

The Holocaust and Wales

Jewish Refugee Doctors, Dentists & Nurses in Wales

Teachers' Notes

This resource looks at Jewish refugee doctors, dentists and nurses who fled to Britain in the 1930s. Jews in the medical profession were among the first to be persecuted by the Nazi regime. Several of these refugees eventually made their way to Wales.

It contains:

- Background information on Jewish refugees in the medical profession and where to find out more
- Photograph of Paul Bosse meeting Adolf Hitler
- Short biographies of Josephine Bruegel, Alfred Feiner and Jacques Kurer
- Link to audio clip of oral history recording of Josephine Bruegel
- Photograph of Jacques and Theodora Kurer
- Transcript of the audio clip

The resource assumes a basic understanding of the Holocaust. You may wish to cover the Holocaust Educational Trust's (HET) worksheet ['Defining the Holocaust'](#) before exploring these resources. See also the HET's ['General Principles for Teaching the Holocaust'](#).

Learning aims:

- To understand how Nazi antisemitic policies affected different occupational groups, including doctors, dentists and nurses, and how people responded to them over time
- To make connections between the lives of those from different countries with those living in Wales, in both the past and present
- To undertake new information and respond to it in creative ways
- To develop critical thinking and a sense of empathy with those who have experienced suffering in the past
- To explore the importance of this story on Wales and the wider world and its connections to contemporary issues, including refugees, antisemitism, prejudice and racism

Curriculum links

The Four Purposes

Ambitious, capable learners who:

- are building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts
- can communicate effectively in different forms and settings
- can explain the ideas and concepts they are learning about
- undertake research and evaluate critically what they find

Enterprising, creative contributors who:

- connect and apply their knowledge and skills to create ideas and products
- think creatively to reframe and solve problems
- express ideas and emotions through different media

Ethical, informed citizens who:

- find, evaluate and use evidence in forming views
- engage with contemporary issues based upon their knowledge and values
- understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights
- understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting
- are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world, now and in the past
- respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society

Healthy, confident individuals who:

- have secure values and are establishing their spiritual and ethical beliefs
- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy
- have the confidence to participate in performance

Statements of What Matters

Main Area of Learning and Experience: Humanities

Progression Step: 3 & 4

- Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future
- Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways
- Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs

- Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action

Other Areas of Learning and Experience:

Health and Well-being

- How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being
- How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication

Cross curricular skills and integral skills

Literacy

- Developing oracy through discussion, role play, questioning and presentations, and adapting oracy skills for audience and purpose while listening to and debating different viewpoints
- Developing all styles of writing, e.g. describing, explaining, discussing, evaluating and creative writing, combined with the use of disciplinary-specific terminology and vocabulary
- Accessing and exploring a range of texts from a variety of places and times to analyse evidence, to think critically, to infer meaning, and to evaluate interpretations and viewpoints

Creativity and innovation

- Encouraging openness to different ideas and ways of thinking, enabling the expression of reasoned opinions about these differences

Critical thinking and problem-solving

- Developing the ability to think analytically and understand the past and present as well as to imagine possible futures
- Collecting, reflecting and critically evaluating the use of sources and evidence

Personal effectiveness

- Evaluating, justifying and expressing considered responses in a variety of ways

Cross-cutting themes

Relationship and sexuality education (RSE):

- The material offers learners opportunities to explore human rights, values, ethics, philosophies, and religious views relating to relationships

- It supports learners to engage critically with local, national, and global RSE issues in both the past and present, helping them to become ethical, informed citizens

Human rights education and diversity (e.g., discrimination, racism, antisemitism, refugees)

- Learners develop an understanding of the importance of democratic values and human rights and reflect on their civic responsibilities

Cynefin – supporting learning in local contexts

The Holocaust is a large topic that can seem distant to learners in Wales. These resources allow learners to hear the stories of people who were directly affected by the Holocaust, and who lived in Wales. These are the stories of people who contributed to and were part of their local Welsh communities. They settled and had families here and their history is part of the story of Wales.

Learning about the Holocaust through local examples allows learners to discover their heritage and develop a sense of place and cynefin. It also removes the idea of ‘otherness’ – that this happened to other people in another place and time – and instead creates feelings of connection and empathy. These local examples can help learners to understand the link between Welsh history and global events like the Second World War and the Holocaust.

The full list of 20 resources about The Holocaust and Wales are:

- [Kindertransport 1: Jewish Life in Central Europe before the Second World War](#)
- [Kindertransport 2: The Journey to Britain](#)
- [Kindertransport 3: Arrival in Wales](#)
- [Kindertransport 4: Life in Wales](#)
- [Kristallnacht 1: Memories of Kristallnacht](#)
- [Kristallnacht 2: The last bar mitzvah](#)
- [Jewish Artists in Wales 1: Josef Herman](#)
- [Jewish Artists in Wales 2: Heinz Koppel](#)
- [Aero Zipp Fasteners at Treforest Trading Estate](#)
- [General Paper and Box Manufacturing Company at Treforest Trading Estate](#)
- [Internment of ‘enemy aliens’ 1](#)
- [Internment of ‘enemy aliens’ 2](#)
- [Jewish Refugees as Domestic Servants](#)
- [Jewish Refugee Doctors, Dentists and Nurses in Wales](#)
- [Jewish Refugees in the British Army during the Second World War](#)
- [Religious Life of Jewish Refugees in Wales](#)
- [The Welsh Language](#)
- [Liberation](#)



- [Identity](#)
- [Remembering the Holocaust](#)

Ideas for activities

Activity 1

The resource could be used to highlight the gradual nature of Nazi antisemitic legislation. Jews in the medical profession were some of the first to be targeted by the Nazis' racist laws, but the elimination of Jewish doctors, dentists and nurses from the German labour force took several years.

Ask learners to read the **background information** about the persecution of Jewish doctors and dentists by the Nazis in the 1930s. Working in pairs or individually, ask learners to arrange the following events relating to the persecution in chronological order:

- Jewish doctors banned from having 'Aryan' patients (July 1938)
- Jewish doctors expelled from the public health insurance programme (April 1933)
- Jewish doctors decertified (September 1938)
- Nazi seizure of power (January 1933)
- Cooperation between Jewish and non-Jewish doctors banned (July 1933)
- Jews forbidden to qualify as new doctors or dentists (September 1935)

Why were Jewish doctors/dentists targeted so early by the Nazi regime? Why might it have taken five years, from 1933 to 1938, before the Nazis decertified Jewish doctors?

Activity 2

The resource could be used to highlight the arbitrary nature of Nazi antisemitic policies. Ask learners to read the **background information** about the persecution of Jewish doctors and dentists by the Nazis in the 1930s and look at the **photograph** of Paul Bosse meeting Adolf Hitler.

Some useful questions:

- Why would Hitler have been visiting the hospital in Wittenberg? Why might an accident at a munitions factory be deemed important?
- What can the photograph tell us about Nazi policies during this period?
- Why was Paul dismissed from his role at the local hospital?
- Why were the Nazis concerned with removing Jews and those associated with them from the public sphere?

Activity 3

The resource could be used to highlight the important of homeland/cynffin for refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. Ask learners to first read the **short biography** of Josephine Bruegel, a Jewish refugee from Czechoslovakia, and then listen to [Audio Clip: Josephine Bruegel on attaining the MD Czechoslovakia](#).

Some useful questions:

- Why was the Czechoslovak government based in London in 1941?
- Why might Josephine want her degree to be valid in Czechoslovakia?
- Would you want to return to your home country if you were a refugee?

Activity 4

The resource could be used to compare the lives of those living in Central Europe to those living in Wales in the 1930s. Ask learners to read the **background information** about the persecution of Jewish doctors and dentists by the Nazis in the 1930s and the **short biography** of Albert Feiner.

- What complaints might patients have brought to Dr Feiner in Vienna? (These could be those linked to overcrowding and poor housing, e.g. tuberculosis, typhoid, Spanish flu, syphilis) – NB it may be useful to outline briefly what these conditions are and their causes
- What complaints might patients have brought to him in Pontypridd? (These could be those linked to the coal mining, iron and steel industries, e.g. miner's lung (pneumoconiosis), rheumatism, broken limbs, hearing loss, asthma, bronchitis)

How different might Dr Feiner have found treating patients in Vienna compared to those in Pontypridd? What difficulties might he have encountered?

Ask learners to imagine that they are a Jewish doctor in Vienna in 1938. Learners should write a doctor's note for an imagined patient in Vienna, detailing their health problem, the date, prognosis, remedy, and whether the patient is medically fit to go to work. They should then complete a similar note for a patient in Pontypridd.

Other useful questions:

- How does our environment affect our health?
- How do the politics of a country affect its health service?

Activity 5

In the late 1930s, less than half of registered dentists in the UK had appropriate dental training. In Austria and Germany, by contrast, all dentists were required to attend dental school, which emphasised a blend between scientific research and clinical

practice. Over 1,000 Jewish dentists from Germany and Austria tried to reach the UK before the outbreak of the Second World War, but only 300 were accepted.

Ask learners to read the **background information** about the persecution of Jewish doctors and dentists by the Nazis in the 1930s and the **short biography** of Jacques Kurer, and look at the **photograph** of Jacques with his wife Eleanora.

Some useful questions:

- What difficulties did Jewish doctors, dentists and nurses encounter as refugees in the UK?
- Why were organisations like the British Medical Association, General Nursing Council and British Dental Association reluctant to recognise qualifications from other countries? How fair was this?
- What difficulties might refugees have faced in retraining?
- Why did Quakers try to help Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe?
- Why were the Kurer family evacuated to Llandudno?