

Workshop 2: Refugees from Nazi Germany

Aims:

To consolidate knowledge about Nazi persecution of Jews and other groups

To explore Josiah Wedgwood's work to help refugees from the Nazis

To explore responses to Wedgwood's work through the Standard family

Resources

Standard family details

Source extracts 2A-2F

Additional information from Teachers' Notes

Key questions for exploration

How and why did Josiah Wedgwood try to help Jewish refugees and others fleeing from the Nazis?

What responses might there have been among local people at the time?

Should we help people who are being **persecuted** in another country? If so, how?

Workshop 2: Activity

Stage 1: Sources 2A-2C

Introduce background information as necessary about Nazi persecution of Jews and other groups from 1933 onwards.

Introduce the Standard family. Ask students to work in small groups of 4-5, each taking on a character from the Standard family.

In character as members of the Standard family, ask pupils to look at each of the **Sources 2A-2C**. Answer these questions, explaining why their character thinks this way. There will be differing opinions and responses in the family.

- What does your character think about Nazi persecution of Jewish people?

- Does your character think we should help Jews living under Nazi oppression? What should we do?
- How does Mr Standard's experience of fighting against Germany in the First World War affect your view?
- How might Charlie's difficulty finding work affect his views?

Stage 2: Source 2D

Ask students, in character, to read the advertisement in **Source 2D**. One or more members of the family feel they could and should take a refugee child in. Others are unsure. What does your character feel? Why?

Stage 3: Source 2E

Working in small groups, still in character as members of the Standard family, read Source 2E. It is an article from the local newspaper, the Staffordshire Sentinel. It reports on the first meeting of the Leek Refugee Aid Committee, where local MP, Josiah Wedgwood was speaking.

Some members of the Standard family went to the meeting.

In character, answer these questions, explaining why your character thinks this way. There will be differing opinions and responses in the family.

- Which member/s of the family decided to go to the meeting, and why?
- What do they say about Josiah Wedgwood's speech when they get home?
- What is the response of other members of the family?
- Now imagine that **your own** family is living locally, back in 1939. What do you think your family's responses might be?

Stage 4: writing dialogue

Ask students to write a short play script of dialogue between members of the family. Should they take in a refugee child? Some members of the family feel they should help refugees from Nazi Germany. Others are unsure. What arguments do they make? What conclusion does the family reach?

Extension: Source 2F

Class discussion: Are you aware of contemporary issues or local campaigns to support refugees' rights? Eg refugees from Syria



**THE HISTORY OF
PARLIAMENT**
British Political, Social & Local History

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



How does media coverage influence your views?
What do political parties have to say on the issues?

Skills required

- Using evidence rigorously
- Drawing connections and contrasts
- Identifying arguments
- Creative writing
- Discussing, debate

Introducing the Standard family

The (fictional) Standard family are an ordinary family living locally in 1939. Mary and James Standard married in 1920, soon after James came home from the First World War. They have three children.



From left: Charlie, Mrs Standard, Mr Standard, Alfie, Sarah.

- Mr James Standard (aged 45) fought against the Germans in the First World War as young man. He was badly injured, but survived, unlike several of his friends. He still has nightmares about his wartime experience. Mr Standard is a skilled worker at Wedgwood Pottery.
- Mrs Mary Standard (aged 43) also works at Wedgwood Pottery.
- Charlie (aged 17) left school at 14 and has been in and out of work. He would like to find a steady job and become a skilled worker like his father.
- Sarah (aged 15) is still at school and hopes to train as a nurse.
- Alfie (aged 13) hopes to follow his father and join the army when he is old enough.



**THE HISTORY OF
PARLIAMENT**
British Political, Social & Local History

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



Workshop 2 Sources

Source 2A

Colonel Wedgwood's speech in Parliament: 22 May 1933, recorded in Hansard:

Is the right honourable Gentleman aware that the position of the Jews in Germany is daily getting worse, and are we to understand that the British Government are going to do nothing to help the people who are being persecuted in Germany to escape from that country?

Source 2B



Austrian Nazis and local residents look on as Jews are forced to get on their hands and knees and scrub the pavement, spring 1938. [Creative Commons]

Source 2C

Colonel Wedgwood's speech in Parliament: 6 April 1939, recorded in Hansard:

After all, they [refugees] are intelligent people, capable of producing wealth, and useful assets to any country which takes them in. That at least is recognised that we have benefited in this country in the past from the countless immigrations—the Huguenots; before that the Flemings; and, to go back further still, we have got some advantage from Norman blood.

Source 2D *(could be presented to look like a newspaper cutting)*

Personal advertisements Times Newspaper Sat 8 April 1939:

GERMAN REFUGEE youth, 15½ , exceptionally well educated; advertiser wishes to hear from charitable minded people who will take boy into their home and supply Government guarantee – A.L., 12 Dollis Road, London N3

Source 2E *(could be presented to look like a newspaper cutting)*

Staffordshire Sentinel 13 June 1939

COLONEL WEDGWOOD AND THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

Colonel Wedgwood addressed a meeting in Leek Town Hall last night of the newly-formed Leek Refugee Aid Committee... Colonel Wedgwood said the more he saw of the refugee problem, the more it impressed itself on him as the first concern of everyone who had humanity, Christianity, and justice at heart.

This country led the world in the abolition of slavery because it seemed to our forefathers that slavery was a vile thing. It was contrary to all British traditions and to the teachings of Christianity. Here you have something that is far worse than slavery (he went on). After all, slaves were fed and housed and kept alive. The Hitler slaves are not even kept alive. They are robbed of everything they have got, and are deprived of participating in any charity which may be going. They cannot get food, houserom and anything that makes life possible, and Great Britain, the home of liberty, stops them coming even here.

Referring to 8,000 refugees who were allowed into this country as domestic servants, Colonel Wedgwood said they were working to save money to help other members of their families. They deserved sympathy, help and kindness.

All the rest could only come if they had guarantees. You have got to put down £50 to 'buy' a child refugee.

If you start a Refugee Aid Committee here, if you can get a number of people who will guarantee so much a week, then with that fund you can use it as an insurance fund, so to speak. Many people will take a child so long as they do not have to give a guarantee

Source 2F

Contemporary resonance: refugees today



**THE HISTORY OF
PARLIAMENT**
British Political, Social & Local History

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



<https://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/news/syrian-refugees-staffordshire-syria-moorlands-1442856>



**THE HISTORY OF
PARLIAMENT**
British Political, Social & Local History

**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

