

## **Why didn't the Jews Just Leave? The Story of the Tuttmann Family**

### **A Primary Source Inquiry Lesson**

### **Educator Guide**

#### **Lesson Context/Overview:**

Using primary sources from the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center's Permanent Collection in Cincinnati, Ohio, this inquiry lesson focuses on a common student question: *Why didn't Jews just leave Europe when Hitler rose to power?* The lesson explores the story of the Tuttmann family and Dr. Josef Warkany. The Tuttmann family, trying to flee Nazi Germany from Vienna, Austria, wrote to Dr. Warkany, a Cincinnati pediatric researcher and physician. Dr. Warkany received dozens of desperate requests from family members, friends, colleagues, and strangers asking for his help in escaping Europe. The lesson asks students to evaluate the complexity of 1930s immigration policy, grapple with the human toll of the Holocaust, and make connections to the current-day refugee crisis.

#### **Materials:**

- Teacher PowerPoint
- Key Events Historical Timeline & Emigration/Immigration Policy Sheet
- Document Set: 3 Letters to Dr. Josef Warkany from Salo Tuttmann and 1 Letter from Dr. Josef Warkany to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain
- Student Guiding Questions

**Timing:** Approximately 2 regular class periods, or one block period.

**Suggested Grade Level:** 9-10 grade

#### **Lesson Structure:**

1. Introduce students to the central historical question: *Why didn't Jews just leave?* (slide 1 in teacher PowerPoint)
2. Distribute the "Historical Timeline." (Can be copied front/back with the Emigration/Immigration Policy sheet).
  - a. Ask students to actively read and annotate the timeline using the instructions in the teacher PowerPoint (slide 2)
  - b. Debrief with annotations with students.
3. Ask students to look at the "Emigration/immigration Policy" sheet and consider the question in the accompanying PowerPoint (slide 4). Debrief with students. (Note: project the Austrian diagram in PowerPoint (slide 5) on the board for students. The speaker's notes in the PowerPoint explain this diagram in more detail).

4. Transition: *Today, we're going to explore the story of the Tuttmann family. Trying to escape from Austria, they wrote letters to Dr. Josef Warkany, an Austrian physician who had settled in Cincinnati in 1932.*
  - a. Introduce students to Dr. Josef Warkany using the slide in the PowerPoint (slide 6).
5. Document Inquiry (slides 7-8):
  - a. Distribute document set and guiding questions.
  - b. Have students read each document and answer the guiding questions with their partner.
  - c. Suggestions for debriefing documents with your students:
    - i. Document A – Questions for focus: 1 & 3
    - ii. Document B – Questions for focus: 2, 3, & 4
    - iii. Document C – Review who Neville Chamberlain was and what his policy of appeasement entailed. Then, debrief questions 3, 4, & 6
    - iv. Document D – Questions for focus: 2, 3, & 4. **\*Note:** When debriefing question #3, it is important to explain why being born in Romania would have hindered Salo's ability to enter the United States at this time. Bring their attention to the first date on the historical timeline and reiterate the Immigration Act of 1924 set quotas that would have discriminated against people born in Eastern Europe.
  - d. Ask students to answer the summary question and have them share their answers with their partner. Debrief whole class.
6. Conclusion: Using the PowerPoint (slides 9-14), tell students what happened to the Tuttmann family. Underscore that escape was not easy and unfortunately most "escape stories" did not have a happy ending.
7. Going further: According to the United Nations, in 2020 more than 82.4 million people have been forced to flee their homes, pushing the number of refugees and displaced people to a record high. The following resources are provided to engage students in making connections between 1930s immigration policy and the current day refugee crisis:
  - a. [Infographic: Screening Process for Refugee Entry into the United States](#) (source: whitehouse.gov)
  - b. [Key Facts about Refugees to the US](#) (source: Pew Research Center)
  - c. [Current Refugee Crises](#) (source: International Rescue Committee)As students explore the resources, have them record a **3-2-1 reflection**: 3 key takeaways, 2 questions, 1 historical connection
8. Extension: Use the questions students posed in the 3-2-1 reflection as a springboard for more in-depth research. In groups, have students choose 2-3 of their group's best questions to research together.

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