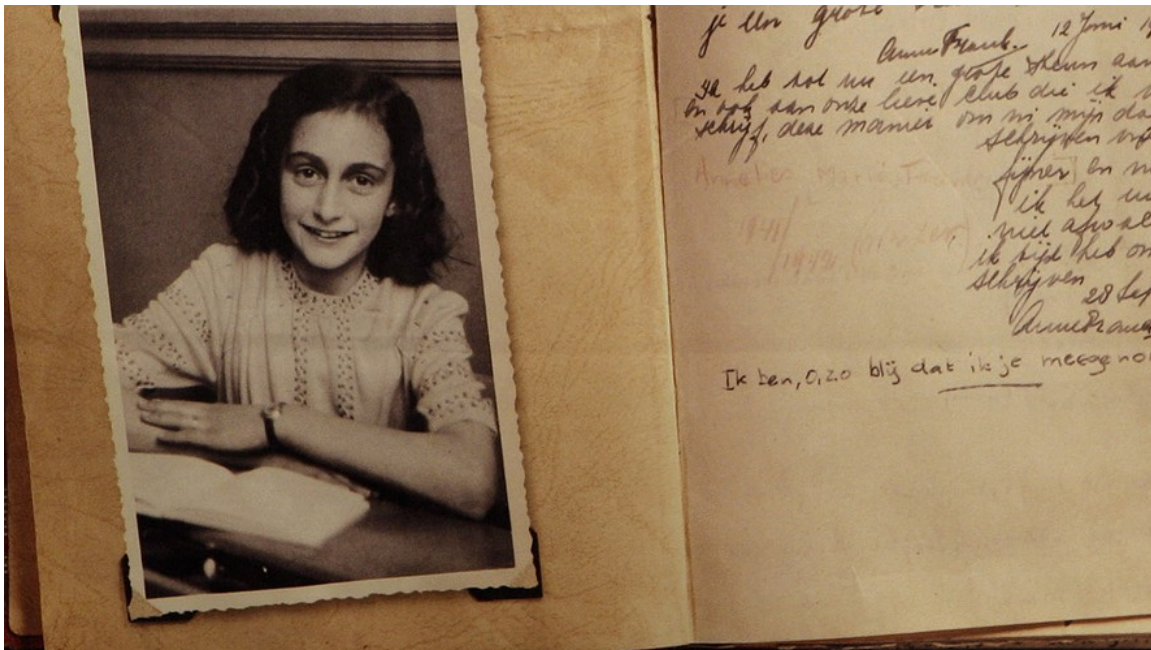


Today's refugees and Jewish girl from long ago share immigration problems

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 11.30.15

Word Count **635**



A picture of Anne Frank is pasted in a book at the exhibition "Anne Frank, a History for Today" at the Westerbork Remembrance Centre in Hooghalen, Netherlands, June 12, 2009. Photo: AP Photo/Bas Czerwinski

President Barack Obama has promised to take in 10,000 Syrian refugees. They are escaping war in their homeland in the Middle East. More than 75 years ago, there was another group of refugees who also sought to come to the United States. They were Jews trying to flee Europe right before World War II. The two groups of people are separated by many years. Yet, they have faced many of the same struggles.

Among the many Jews who tried to escape Europe were Otto Frank and his family. His wife was Edith, and his daughters were named Anne and Margot. Anne was the author of "The Diary of Anne Frank." The family was never able to leave and come to the U.S.

Otto Frank survived, but his wife and daughters died. During World War II, Germany tried to destroy the Jewish people. Nazi Germans killed and imprisoned millions of Jews.

Documents Tell Family's Painful Story

In 2007, a history professor, Richard Breitman, wrote about the discovery of an important collection of papers. They told the story of the Franks' struggle to come to the U.S.

Breitman said that U.S. government rules prevented the family from coming. If they were different, Anne Frank would be 77 today. Maybe she would have been a writer living in the U.S.

Instead, she died when she was 15 years old.

The rules that kept the Franks out were designed to keep the U.S. safe. They were also supposed to guard against a flood of foreigners coming to the U.S. during the war, Breitman wrote. Many people are against the Syrians entering the U.S. for similar reasons. They are worried about the Islamic State group. It is a violent group that has taken over parts of Syria and Iraq. People are worried that Islamic State group members could hide among the Syrian refugees.

In 1940, Germany took over the Netherlands, where the Franks lived. Otto Frank applied for visas to come to the United States.

Long, Slow And Unsuccessful Attempt To Leave

"The story seems to unfold in slow motion," The New York Times wrote. It looked at the 80 pages of documents found by the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York. "Each page adds a layer of sorrow," the newspaper wrote. The moment the Franks and their American supporters overcame one obstacle, they had to deal with another one.

In the Netherlands, the Germans did not allow Jews to be teachers or government officials. They could not own businesses, and their children had to go to special schools for Jews. At first, Otto Frank decided to stay there instead of leaving everything and making a new life in a different country, wrote David Engel. He is a history professor at New York University.

Meanwhile, American rules were changing. The U.S. government was making it harder for foreigners to get into the country. At the same time, the Germans were making it difficult for them to leave.

A Terrible Ending

By early 1939, more than 300,000 people were on a waiting list. They wanted permission to come to the U.S., Breitman wrote.

In 1942, Margot Frank received a German order. She was being sent to a work camp in Eastern Europe. The day after, the family left their home and went into hiding. A month later, Anne Frank received her famous diary for her 13th birthday.

The family was eventually discovered. Otto Frank was the only family member to survive after they were sent to concentration camps.

In 1944, Anne Frank wrote in her diary that terrible things were happening in the world. "It's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart."

Quiz

- 1 Read the section "Long, Slow And Unsuccessful Attempt To Leave." Which of the following can be inferred from this section?
 - (A) Some Jews were still able to run successful businesses in Germany and the Netherlands.
 - (B) Most Jews were able to leave Germany and find safety in the Netherlands.
 - (C) Neither the German nor the American governments provided support to Jews.
 - (D) Many Germans believed that Jews should have the right to work as teachers and own businesses.

- 2 According to the section "A Terrible Ending," in what year did the Frank family go into hiding?
 - (A) 1939
 - (B) 1942
 - (C) 1943
 - (D) 1944

- 3 Which sentence from the article would be MOST important to include in a summary of the article?
 - (A) President Barack Obama has promised to take in 10,000 Syrian refugees.
 - (B) During World War II, Germany tried to destroy the Jewish people.
 - (C) Many people are against the Syrians entering the U.S. for similar reasons.
 - (D) In the Netherlands, the Germans did not allow Jews to be teachers or government officials.

- 4 Which paragraph in the section "Documents Tell Family's Painful Story" BEST represents the article's central idea?