

Every picture tells a story; activities for Citizenship, Humanities and Media Studies (Upper Secondary/Post 16)

A note for educators on the context of the tasks: In these activities it is important to **encourage** your students to develop confidence in their own ability to 'read' a photograph by unpacking the evidence it provides about an event. **Ask** students to think carefully about evidence presented to them through the international, national and local media. **Challenge** students to articulate their ideas and encourage them to ask questions about the **Untold Stories** the pictures presented to the world. They might also consider how a recent local story, familiar to them, has been presented through the media. Where possible **help** everyone to explore possible connections between the voices of local people and the world's perception of a story.

The activities will link to the **Untold Stories** of the Jews of Greece

<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-untold-stories-of-lost-communities/read> and

Untold Stories of the needs of other refugees eg the passengers on the SS. St Louis

<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-ss-st-louis/read> or refugees from the present

day crisis in Darfur <http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-villages-of-darfur/read>.

However you should not introduce discussion on issues arising from the case studies until students have thought about the specific **Untold Stories** unfolding in the photographs and worked out that one of the photographs was taken in the UK. Only after discussions on both images will students be able to discuss and fully appreciate what is at stake when human rights are questioned or even removed. **Work** through the ideas at your own pace over a series of lessons. **Encourage** everyone to explore their own sense of social justice and moral responsibility and help students to understand that the media responds to the needs of readers and viewers so individual choices, opinions and behaviour, including their own, can affect local, national or global issues and political and social institutions.

Section one: Focus on our own interpretation of images; the crying woman

Give everyone a copy of the first photograph 'The Crying Woman' or **display** the image on the white board. The image can be found at the end of this document. **Ask** students to work in pairs and think together of the questions the picture compels us to ask. Some questions might be why are there only women in the picture? What is the mood of the people in the photograph? What time of year is it? What items do the people have with them and what do these items imply about the reason the women are gathered together?



After five to ten minutes **discuss** each pairs' suggested questions with the whole group. Did some pairs come up with the same questions? What did everyone want to know? Could some of the answers be found in the picture?

Next share one of the **Untold Stories** unfolding in this photograph. This story has recently come to light after an appeal placed on the internet by Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos the Museum Director of Kehila Kedosha Janina which is based on the Lower East Side in New York City. These are her words but you can **retell** the story using your own.

Fani's Story

'It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words, that thoughts feelings, ideas can be captured in a single image. A picture that we labelled 'The Crying Woman' captured, in a solitary icon, the anguish, heartbreak and pain of the destruction of the Jewish community of Ioannina and by extension that of the Jews of Greece during the Holocaust. From the moment I first saw the photo, I knew that I must find out who she was.

For those who may not know, 87% of Greek Jews perished in the Holocaust and in the small city of Ioannina, home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in Greece, 91% would meet their fate at Auschwitz-Birkenau, rounded up on a cold March morning in 1944 and arriving at the concentration camp in Poland on 11 April where most would go directly to the gas chambers. As they were being loaded into open trucks to take them across the snow covered mountains to Larissa, where they would be kept in a warehouse and stripped of their valuables, to await the cattle cars to take them on their final journey, a German photographer took a series of photographs - forever documenting the event. The photos became part of the photo archive in Koblenz, where the image of the crying woman would languish for many years until we acquired it. In 2004 the image of the crying woman haunted me and while we were able to identify so many in the photos, her identity would remain a mystery. Under 200 of the close to 2000 Jews who lived in Ioannina in 1944 survived. Was the crying woman amongst the 1850 who perished in the camps? Did she somehow survive?

Due to the wonders of the internet, in March 2009, close to the 65th anniversary of the round up the identity of the crying woman was revealed. In accessing our website www.kkism.org and viewing the story of the Holocaust in Ioannina someone saw the picture and our plea to help identify her. Someone who knew the woman well, her granddaughter.

Fani (Haim) Svolis, the daughter of Firo Haim and Avram Ben Isaak Haim had survived the camps. Fani [pronounced Faa-knee] was born in 1925 and the image captured on March 25 1944 was of a 19 year old girl who had been emotionally wrenched from her home. Fani was the only survivor in her immediate family. Her 76 year old widowed grandmother Fani, after whom she had been named, her 39 year old father Avram, who was a teacher, her 36 year old mother her younger sister Reveka, age 18 and her two younger brothers, Isaac aged 15 and Haim aged 12, would all be murdered by the Nazis. We do not know Fani's whole story. She passed away at the age of 83. She married a Greek Orthodox Christian, had children and lived to experience the joy of being a grandmother. Her granddaughter Lia, who lives in Athens, grew up knowing that her grandmother had survived the camps, the numbers on her arm bearing witness to the horrors she endured. Lia said her grandmother never hid the fact that she had been born Jewish but had said little about her life in Ioannina. The memories of what she had lost were probably too painful.'

At the end of the story **tell** the students that through the photograph and the search for the identity of the crying woman Lia has discovered that she has American relatives because a branch of Fani's mother's family emigrated to America before the start of the war.

Allow time to **discuss** how students feel after hearing the story. **Examine** together how the internet made it easier for the museum to uncover Fani's story and then think together of other ways new technology can be used to trace more **Untold Stories**. Does electronic communication assist or hinder us when we try to:

- a) examine different perceptions on past events
- b) conduct investigations into possible abuses of human rights?

Section two: Focus on our own interpretations of the refugee

Give students a copy of the second photograph 'A refugee at the airport.' The image can be found at the end of this document. **Ask** them to work in groups of four. **Instruct** the group to examine the photograph and note down four facts, from the evidence in the picture, that they feel certain they can claim about the incident and four questions they need to ask to help them find out more about **Untold Stories** in the picture. **Suggest** they first focus on looking for any clues pointing to where the incident took place. Once everyone is happy with their facts and questions **share** and **discuss** ideas with the whole group.

Observant students should notice, from the uniforms in the picture, that the incident took place in the UK. **Explain** that the photographer captured an incident which took place at

Croydon Airport in 1939. **Ask** where we could look for further details and evidence about this incident. How might new technology help us?

Share the newspaper reports on the Croydon incident with the group. You will find these reports at the end of this lesson plan. Then **discuss** how each publication reported the story. What were the similarities and differences? Do they all report the same facts? **Ask** how important students think this story was to the publications' different readers on the day it was published. If you are able to access the paper's electronic archives to view the whole paper then a clue to this might be the position of the report within the newspaper. Other questions to consider might be what sort of headlines are used and how might they influence how the readers react to the story eg when *The Times* refers to 'screaming aliens' what impression might it give of refugees? Does this story reflect the traditional view of how people in the UK helped those who wanted to escape from persecution? How does the reporting of the story change in just one day? How do you think readers reacted to the story as it was published and how might it differ from the reactions of those who read it today? How might today's papers tell this story if it had taken place recently? How might a headline in a tabloid paper differ from one in a broadsheet? What Human Rights issues are highlighted by this story?

Ask students to think of the players in the story such as the police officers, the refugees, the pilot of the plane and the person who took the photograph. How do their actions contribute to the makeup of a newsworthy story?

Section three: Focus on Untold Stories of lost communities

Discuss the storytelling roles played by photographers and editors of papers, magazines and websites. Why is the same story told in a variety of ways in a number of publications and on different websites? How can the caption given to a photograph influence the way we view an event? Is a story about an event in another country presented in the same way as one on an event in our own nation? What responsibility should the media have to present readers and viewers with all the facts behind a story and what influence does reporting have on individual views? Should we challenge a media story if we believe the facts to be wrong? If no, why not? If yes, how could we do this?

Link the photographs to the case studies. We now know more about what happened to millions of other people like Fani <http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-untold-stories-of-lost-communities/read> and refugees who, like the refugee in our photograph, were desperate to escape from persecution <http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-ss-st-louis/read> but what do we know about similar stories being played out today? **Ask** students to use printed media and the internet to investigate **Untold Stories** unfolding

today in present day Darfur, paying particular attention to small villages

<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/the-villages-of-darfur/read>. What happens to refugees from these villages?

Suggestions for further research

Students of Geography might investigate ways to map an unfolding refugee story and discover which countries have the best record for welcoming refugees.

History students could examine Britain's role in the 1930s and 1940s when millions of people tried to flee from Nazi persecution.

Citizenship and Media Studies students could examine together the potential role of electronic media to highlight and/or prevent abuses of Human Rights in our modern world.

At the end of the research projects think together about how we often take our freedom for granted. We try to create communities where everyone is valued. We aim to support each other and look after other people. Everyone has a mixture of rights and responsibilities and these include the right to form and express our opinions and the responsibility of not hurting other people. In the photographs we have seen ordinary people suffering because of the actions of others. Could other equally ordinary people have acted in a positive way to change the story unfolding in the pictures?

It is sometimes difficult to uncover the facts of **Untold Stories** and we should be prepared to question, discuss and research evidence presented to us in a variety of media. On Holocaust Memorial Day pass the **Untold Stories** from these photographs on to other people and ask what we could do to protect everyone's rights, their freedom, their identity and their value as individual Humans.

Extracts from Newspaper Reports.

'Screaming Aliens In Air Liner

Pilot's Refusal To Take Off

There were extraordinary scenes at Croydon Aerodrome last night when an attempt was made to send back 12 aliens who had arrived at the airport on Wednesday in a Danish air liner from Warsaw. After they had been carried by several policemen and aerodrome porters to the aeroplane they threatened to throw themselves out as soon as the machine was in the air. Finally the pilot, declaring that he was afraid of what the passengers might do in their distraught state, refused to take off. A member of the aerodrome staff said that the 12 aliens, who included one woman, were mostly Jewish refugees from Czecho-Slovakia...

In Hysterical Condition

As soon as they were inside the aerodrome an official said 'The plane is waiting.' And one of the men started screaming. Within a short time others were also screaming and in an hysterical condition. Porters and police were needed to carry and push them to the aeroplane. By chance the man who had begun screaming was reprieved at the last minute for as he was about to enter the machine an immigration official arrived with the papers stating that he could after all remain in the country. Almost in tears with joy the man flung his arms around an embarrassed policeman...'

The Times (London UK) 31 March 1939

'Pitiful Scenes At Croydon; London Friday

Pitiful scenes were witnessed at Croydon airport last night when 18 Czech Jews who had arrived the previous day and who had spent the previous 24 hours in gaol after having landed illegally in England had to be sent back to Warsaw.

They fought and pleaded with constables putting them aboard the plane... One man threw himself on the ground and clung to the constable's legs.

Women cried and some offered money for the refugees. One man was carried aboard the plane shouting 'I'll be shot.' Another was being dragged to the plane when he announced that he had been given permission to stay. He cried, kissed the policeman, shook hands with everyone and then collapsed.

When the others were aboard they hammered at the windows and broke one. They threatened to jump from the plane on the journey but then the Danish pilot refused to take off. The refugees were taken back to gaol [jail] and will be sent to Poland by sea.

500 more refugees arrived at Croydon yesterday from all parts of Europe.'

The Argus (Melbourne, Australia) 1 April 1939 page 9

'An Incident at Croydon

The party of Czech refugees whose troubles at the Croydon airport aroused much sympathy and put some of our officials in a light which they probably had done nothing personally to deserve will stay in England. The German Jewish Aid committee, which has formerly taken no responsibility for Czechs, has given the necessary guarantees. The eleven people had been informed before they made their attempt that they would not be accepted, and to that extent their unhappy experience was due to their own act. But it is surely unworthy of this country that anyone coming to these shores for the first time should receive such treatment... We are one of the most wealthy lands in Europe and yet our record of hospitality to the persecuted is miserable beside that of France or Czecho-Slovakia before she fell. Many people wishing to offer a home to a refugee have been disheartened by the slow moving wheels... and the stern request for a large monetary guarantee. There are thousands upon thousands of refugees waiting to leave Germany and Czecho-Slovakia. The old attitude and the old rules are not enough.'

The Manchester Guardian 1 April 1939



The Crying Woman; 19 year old Fani Heim weeps as she and other Jewish women await deportation from Ioannina in Greece March 1944. © Kehila Kedosha Janina



Refugee from German-occupied Czechoslovakia being forcibly deported from Croydon airport

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