STAGE 2: ROLE-PLAY OF THE EVIAN CONFERENCE

By reenacting the setting and central narratives of the international conference on refugees in Evian in 1938 stage 2 aims at providing historical knowledge and further reflecting the four core questions:

- To what extent am I responsible to help foreigners?
- What is the proper balance between self-concerns and international obligation for refugees?
- What are legitimate and non-legitimate concerns for rejecting refugees?
- To what extent is diplomacy effective or necessary to solve such problems

Instructions

Briefly explain the event of the Evian Conference. Use the information on Evian. [5min]

Divide the group into up to six teams. Each team gets a handout with an outline of arguments made by a country that participated at the Evian conference – USA, UK, Peru, Argentine and the Dominican Republic. Each group studies the arguments and creates a short speech. Additionally, there is a group of at least two journalists that sums up the conference including further information on positions of Jewish organizations and Nazi Germany. [20 min]
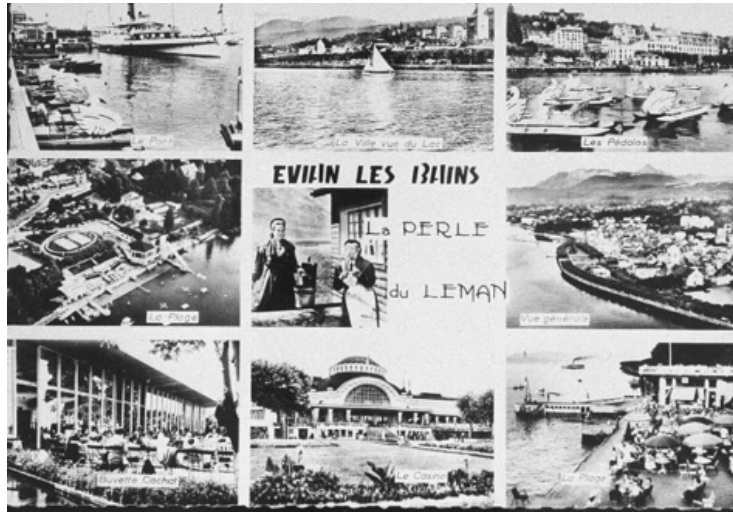
Let to groups deliver their speeches and briefly sum up the arguments by categories together with the participants, such as [10 min]:

- Economic arguments (unemployment, burden to the welfare system).
- Demographic arguments (population density in the country leaves no room for refugees).
- Racial/ethnic arguments (keeping the ethnic-cultural characteristic of the country)
- Political arguments (concerns about political unrest because of the refugees).
- Security concerns (fear of German spies).

Ask the groups to expose their "hidden agendas" – the interests of their countries (mentioned in the handouts) that were not made public in their speeches. [15 min]

Explain that the conference hardly achieved any practical results. [5 min]

Background Information

Working Groups

Argentine

Dominican Rep.

Peru

United States of America

United Kingdom of Great Britain

Journalists

"WIR KONNTEN NIRGENDWO HIN"
Jüdische Flüchtlinge 1938 – 39