

The Children of Willesden Lane Bay Area BIG READ *About the Kindertransport*

As the Nazi Party increased its power in Europe during the 1930s, the governments of nearly all unoccupied countries (including Great Britain and the United States) maintained strict immigration quotas.

At the [Evian Conference](#) in July 1938, the world community made it clear that in terms of Jewish immigrants, “none was too many.” At this international meeting, representatives from 32 countries around the world met to talk about what they should do with the large number of Jewish people fleeing from the Nazis. Despite the danger posed to Jews by the German government, most countries decided that they would not accept Jewish refugees.

It was not until after [Kristallnacht](#) (“The Night of Broken Glass”), a Nazi-sponsored pogrom in November 1938 that left thousands of synagogues and Jewish-owned businesses destroyed, that the British government changed its mind. Pressured by refugee aid committees, the British government agreed to allow select groups of Jewish refugees to enter the country. Although it still would not allow Jewish adults into the country – for fear that they would take jobs away from British citizens – the British government opened their borders to children fleeing from the Nazis.

Between 1938 and 1939, unaccompanied children under the age of 17 were allowed to enter Great Britain from Central Europe, as long as private citizens promised to support them financially. Known as the *Kindertransport* (Children’s Transport), this series of refugee efforts saved the lives of close to 10,000 children from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. Although most of these children were Jewish, non-Jewish children were also included in the *Kindertransport*.

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Glossary

- **Anschluss:** Nazi Germany's invasion and annexation of Austria in March 1938
- **emigrate:** to leave one's country
- **Evian Conference:** conference on "Jewish refugee problem" held at Evians-les-Bains in France in July 1938, by representatives of 32 countries, including the United States. The only agreement reached was that the existing immigration quota systems in effect in the various countries would be upheld.
- **genocide (as defined by The United Nations Genocide Convention: Article II):** any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group
- **Kindertransport (Children's Transport):** the popular name of an exodus of unaccompanied children from Nazi-occupied Europe to Great Britain between 1938 and 1939. Approximately 10,000 young lives were saved by the *Kindertransport*.
- **Kristallnacht ("The Night of Broken Glass"):** on November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis unleashed a wave of violence against German Jews, destroying hundreds of Jewish businesses, synagogues, and private homes, and arresting tens of thousands of Jews.
- **Nazi:** shortened name for Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (N.S.D.A.P.), the political party that emerged in Munich, Germany after World War I. The party was taken over by Adolf Hitler in the early 1920s.
- **pogrom:** violent attack of a local Jewish population by non-Jews
- **quota:** a limited or fixed amount of things or people
- **synagogue:** Jewish place of worship
- **Third Reich:** the name of the German government while under control of the Nazi Party
- **Vienna:** Located in Austria, Vienna was an important center of culture and education for a variety of ethnic and religious groups. It was Lisa Jura's birthplace.
- **visa:** a document granting permission for someone to enter a country
- **survivor:** Within the context of the Holocaust, a survivor is someone who escaped death at the hands of the Nazis or their collaborators.
- **refugee:** someone who flees their home for another country

The Children of Willesden Lane Bay Area BIG READ Resources Available at the Tauber Holocaust Library

Books

Byers, Ann. *Saving Children from the Holocaust: The Kindertransport*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, 2012.

Drucker, Olga Levy. *Kindertransport*. New York : Henry Holt and Company, 1992.

Emanuel, Muriel and Vera Gissing. *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation: The Story of 'Britain's Schindler'*. Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002. ***

Fast, Vera K. *Children's Exodus : A History of the Kindertransport*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2010.

Fox, Anne L. and Eva Abraham-Podietz. *Ten Thousand Children: True stories told by children who escaped the Holocaust on the Kindertransport*. West Orange, NJ : Behrman House, 1999. ***

Golabek, Mona and Lee Cohen. *The Children of Willesden Lane, Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love, and Survival*. New York: Hachette, 2002. ***

Harris, Mark Jonathan and Deborah Oppenheimer. *Into the Arms Of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2000. ***

Korman, Gerd. *Nightmare's Fairy Tale: A Young Refugee's Home Fronts, 1938-1948*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. ***

Leverton, Bertha and Samuel Lowensohn, eds. *I Came Alone: The Stories of the Kindertransports*. Sussex, England: Book Guild Publishing, 1990.

Milton, Edith. *The Tiger in the Attic: Memories of the Kindertransport and Growing Up English*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. ***

Roth, Milena. *Lifesaving Letters: A Child's Flight from the Holocaust*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004.

Scrase David, Wolfgang Mieder, and Katherine Quimby Johnson, eds. *Making a Difference: Rescue and Assistance During the Holocaust*. Burlington, VT: Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont, 2004.

*** Available to borrow for classroom use through the JFCS Holocaust Center's Teacher Resource Center

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Films

50 Children: The Rescue Mission of Mr. and Mrs. Kraus. DVD. Directed by Steven Pressman. 2013; Los Angeles: Seventh Art Releasing, 2013.

Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport. DVD. Directed by Mark Jonathan Harris. 2000; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2001.

My Knees Were Jumping: Remembering the Kindertransports. DVD. Directed by Melissa Hacker. 1995; New York: New Video, 2003.

Oral Histories

The JFCS Holocaust Center has a collection of over 2,000 audio and visual testimonies from Holocaust survivors and witnesses. Included in this collection are many testimonies by those who experienced the *Kindertransport*. These testimonies are available to view in the Tauber Holocaust Library.

To make an appointment to view an oral history, contact Yedida Kanfer at YedidaK@jfcs.org or 415-449-3748.