1945

### **Conclusion**

It is important to consider that Přemysl never wrote a summary of his educational methodology or any kind of didactic manual. Despite this it is possible to find in his work a wide range of principles and methods of how to work with children. He considered his educational activities a crucial part of his life's work, though he perhaps also felt unfulfilled when during his lifetime the chance to raise his own children was denied him.

The witnesses describe P. Pitter as a kind and charismatic person with a great sense of humour. He loved animals; therefore he has a consistent vegetarian. He

hated dishonesty and flattery. He was able to recognize pure characters; he was surrounded with devoted co – workers and friends (Matouš 2001).

Another generally human principle that Přemysl followed was “keeping his word”. In his letters, he described an example from his life. During World War I, he had had a close friend in the trenches. They got along well and pledged allegiance to common ideals and to each other. The end of the war divided them. After the war, Přemysl began to devote himself to young people and forgot about his friend. Once, after a lecture at a conference in Belgrade, he was going to the train station and a stocky gentleman ran into him. He looked at him and shouted “*Přemysl!*” Přemysl could not recognize him. “*Is that you, Jiří? What are you doing here?*” They got on the train together and shared their memories. Jiří said that he had become the director of a factory and was doing very well financially. Přemysl replied: “*Jiří, do you remember how in the trenches we promised to be true to the ideals for which we live, if we survive?*”. Jiří replied that he no longer believed in such ideas, and where they would take him in life. He had needed to secure himself and his family. At that moment, it was as if someone very close to Přemysl had died. At the meeting, he told his listeners: “*I don't believe that Jiří is happy, even though he has everything that life can give him. I haven't met him since. Maybe he has more of those millions today, maybe not. But I wouldn't trade places with him for anything in the world, because he doesn't have the wealth I have!*” (Moravec 2006, 16).

Posthumous awards soon followed in recognition of his work: in 1964 - Righteous Among the Nations (Yad Vashem); in 1973 – The Order of Merit 1st Class of the Federal Republic of Germany (for helping German children) awarded by the German President; 1975 – Honorary Doctorate in Theology at the University of Zurich; in 1976 – Medal from the Sudeten German Evangelical *Johannes Mathesius Gesellschaft* (in memoriam); and in 1991 – the Order of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in memoriam, awarded by Václav Havel.



Source: pitter.eu

**Figure 3.** The Cross of Merit, 1st class; the Federal Republic of Germany

## NOTES

1. Milič from Kroměříž (1325 – 1374) was originally a notary of the Czech Royal Office, later a popular Prague preacher. He is considered the greatest Czech reform preacher of the 14th century. However, his idea of the Holy Communion of the laity following the example of the early Christians led in 1373 to accusations of heresy. In 1374 he therefore went to Avignon to defend himself. The council agreed with him, but then he died and was buried in Avignon.
2. The author of the article had the opportunity to visit today's kindergarten "Miličův dům" on 30 April 2020. He also had the opportunity to see the Přemysl Pitter Memorial Corner.
3. MUDr. Emil Vogl (1901 – 1977) came to the castle straight from the concentration camp where the Nazis murdered his entire family, all 36 members. In 1940, the Nazis deported him to the Łódź concentration camp. Here he took care of the others as a doctor too. He himself contracted typhus and survived a later move to Auschwitz, where he lived to see the end of the war. Vogl himself was a Jew, as far as is known, and did not share Přemysl's Christianity (Kosatík 2009, 198 – 199).
4. I have drawn these memories from Pavel Kohn's book: *Kolik naděje má smrt* (Kohn 2000). Where the author, the "Pitter Child" himself, captured the medallions of former inmates of post-war sanatoriums. And thus he made it possible to know the feelings of children who survived such horrors and came into the loving care of Přemysl and his co-workers. Although for some this period has already disappeared from memory, or due to their young age at that time, they no longer remember, it is still possible to recognize the story of their experiences with the German children who were together in the castles and finally their authentic memories of Přemysl, Olga and the other workers themselves. I think it is very interesting to read their answers to the questions: "What do you consider as important personal characteristics" and "What is your attitude to the Germans today". They mostly write that the young generation has no ill feeling, despite what they, as a nation, suffered. In most cases from this book, these teenagers moved alone to Israel with very few possessions, and here in the "land of their fathers" began a new life, which was not always easy. I must admire those who had experienced such horrific events but did not resign themselves to life and become bitter. But in many cases, they helped themselves and lived meaningful and fulfilling lives.
5. Beneš Decrees, or also decrees of the President, is the name of the decrees issued by the exiled President of Czechoslovakia Edvard Beneš during World War II and shortly after the end of the liberated Czechoslovakia when it was not possible to exercise legislative power through the National Assembly.

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