



# Speak Up, Speak Out

## Primary History

### Looking at those who spoke out during the Holocaust

This lesson is best suited for year six after they have studied a previous lesson on the Holocaust.

#### Aim:

- to introduce pupils to the stories of those individuals that spoke out during the Holocaust

#### Outcomes:

- pupils will learn about some of the individuals that spoke out against the Nazis and tried to stop what was happening.
- pupils will recognise that people spoke out for different reasons
- pupils will reflect on whether events in history can help to inform them about events or actions today.

#### Resources:

- case studies of [Janusz Korczak](#), [Stephen Frank](#), and [Jacques Lusseyran](#) – there are specially adapted versions for Primary at the end of this document.

#### Stage 1

Introduce the theme of the Holocaust – do they know what it means?

Explain to the pupils that some people were willing to **Speak Up, Speak Out** against what was happening and were willing to challenge the Nazis.

Ask the pupils if they know how risky it was to speak up. Explain that the punishment was different in different countries, but that it was always risky. Punishments could include imprisonment, deportation to a concentration camp, and physical beatings. Read out each of the three case studies.



## **Stage 2**

In small groups give the pupils the adapted versions of the case studies, one per group.

Ask them to answer the following questions

Who spoke out (it might be more than one person in each story)?

What exactly did the people do to speak out?

Did they have to operate in secret? Or was it a public act?

How were they stopped from speaking out further?

Does it say why they spoke out?

## **Stage3**

Ask the pupils to report back their answers and either in the groups or as a class create a spider map of the stories of each of those who spoke out.

Ask the pupils if they think the stories are important to remember the Holocaust.

Ask the pupils if they think the stories have any importance for today.

Finish with a review of what they have learnt about different people who lived and spoke out during the Holocaust.

## **Steven Frank – case study for primary**

Steven Frank was born in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. In 1940 when he was five years old the Nazis invaded and occupied the country. His life and that of his two brothers changed very quickly because they were Jewish. His parents were not religious and thought of their identity as Dutch.

‘I was suddenly different from all my other friends. I was no longer allowed to play in the park, my father could not take public transport to work; I couldn't go into the swimming pool or the zoo.’

Steven's father Leonard Frank was a lawyer. He was well respected and very involved with the Amsterdam authorities. Leonard Frank sat on the board of a large hospital for the mentally ill. When the Nazis invaded, the family had offers of help to escape to Britain. Leonard Frank was worried about the patients and refused to leave them. He became involved with resistance activities. Leonard Frank wrote letters on behalf of Jews arrested by the Nazis, asking for better treatment and for them not to be deported to concentration camps.

The whole Frank family suffered under the restrictions. People they knew were arrested and others went into hiding. Sometimes people were hidden at the Frank's house, a very risky thing for a Jewish family to do.

In December 1942 Leonard Frank set off for work as usual (by bike as Jews were not allowed to use other forms of transport). He was arrested by the Nazis and sent to a prison where he was interrogated for his resistance activities.

Some brave non-Jewish friends of Leonard wrote a letter asking for him to be free. All of them risked punishment. One of the men was Arnold D'Ailly who after the war became the mayor of Amsterdam.

Shortly after his father's arrest Steven, his mother and his brothers received notice that they were to be sent away. Nothing could be done to help them.

Westerbork camp was a transit camp, where Dutch Jews were held until they were deported to camps in Eastern Europe. People held in these camps often ended up in Auschwitz.

The Frank family spent a number of months living in Westerbork transit camp. During this time, a lot of their friends in the camp were loaded onto trains and sent away. The Frank family were also deported to Theresienstadt ghetto camp in occupied Czechoslovakia in September 1944.

Theresienstadt was very over crowded – disease was everywhere and thousands of people were dying. Steven and his brothers and mother managed to survive. He and his brothers are three of only 93 children who survived Theresienstadt out of the 15,000 children who were sent there. His father did not survive the Holocaust.

After the war Steven his brothers and mother moved to England to try and rebuild their lives.

## **Jacques Lusseyran – case study for primary**

Jacques Lusseyran was born in France, and when he was eight years old he lost his sight in an accident. He learned to read Braille so that he could continue his school work. In 1940 he was studying in Paris. That year the Nazis invaded France.

One day a friend told Jacques that his biology tutor, Mr Weissberg, had been arrested and taken away by the Gestapo. Mr Weissberg was Jewish. Jacques heard that other Jewish friends and neighbours were being taken away. He was angry that some French people including some police were acting like Nazis, burning books and committing acts of hatred. At one point the place where Jacques was studying was closed for a month because the police did not approve of a student demonstration. Some students were shot.

Jacques did not like what he heard. With two friends, he began to organise students into a resistance group. They called themselves the 'Volunteers of Liberty'. Students who wanted to join the group were told to 'visit the blind man' but did not know his name. Jacques interviewed them in secret to decide whether they could be trusted. He was usually a good judge of character as he was aware of changes in their voice - he could often tell whether someone was telling lies.

The group wrote a paper called 'Le Tigres' and delivered it secretly to houses all over Paris. The Nazis and the French Government declared that the 'Volunteers of Liberty' were terrorists. A reward was offered to people to betray them. The students had to be very careful as fellow students and even teachers could be Nazi helpers and ready to give them away.

The Nazis believed that people with disabilities should take no active part in society and they were barred from many activities. They murdered Disabled people under the T4 Euthanasia Programme. Jacques gained good grades at school but the Nazis would not allow him to go to University because he was blind. He was angry but did not want to draw attention to his resistance group, so refused to appeal. Instead he put all his energy into resisting the Nazis.

In 1943 the students joined up with other resistance groups. They printed the truth about arrests, torture, disappearances and the slaughter of Jews in death camps and asked the French people to stand up to Nazi hatred.

In July 1943 armed soldiers broke into the room where Jacques read and wrote Braille and arrested him. Whilst in custody he discovered the Nazis had notes on what he had done. He had been betrayed by someone in the group. Jacques refused to talk to the Nazis and was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp, where he was kept until the end of the war. After the war Jacques went to university, studied hard and became a teacher.

## **Janusz Korczak 1878-1942 – case study for primary**

(pronounce using a soft 'ge' sound, eg Korge-ack)

Janusz Korczak was Polish and Jewish. He was a doctor and a writer. He thought that children were very important and wanted to do everything he could to help them. He particularly cared for children from poor backgrounds.

He helped to set up two orphanages in the city of Warsaw in Poland. These orphanages had new ways of helping children giving them lots of care and help. Korczak was one of the people who began talking about children having rights. He believed that good education could help all children. He worked with Polish Jewish children and Polish Christian children.

Korczak travelled to other countries talking about his ideas and had many friends around the world.

When the Nazis invaded Poland they took control of all parts of Polish life. The Nazis had racist ideas and they forced all Jews to live in ghettos. A ghetto is a special area of a town or city that is controlled, a bit like a prison. The ghetto is controlled and people cannot come and go as they want, there are walls or barriers and guards. Conditions in the ghettos were appalling and many families were crowded together without adequate supplies of food or water. Many people died from starvation, disease and casual executions carried out by the Nazis.

The children at one of Korczak's Jewish orphanage were moved to the Warsaw ghetto. Korczak had the option of staying with the children in his other Warsaw orphanage, but he chose to go with the 200 children to the ghetto. He was worried about what would happen to them without him.

The Nazis began to deport all the people from the ghetto ready to kill them. It was impossible for all the children to escape – where would they go? It was possible with help for one person to get out and friends of Korczak offered to help him. An old Polish pupil, Igor Neverly, disguised himself as a sewer inspector and visited Korczak at the orphanage inside the ghetto. He begged his old teacher to escape with him into the outside world and live in hiding until the war was over, as he had so much to give in the post-war world.

Korczak decided that he could not leave the children and turned down the help and stayed with the children. Hiding his own fear he led the children in five orderly lines, quietly through the streets of the ghetto, to the waiting railway wagons, comforting the youngest and instilling courage in all. They were sent to Treblinka, a 'death camp' where they were all killed.

Korczak's greatest legacy is perhaps the inspiration he provided for the promotion of children's rights worldwide, through not only his books, speeches and writings, but also by his personal example.

Most of his ideas were included in the UNESCO charter for children's rights after the war.