**FEEDBACK ERASMUS**

***Has the project offered you an occasion to reflect on the horrors of the War and the necessity for peace? If yes, explain how and give a feedback on the project activity that has just finished.***

The project has offered me an occasion to reflect about the horrors of the War.

We started this project three months ago analysing the letters that some people of all the World wrote, imagining writing to a Warrior of the First World War; we can say that the addressee of the letters is the Statue of the Unknown Warrior at Paddington Station.

These 21439 letters are conserved in a website, opened on 28th June 2014 (the website will be closed in 2018).

Many of this letters had a deep meaning and some of these provided many hints of reflection; by these letters we understood that people are today troubled by the horrors of the War. We also understood that many young warriors were bound to go to War and when some of them died their relatives didn’t have a grave where they could cry; indeed, the warriors who died in France remained on the battlefields and for this reasons were built the War Memorials.

After having analysed the letters we began to study the function of the funeral rites and the War Memorials. To study for this project we made individual and group work and then we discussed in class arguing and listening the different opinions.

We read and studied the text “Why the funeral ritual is important”, written by a researcher Alan D. Wolfet. We knew that the rituals are symbolic activities that help the people and their families to express the most profound thoughts and sentiments about the most important events of the life; in particular, a funeral ritual helps the people to accept the death and offers a reason and a prospect of life. Talking with our English teacher during a lesson we understood that in the last years people undervalue the importance of the funeral-rites, because the modern culture and society is afraid of the death and has forgotten the importance of a funeral.

Subsequently, we analysed in group works some chapters of the book “The Unknown Soldier”, written by Neil Hanson; my group analysed the Chapter of the Cenotaph, that is an example of War Memorial as the grave of the Unknown Warrior set at Westminster Abbey. The Cenotaph, in Whitehall, is an empty tomb and its function is to commemorate all the warriors who died in the First World War; it represents an opportunity to remember an important part of the European history.

From the 20th March to 27th March we went to London and we visited all the monuments that we had studied at school. At first, in London, we visited Westminster Abbey and in particular the grave of the Unknown Soldier. A very kind guide explained us the history of the Unknown Soldier, but it was only a refresher for us, because we had already studied very well his history at school. David Railton, a man who fought in the First World War proposed the idea to build the tomb that had to represent the men who died in the First World War, but King George V didn’t accept his proposal immediately. Subsequently, Ryle (the dean of Westminster) accepted Railton’s idea and wrote a letter to the king. At the end, the King accepted the idea and Ryle wanted to be recognized as the promoter of the idea. Studying these texts, we have learnt to extrapolate the character and the personality of the people, reading “between the lines”. We understood that lots of times the richer and powerful people wanted to be more important than the other people (for example Ryle wanted to be recognized as the promoter of the grave of the Unknown Soldier). With the first Minister Lloyd George was built the grave at Westminster Abbey; George wanted that his citizens felt to belong to the same community and wanted to give them patriotic ideals. The Unknown Warrior is a one of the six dead men that L.J. Wyatt chose at random and he was brought from France to England. We studied by another text that when the Soldier was brought at Westminster Abbey there was a very big ceremony; in two days about 1.5 millions of people went to London and visited the tomb at Westminster Abbey and the Cenotaph. We saw that also today both the grave at Westminster and the Cenotaph are very well maintained.

The school trip was very interesting and informative; from this trip we have understood that the English are proud and also a bit jealous of their monuments and history.

We studied also the history of the ritual of the Unknown Soldier of France, of the USA and of Italy.

The First World War caused a very high number of victims (17 millions of dead and 20 millions of wounded) and when the warriors died they didn’t return to their relatives. For this reason, the War Memorials changed their function: before the First World War, the War Memorials were used to exalt the war and to invite people to fight (to convince people to fight the governments presented the men who died in War as heroes), instead after the First World War they were used to commemorate the dead.

Thanks to this project we realized that the War has caused and causes terrible and tragic effects and for this reason we must have peace relations.

We also understood that the vision of the world is changed; indeed, in the last century people had the ideology of the War, instead now we have the ideology of the peace.

By our project I understood the sufferings that the War causes and that we have to promote the peace.

In this century people have the ideology of the peace, but 62 countries are still in war; even if people know the terrible effects of the war the ones who govern continue the wars.

In my opinion each country must educate its young people to peace, explaining that only with the peace we can avoid tragedies as the ones of the First and Second World War.