

A STUDY GUIDE

BASED ON THE FILM

INTO THE
ARMS OF STRANGERS

STORIES OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT

ACADEMY
AWARD®
WINNER

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILM-2000





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*Kinder on train
at Dutch border*

Preface

In August 1939, in the days just following my mother's eleventh birthday, my grandparents sent their daughter on a train departing Chemnitz, Germany. My mother was exchanging life with a loving family under the peril of Nazi control for an unknown future with strangers, in the relative safety of Great Britain. Like the majority of the 10,000 children saved by the Kindertransport rescue effort, she never saw her parents again.

Throughout my life, my mother could never speak about the events that brought her to Great Britain and then to the United States. The few times I tried to break through her silence she would start crying, then I would begin to cry and would ultimately retreat—out of love for my mother. She was hiding a profound grief from her childhood, and I made a silent pact to absorb it.

In 1993, my mother passed away from cancer. As a means of dealing with my loss and no longer fearful of causing her pain, I went in search of her story. While the Kindertransport had been the defining experience of my mother's life and had deeply affected our family, I had never heard it mentioned outside our home, studied it in school, talked about it with friends, or, to my knowledge, met another Kindertransport survivor. I always had an emotional awareness of the Kindertransport, but I never knew its history. I decided to learn everything I could in the hopes of bringing it to the widest audience possible. I wanted people to know what had happened, and used the skills I had developed as a longtime producer ("The Drew Carey Show") at Warner Bros. to make my documentary feature debut.

I contacted Mark Jonathan Harris, whose work I had admired in the Academy Award®-winning film *The Long Way Home*. Recognizing that we couldn't possibly present the complete range of experience of a rescue operation which saved so many lives, we looked for witnesses whose stories would represent what we considered the most characteristic aspects of the Kindertransport. We read historical accounts, letters, diaries, transcripts, and memoirs. We viewed testimonies and spoke to Kindertransport survivors around the world whom we found through Holocaust institutions, word of mouth, and books. Inspired by the hundreds of stories we read and heard, we then retraced the path of the Kindertransport through Germany, the Netherlands, and England, and attended the 60th Anniversary Reunion of Kindertransport survivors in London.

Because we wanted our audience never to lose sight of the fact that the Kindertransport happened to children, we decided the story should be told through the child's point of view. We began filming *Into the Arms of Strangers* in September 1998 and released the film in the United States in September 2000. In November, at the royal premiere in London, 14 of the 16 people featured in the film met privately with HRH Prince Charles to express their gratitude to Great Britain for having saved their lives. The following week, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder introduced the film in Berlin. With his encouragement, the German government's Agency for Political Education announced that the film will be distributed to every school in Germany as part of its compulsory Holocaust education program. On March 25, 2001, we were presented with the Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature. When presenter Samuel L. Jackson announced the film's name on the telecast, over 200 million viewers in more than 150 countries heard the word "Kindertransport," many for the first time. The Award will ensure the film a very long life.

There is a terrific irony to my search. If my mother had told her stories, I would never have felt the need for this quest. Now there is so much I want to talk to her about. I wish I could ask questions. I wish I could introduce her to the people I have grown to know and love during the making of this film. They have taught me much about my mother and about her silence, and I feel that, in their words, glimpses of her life and my grandparents' lives have been brought to light.

This film is a tribute to my mother, Sylva Sabine Avramovici Oppenheimer.



*Producer Deborah Oppenheimer
Los Angeles, July 2001*

Introduction

For nine months prior to the outbreak of World War II, in an unprecedented act of mercy, Great Britain conducted an extraordinary rescue mission known as the Kindertransport. Ten thousand Jewish and other children were transported from their homes in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland and placed into British foster homes and hostels, expecting eventually to be reunited with their parents. The majority of the children never saw their families again.

In the film *Into the Arms of Strangers*, this unique story is told through the firsthand accounts of 12 of the *Kinder* (children) who were rescued, as well as a parent, a foster parent, and two rescuers. Their recollections are interwoven into a compelling chronological narrative and illustrated by rare archival footage, photographs, and personal artifacts. The result is a hopeful and human portrait of an unusual and edifying historical event.

The *Kinder* (sing. *Kind*) describe their early years with their families, their parents' agonizing decision to send them to safety, and their own childhood journeys into an unknown future, offering a unique perspective on important themes of choice, responsibility, identity, memory, fitting in, loss, and separation. The stories highlight the significance of individuals' actions as well as the impact of government policies. Because this is also a film about children and parents, the accounts offer a rare opportunity to explore and discuss the power and fragility of this deepest of human relationships.

Into the Arms of Strangers enables thoughtful classroom discussion of these topics and acts as a compelling and accessible means to approach a historical event that is particularly difficult to learn about and to understand. The accounts of the *Kinder* remove the distance of history, helping to demystify the Holocaust by showing the effects of intolerance, racism, and institutionalized violence on individuals. Their stories resoundingly assert the value of human life; the timeless and universal themes serve to remind us of every person's responsibility for its protection.

The film and this guide can be used together in the classroom to meet the following general objectives:

- Reinforce a meaningful historical understanding of the Holocaust without exposure to explicit content for which students may be unprepared;
- Provide a solid foundation of knowledge about the Kindertransport and an understanding of the political and social factors behind immigration and refugee policies;
- Explore the importance of language, beliefs, values, and traditions in defining a culture;
- Recognize the value of individual firsthand accounts in the study of the past;
- Consider the responsibility of each citizen to protect the democratic process, to guard individual rights, and to participate in community service;
- Examine the presence of ethical principles underlying individual action and illustrate ways in which one individual in a society can change the lives of many others;
- Develop historical perspective and connect the events of the past to students' own lives by addressing themes universal to the human experience;
- Help students learn to use their knowledge of the past to make informed choices in the present and the future.

Using This Guide

*This guide serves as a companion to the film *Into the Arms of Strangers*, providing students and teachers with reference materials and suggestions for classroom discussion, group projects, and individual assignments, as well as a potential entry for parents and guardians to join the classroom dialogue. This film and the guide are appropriate for students from grades 7 to 12.*

Reference Materials

To put the accounts of the film into context, this guide includes summaries of each of the stories of the people who are featured in the film. A brief historical review provides background information on the origins of the Holocaust, World War II, and the Kindertransport. A map, a timeline of relevant events, a glossary, and a bibliography are also included.


Viewing and Discussion

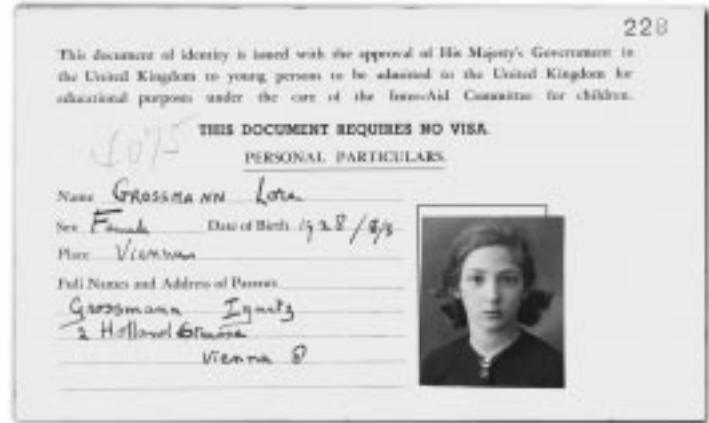
For the purpose of classroom use, the film can be divided into five parts:

- Part 1 (approx. 20 minutes): "Life Is Quite Normal..." (00:00-19:41)
- Part 2 (approx. 27 minutes): A Light in the Darkness (19:41-46:40)
- Part 3 (approx. 23 minutes): Into the Arms of Strangers (46:40-1:09:19)
- Part 4 (approx. 26 minutes): War and Deportation (1:09:19-1:35:25)
- Part 5 (approx. 22 minutes): None to Comfort Them (1:35:25-1:57:12)

The class is encouraged to watch the film in full before discussing its separate sections, but the film may also be watched, or watched again, in the five individual parts in order to fit it into class periods. On pages 18-29 of this guide, you will find suggested discussion points for each part of the film, as well as a reflective section on pages 30-31. Recommendations for group projects and individual assignments are included.

Suggestions

- Teachers may encourage students to keep a journal while watching the film to note the stories, images, music, or sounds that resonate for them. How do the visual and audible elements of the film illustrate the stories being told by the participants? The students should treat this journal as a physical memoir of their experience, and they may want to add drawings, photographs, printed text, or other items that are meaningful to them. Suggestions for journal entries are indicated by this symbol: 
- Since the relationship between parent and child is central to this film, teachers may wish to ask students to invite their parents or guardians to join them in the classroom or auditorium for viewing *Into the Arms of Strangers*. They may then facilitate a discussion of the themes in this study guide and encourage a dialogue among the generations.



Lore Segal's Kindertransport identity card

"It's strange that it's only six years out of a long life and those six years will affect the rest of your life."

Eva Hayman



Berlin, 1938

Historical Background

The following pages provide a brief review of the historical context for the Kindertransport. To explore the following topics in greater depth, please refer to pages 32-36.

Background

The children of the Kindertransport (*see pages 14-16*) featured in the film were born between 1922 and 1931, in what was in retrospect a deeply unstable and volatile region of Europe. Much of the continent had been ravaged by World War I, and recovery was particularly elusive for Germany. Throughout the 1920s, the German people were acutely conscious of their unexpected defeat in the “Great War,” and they were also impoverished by the high cost of war and the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany’s peace accord with Great Britain, France, the United States, and the other victors. Unemployment was high, and in the early 1920s, uncontrolled inflation rendered German currency nearly worthless—along with the savings accounts of much of the German population. The economy began to recover in the late 1920s, but the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 cast the nation into renewed misery. With the German people demoralized, their democratically elected government found itself increasingly unpopular and vulnerable.

The Rise of the Nazi Party

In 1919, when Adolf Hitler joined what would become known as the Nazi Party (short for the National Socialist German Workers’ Party), it was a little-known fringe group of right-wing extremists. During the 1920s, the Nazis exploited civic discontent to build a small but loyal following, but mainstream public recognition eluded them until 1929. In the vast destitution of the Depression era, the German public began to embrace the Nazis’ messages, which included fanatical pro-German nationalism, the rebuilding of Germany through remilitarization, and open racism and antisemitism which presented ethnic minorities—especially the Jews—as scapegoats for the nation’s troubles. Although the Nazi Party was never able to claim a majority of German votes, it gained enough support for Adolf Hitler to emerge as Chancellor of the nation in 1933. The political establishment viewed Hitler’s ascension with concern, but generally assumed that the realities of the political system would force him to moderate his views. Yet Hitler, who rose to power within a democratic system, invoked the provisions of the German constitution that permitted the suspension of constitutional protections in emergency circumstances. Ruling by decree, he dismantled the democratic structure and proclaimed himself *Führer* (“leader”) of an authoritarian, dictatorial new regime.

A few of the prewar German laws that directly affected Jewish children

April 25, 1933—The government limits the number of Jews who can attend German high schools.

September 15, 1935—The Nuremberg Laws are passed: Jews are no longer German citizens, cannot display the German flag, cannot employ Germans younger than 45 in their homes, cannot marry or have relations with non-Jewish Germans. Jews are defined biologically and designated based on the religion of their grandparents rather than their own faith or cultural identity.

July 23, 1938—All Jews older than 15 must carry a special identification card. In any dealings with the government, Jews must declare they are Jewish and show the card.

August 17, 1938—Newborn Jewish children are to receive names only from a government-approved list.

November 12, 1938—Jews cannot attend plays, movies, concerts, or exhibitions. Jews must pay 1.25 million *Reichsmarks* (almost six million U.S. dollars today) for damages caused on “*Kristallnacht*.” (*See box on page 10.*)

November 15, 1938—Jewish children are expelled from public schools and must now attend Jewish schools.

December 8, 1938—Jews can no longer attend German universities.

The Jews of Germany

The fewer than 600,000 Jews who lived in Germany in the 1920s accounted for not even one percent of the population, but Jewish people had been present in Germany for hundreds of years. As in the rest of Europe, Jews of the region had once been a subordinate class, subject to legal discrimination, but over the past century the Jews had become more and more integrated into German society. After 1870, they enjoyed full rights and protections as German citizens, and by World War I many Jewish Germans were fully assimilated and patriotic members of society. The 12,000 Jewish soldiers who served Germany during World War I were among the most decorated troops.

With the rise of German discontent and the openly antisemitic Nazi Party, the Jews began to endure a renewal of persecution and a sense of deepening isolation. This experience was disturbing and painful, but not unfamiliar. Like many other minority populations, the Jews had been subject to discrimination and persecution throughout their history. Antisemitism had never truly disappeared in Germany, and it was rampant in neighboring Poland, home to more than three million Jews. To some German Jews, the ebb and flow of antisemitism seemed like an unfortunate but predictable part of life in the region. Others made the decision to emigrate in the early years of the Nazi regime.

The Nazi Regime

When Adolf Hitler took control of Germany, the *Kinder* featured in *Into the Arms of Strangers* were still children. Many were too young to understand the significance of the laws that Hitler and the Nazi government began to pass against the Jewish people—who, as early as 1935, were no longer even considered citizens in their own country. These laws would have a devastating impact on their lives, restricting their rights and their access to public services (*see box on page 8*), encouraging the non-Jewish population to degrade them, and legalizing the violence perpetrated against them.

Over time, the Nazi government of Germany also began to increase the persecution of political dissidents, Communists, Sinti and Roma (“Gypsies”), homosexuals, and others. Along with a systematic suppression of their political opponents, the Nazis were beginning to develop and realize a goal of “racial cleansing.” The Nazis’ admittedly racist ideology was based on a theory of a “racial hierarchy” that had northern Europeans (whom they called “Aryans”) at the top and Jews at the bottom. Believing that Germany rightfully belonged to the “Aryans,” they were determined to defend the genetic stock against “contamination” and weakening. Thus the Jews were not seen as a people who practiced a religion or affirmed a historic identity, but as a “race” whose “Jewish blood” threatened “Aryan” supremacy. The Nazis endeavored to force Jews and other potential “contaminants” to emigrate from the country and to eliminate those “Aryans” whose existence was not believed to contribute to a stronger race, such as the disabled.

The German government remilitarized the country—in flagrant violation of the Versailles Treaty that had ended World War I. Great Britain, France, and other European nations permitted this violation as part of their policy of “appeasement” of Hitler, through which the war-weary governments hoped to avoid a direct conflict with Germany. For the same reason, they also did not stop the annexation of Austria in March 1938 (known as the “*Anschluss*”) and the dismantling and subjugation of Czechoslovakia in September 1938 and March 1939.



Greater German Reich, late 1930s



Austria, 1938

Under German control, the Jewish populations of Austria and part of Czechoslovakia found themselves subject to all the anti-Jewish laws the German Jews had been gradually forced to accept over the previous five years.

Emigration

Until the early 1940s, the primary intent of German anti-Jewish policies was to make life so difficult for Jews that they would leave of their own accord. Although this policy of forced emigration opened a narrow window of opportunity for escape, the decision to leave was not easy. Many people were reluctant to abandon a home in which their families had lived for generations, and few wanted to leave their extended families and communities at a time when they were in most need of support. Some considered themselves patriotic Germans and thought that Hitler and the Nazis could not possibly rule their country for long. In addition, since the German government forbade emigrants to take any valuables or currency, leaving Germany meant starting anew,

as penniless refugees, in an unknown land. Many preferred to believe that the events that were occurring, which had no modern precedent, would eventually subside under international pressure.

To make matters worse, those who decided to leave often found it difficult to find a country willing to take them in. Much of the world, including the United States, was still in the grip of the Depression, and, after the devastation of World War I,

the populations and governments of many countries tended toward isolationism—the policy of not becoming involved in foreign affairs, sometimes without regard for their human implications. By July 1938, however, once the growing numbers of desperate refugees from Germany had become impossible to ignore, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt suggested a conference to discuss the issue. The diplomats who convened in the French resort town of Evian spoke eloquently on behalf of the refugees, but of 32 nations represented, only one—the Dominican Republic—agreed to accept more refugees to help the victims of Nazi Germany. Ironically, the only lasting effect of this meeting may have been to prove to Adolf Hitler that no country truly cared about the fate of the Jews.

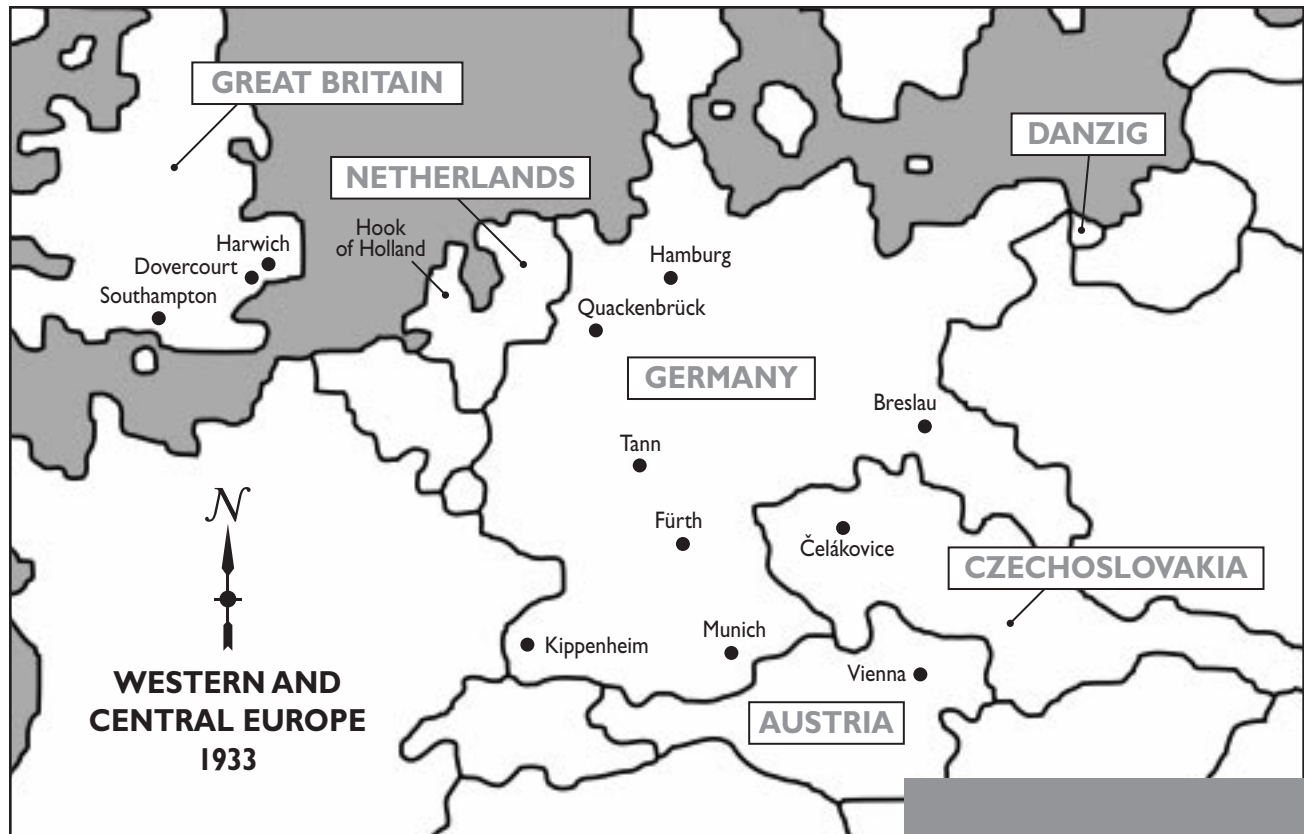
The violence of “*Kristallnacht*” (see box to the left) was widely reported in the international press and left little doubt as to the brutal intentions of the Nazi government. The news fueled international public outrage, creating the possibility that nations might begin to accept refugees from Germany despite the economic hardship and high unemployment that continued to prevail throughout most of the Western world. Most countries, however, did not ultimately choose to do so.

“*Kristallnacht*”—the November Pogroms of 1938

On November 9 and 10, 1938, the German government coordinated a violent attack on the Jews of Germany and Austria, in which marauding citizens and Nazi storm troopers killed dozens of Jews, burned more than 1,000 synagogues, destroyed and looted more than 7,000 Jewish-owned businesses, and pillaged Jewish cemeteries, schools, and homes as police and fire brigades stood by. In the aftermath, the authorities arrested more than 30,000 Jews, most of them men between the ages of 16 and 60, and sent them to concentration camps. They enacted a new series of devastating anti-Jewish restrictions that effectively removed German Jews from the economy.

The Nazi government used the murder of a German diplomat as a pretense for organizing this rampage, for which they invented the euphemistic and seemingly elegant term “*Kristallnacht*,” literally meaning “night of crystal.” Inspired by the broken glass that covered the streets, this term was meant to obscure a tragic event which in reality was an extraordinarily brutal campaign enacted by a government against its own people and a continuation of the long history of antisemitic pogroms against the Jews.

Kinder Homes and Transport Destinations



The Kindertransport

On November 15, 1938, a few days after “*Kristallnacht*,” a delegation of British Jewish leaders appealed in person to the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. Among other measures, they requested that the British government permit the temporary admission of children and teenagers, who would later re-emigrate. The Jewish community promised to pay guarantees for the refugee children.

The next day, the British Cabinet debated the issue. The Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, said that the country could not admit more refugees without provoking a backlash, but the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, suggested that an act of generosity might have the benefit of prompting the United States to accept additional immigrants. (See “*The Wagner-Rogers Bill*,” page 13.) The cabinet committee on refugees subsequently decided that the nation would accept unaccompanied children ranging from infants to teenagers under the age of 17. No limit to the number of refugees was ever publicly announced.

On the eve of a major House of Commons debate on refugees on November 21, Home Secretary Hoare met a large delegation representing various Jewish and non-Jewish groups working on behalf of refugees. The groups were allied under a non-denominational organization called the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany. The Home Secretary agreed that to speed up the immigration process, travel documents would be issued on the basis of group lists rather than individual

Lorraine Allard—Fürth

Lory Cahn—Breslau

Hedy Epstein—Kippenheim

Kurt Fuchel—Vienna

Alexander Gordon—Hamburg

Eva Hayman—Čelákovice

Jack Hellman—Tann

Bertha Leverton—Munich

Ursula Rosenfeld—Quackenbrück

Inge Sadan—Munich

Lore Segal—Vienna

Robert Sugar—Vienna



Dutch women greet *Kinder* at border

applications. But strict conditions were placed upon the entry of the children. The agencies promised to fund the operation and to ensure that none of the refugees would become a financial burden on the public. Every child would have a guarantee of 50 British pounds (approximately \$1,500 in today's currency) to finance his or her eventual re-emigration, as it was expected the children would stay in the country only temporarily.

The Home Secretary announced the program to the assembled Members of Parliament at the House of Commons, who broadly welcomed the initiative that would come to be known as the Kindertransport.

Within a very short time, the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, later known as the Refugee Children's Movement (RCM), sent representatives to Germany and Austria to establish the systems for choosing, organizing, and transporting the children. On November 25, British citizens heard an appeal for foster homes on the BBC Home Service radio program. Soon there were 500 offers, and RCM volunteers started visiting these possible foster homes and reporting on conditions. They did not insist that prospective homes for Jewish children should be Jewish homes. Nor did they probe too carefully into the motives and character of the families: it was sufficient for the houses to look clean and the families to seem respectable.

In Germany, a network of organizers was established, and these volunteers worked around the clock to make priority lists of those most imperiled: teenagers who were in concentration camps or in danger of arrest, Polish children or teenagers threatened with deportation, children in Jewish orphanages, those whose parents were too impoverished to keep them, or those with parents in a concentration camp. Once the children were identified or grouped by list, their guardians or parents were issued a travel date and departure details.

The first Kindertransport from Berlin departed on December 1, 1938, and the first from Vienna on December 10. For the first three months, the children came mainly from Germany, then the emphasis shifted to Austria. In March 1939, after the German army entered Czechoslovakia, transports from Prague were hastily organized. Trains of Polish Jewish children were also arranged in February and August 1939.

Since the German government decreed that the evacuations must not block ports in Germany, the trains crossed from German territory into the Netherlands and arrived at port at the Hook of Holland. From there, the children traveled by ferry to the British ports of Harwich or Southampton. (*See map on page 11.*)

The last group of children from Germany departed on September 1, 1939, the day the German army invaded Poland and provoked Great Britain, France, and other countries to declare war. The last known transport of *Kinder* from the Netherlands left on May 14, 1940, the day the Dutch army surrendered to Germany. Tragically, hundreds of *Kinder* were caught in Belgium and the Netherlands during the German invasion, making them subject once more to the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

Life in Great Britain

Upon arrival at port in Great Britain, *Kinder* without prearranged foster families were sheltered at temporary holding centers located at summer holiday camps on the cold windy coast of East Anglia—Dovercourt near Harwich and, for a short

STOKE NEWINGTON TOWN HALL
(Church Street, Stoke Newington),
MONDAY, DECEMBER 12th, 8 p.m.
REPRESENTATIVE SPEAKERS
TO BE SILENT MEANS TO ACQUIESCE
SAVE THE CHILDREN

period, Pakefield near Lowestoft. Finding foster families was not always easy, and being chosen for a home was not necessarily the end of discomfort or distress. Some families took in teenage girls as a way of acquiring a maidservant. There was little sensitivity toward the cultural and religious needs of the children, and, for some, their heritage was all but erased. A few, mainly the youngest, were given new names, new identities, and even a new religion. In the end, many of the children for whom no home could be found were placed on farms or in hostels run by the RCM.

From the moment of their arrival, the children struggled to maintain contact with their parents. At first, letters between parents and children flowed fairly easily, and many were filled with hopes and plans for reunion. The beginning of the war in 1939 meant the end of this dream. In addition, the German government restricted the delivery of mail to and from Jews, forcing parents and children to rely on intermediaries or the Red Cross.

As the war escalated, the British government evacuated children and pregnant women from major British cities to “safe areas” in anticipation of devastating German bombing raids. Many *Kinder* were hastily moved to new homes in the countryside. Those who went with their schools benefited from a degree of organization and care, but some found themselves completely isolated and living with uncomprehending families in remote areas. It took years for the refugee organizations to establish contact with many of the scattered children.

Older children suffered a different hardship when, in 1940, the British government ordered the internment of 16- to 70-year-old refugees from enemy countries—so-called “enemy aliens.” Approximately 1,000 of the *Kinder* were held in makeshift internment camps, and around 400 were transported overseas to Canada and Australia. Those shipped to Australia on the HMT *Dunera* were mistreated during the long voyage, and a scandal that followed revelations about the mishandling of internment led to a program of releases in late 1940. Men in particular were offered the chance to do war work or to enter the Alien Pioneer Corps. About 1,000 German and Austrian teenagers served in the British armed forces, including combat units. Several dozen joined elite formations such as the Special Forces where their language skills could be put to good use.

Most of the *Kinder* survived the war, and a small percentage were reunited with parents who had either spent the war in hiding or endured the Nazi camps. The majority of children, however, had to face the reality that home and family were lost forever. The end of the war brought confirmation of the worst: their parents were dead. In the years since the *Kinder* had left the European mainland, the Nazis and their collaborators had killed nearly six million European Jews, including nearly 1.5 million children.

In all, the Kindertransport rescue operation brought approximately 10,000 children to the relative safety of Great Britain—a large-scale act of mercy unique in a tragic historical period marked by brutality and widespread indifference.

Kinder arriving at Harwich, England,
December 2, 1938



The Wagner-Rogers Bill

The Wagner-Rogers Bill, introduced in February 1939 by U.S. Senator Robert Wagner and Representative Edith Rogers, proposed to allow 20,000 refugee children from Germany, over and above the rigid quotas of the 1924 Immigration Act, to enter the United States. Leaders from many aspects of American life, including religion, government, education, and labor, joined in supporting this legislation, but the bill faced strong resistance. Led by organizations such as the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the American Legion, the opposition loudly voiced sudden concern for American children living in poverty. “Charity begins at home” was their slogan, and they made the case that if these refugee children were permitted to enter the country, they would be depriving America’s children of needed assistance. Even in the face of reports from the American Friends Service Committee and a British child refugee agency indicating that the situation for these children was dire, the opposition prevailed, exploiting the fear that this legislation would become the “thin part of the wedge”—the beginning of an uncontrolled wave of immigrants. As political maneuvering on all sides continued, the Roosevelt Administration remained largely silent, and the legislation died in committee.

Adapted from a speech by USHMM Director Sara Bloomfield,
September 11, 2000

The Kinder

LORRAINE ALLARD

Lorraine Allard, born Lore Sulzbacher in 1924, lived with her parents in Fürth, Bavaria, Germany, until being sent on the Kindertransport to Lincoln, England, at the age of 14. She lived with the same foster family until the age of 18, when she joined the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service) in 1943 and drove staff cars during the war. After V-E ("Victory in Europe") Day in May 1945, she learned that both her parents had been murdered at Auschwitz. She died in July 2001 at the age of 76.



LORY CAHN

Lory Cahn was born Lory Grünberger in 1925 in Breslau, then part of Germany. At 14 she was scheduled to leave for England on the Kindertransport but, at the last moment, her father could not bear to part with her. At the end of 1941, she and her parents were deported to Theresienstadt, a Nazi concentration and transit camp in the former Czechoslovakia. She was confined there for a year and a half before being separated from her parents and sent to Auschwitz. For the rest of the war, she was transferred from one concentration camp to another until she was liberated in the Bergen-Belsen camp, weighing 58 pounds. Although her mother was murdered in Auschwitz, her father survived Theresienstadt and returned to Germany, where he died in 1972 at age 79. She currently resides with her husband in Pennsylvania.

HEDY EPSTEIN

Hedy Epstein was born Hedy Wachenheimer in 1924 in Kippenheim, Germany. She was 14 when she was sent on the Kindertransport to London, where she lived with two different foster families. After the war, she returned to Germany as an employee of the U.S. government in order to search for her parents, both of whom, she later discovered, had been murdered at Auschwitz. A German-language memoir of her experiences, *Erinnern Ist Nicht Genug* (*Remembering Is Not Enough*), was published in Germany. Her home is in Missouri.

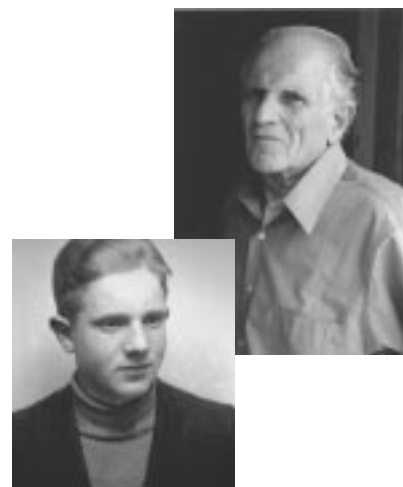


KURT FUCHEL

Kurt Fuchel was born Kurt Füchsl in 1931 in Vienna, Austria, where he lived until the age of seven. After his parents sent him to Norwich, England, on the Kindertransport, he was taken in by the family of Percy and Mariam Cohen and stayed with them until the age of 16. His parents escaped from Austria to the south of France and were sheltered by French families during the war. In 1947, Kurt was reunited with his parents. They lived together in France until immigrating to the United States in 1956. A past president of the Kindertransport Association, Inc. (KTA), Kurt resides with his wife in New York.

ALEXANDER GORDON

Alexander Gordon was born Abrascha Gorbulski in 1922 in Bergedof, Germany, near Hamburg. His father died when he was three years old, and his impoverished mother was forced to place him in a Jewish orphanage four years later, where he remained until he graduated from high school at age 16. Afterwards, he went to work on a farm to prepare for immigration to Palestine. Following “*Kristallnacht*,” he was one of the first children to leave Germany on the Kindertransport. Because he was 16 when he arrived in Great Britain, he was arrested in June 1940, when the British government ordered the internment of refugees between the ages of 16 and 70 from enemy countries. Two weeks later, having been declared an “enemy alien,” he was shipped to Australia on the HMT *Dunera* and interned there for more than a year until he volunteered to join the Pioneer Corps and returned to England. He served in Britain, France, Belgium, and Germany until the end of 1947, when he immigrated to the United States. He now lives in New Jersey.



EVA HAYMAN

Eva Hayman was born Eva Diamant in Čelákovice, Czechoslovakia, in 1924. She was 15 years old when she left Czechoslovakia with her younger sister, Vera Gissing, both of whom were rescued by a Kindertransport organized by Nicholas Winton. She spent two years in an English boarding school before taking up nursing. Her wartime memoir, *By the Moon and the Stars*, is based on her diaries which she started writing in June 1939, her last day in Czechoslovakia, and finished in July 1945, the day she learned of the death of her parents. She resides in New Zealand, where she has lived since 1957.

JACK HELLMAN

Jack Hellman was born in 1925 as Hans Joachim Hellmann. To shelter him from the violent antisemitism he experienced daily in his hometown of Tann, Germany, his parents sent him to boarding school in Frankfurt when he was nine years old. After “*Kristallnacht*” (see box on page 10), the housemother of his school wrote to Baron James de Rothschild asking if he would take in 26 children as well as her husband, herself, and two daughters. The Baron agreed, and Jack and his schoolmates left Germany on the Kindertransport. Once in England, Jack prevailed upon Baron Rothschild to provide a work permit for his father. His parents arrived in Great Britain on September 1, 1939, the day Germany invaded Poland. They remained for two years until immigrating to New York, where Jack lived until his death in August 2001.



BERTHA LEVERTON

Bertha Leverton was born Bertha Engelhard in 1923 in Munich, Germany, the oldest of the three children of a Polish Jewish couple. She was sent on the Kindertransport with her brother Theo and spent her 16th birthday at Dovercourt Camp while waiting to be assigned a foster family. A family in Coventry took her in to be their maid and eventually welcomed Theo and their younger sister Inge, who had been in Germany until that time. Bertha conceived and organized the 50th Anniversary Reunion of Kindertransport in 1989 and also compiled and co-edited a collection of 250 remembrances of the transports, *I Came Alone*. She was a principal organizer of the 1999 60th Anniversary Reunion in London, where she lives.

URSULA ROSENFELD

Ursula Rosenfeld was born Ursula Ellen Simon in Quackenbrück, Germany, in 1925. After her father was arrested during “*Kristallnacht*” (see box on page 10) and murdered at the Buchenwald concentration camp, her mother sent 13-year-old Ursula and her older sister Hella to an orphanage in Hamburg. The girls remained there until they left for England the following year and were taken in by a widow in Brighton. Ursula’s mother did not survive the war. Ursula remained in England, where she was appointed a magistrate for her adopted city of Manchester.

**INGE SADAN**

Inge Sadan was born Inge Engelhard in 1930. At the age of nine, she traveled from Munich, Germany, to Coventry, England, after her elder sister Bertha managed to convince her foster family to act as her sponsor. The sisters and their brother Theo spent five difficult years with their foster family until their parents arrived in England in 1944. Inge lives in Jerusalem, Israel, where she co-organized a 1994 Kindertransport reunion and edited a book of Israeli *Kinder* reminiscences entitled *No Longer a Stranger*.

LORE SEGAL

Lore Segal was born Lore Groszmann in 1928, in Vienna, Austria. She was 10 when the German army marched into her country, and nine months later she was on the first Kindertransport to leave Vienna. At Dovercourt Camp, she wrote letters to relatives that eventually reached the Refugee Committee in London and helped to get her parents a domestic service visa. They arrived in Liverpool in time for her eleventh birthday. Lore Segal’s novel, *Other People’s Houses*, recounts her experience as a refugee child living with five different British families during the war. Today, she lives in New York in the same apartment building as her mother, Franzi Groszmann.

**ROBERT SUGAR**

Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1930, Robert Sugar was eight years old when he left on the Kindertransport. He was sent to a Jewish refugee hostel in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and then to a refugee farming settlement near Millisle, in County Down. After the war, which both his parents survived, Robert immigrated to New York in 1947 to join his mother. A graphic designer and author, Robert still lives in New York and has written extensive educational material on Jewish history as well as designed visual exhibits for the Kindertransport Association, Inc. (KTA), on whose board he serves.

The Parents and the Rescuers

MARIAM COHEN (FOSTER MOTHER)

Mariam Cohen was born in 1911, and married her husband Percy Cohen in 1932. Their son John was born in 1934. During World War II, the family accepted Kurt Fuchel into their home. Percy Cohen died in 1963. Mariam Cohen still lives in Norwich and enjoys regular visits from Kurt.



FRANZI GROSZMANN (MOTHER)

Franzi Groszmann was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1904. In 1939, she and her husband traveled from Vienna to England to join their daughter, Lore Segal. They worked as a domestic couple during the war: she as a cook, he as a butler and gardener. Franz Grossmann still has breakfast with her daughter every day and has two grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

NICHOLAS WINTON (RESCUER)

Nicholas Winton, born in 1909, was a 29-year-old London stockbroker when he journeyed to Prague in December 1938. The desperation he encountered in the camps of refugees—the thousands of Jews, dissidents, and Communists who had fled the Sudetenland, the portion of Czechoslovakia recently annexed by Germany—prompted him to try to save their children when he returned to London. In the nine months before the onset of World War II, he was able to bring 664 Czech children to England, including Eva Hayman and her sister, Vera Gissing. His commitment to others has continued throughout his life. In 1983, he was honored with the title of MBE (Member of the British Empire) for his services to the community. In Czechoslovakia, he was honored with the Freedom of the City of Prague in 1992. He was awarded the 1999-2000 Service Above Self Award by Rotary International for exemplary humanitarian service.



NORBERT WOLLHEIM (RESCUER)

Norbert Wollheim, born in 1913 in Berlin, Germany, was 25 years old when he began organizing the Kindertransports in Berlin. An escort for several of the transports, he returned each time to Germany to continue his work, which ended upon the outbreak of war in September 1939. In 1943, he, his wife Rosa, and their three-year-old son Uri were deported to Auschwitz. Of a family of 70, he alone survived. In 1951, he sued German manufacturer I.G. Farben for back pay from the two years of forced labor he spent at Auschwitz. His suit led to a settlement that established a fund of \$6.43 million to compensate other forced laborers. He died in November 1998 at the age of 85, five weeks after completing his interview for this film.

Discussion: Part I

“Life Is Quite Normal...”

(00:00 - 19:41)

Summary

The Kinder recall their early lives, evoking memories of family, home, and childhood innocence. They also describe the changes in Germany, Austria, and parts of Czechoslovakia in the late 1930s—the rise of the Nazi regime, violent antisemitism, and political persecution. The families grapple with the difficulty of emigration and attempt to determine the level of threat of Adolf Hitler’s authoritarian government. On November 9, 1938, the violent, government-sponsored pogrom known as “Kristallnacht” ends any illusion of safety.

Childhood

The film opens with a montage of images of children and their parents, juxtaposing youthful happiness with a sense of danger and the threat of change. As a class, describe the essential elements of childhood and consider what it meant to the *Kinder* to have these elements taken away. Consider the quotations below in this discussion. What might happen when a child’s sense of safety is lost or when a child realizes a parent can no longer protect him or her? In what ways can the experiences of childhood affect a person’s identity?

Kurt Fuchel: “My parents were sort of middle-class people, and my father was a middle-level bank manager and my mother, a lady of leisure.... And it was, in many ways, a rather idyllic life. And I was indeed, sort of the center of the universe.”

Eva Hayman: “We had a very happy childhood, carefree childhood. My father was always busy during the week, but when he was home, he often took me for walks by the river, mostly—and talked about everything.”

Robert Sugar: “I mean, this is all I knew, and we had to give it up, we had to leave. And that probably was the biggest blow I had. I mean, just the idea that—that it’ll all end the way it is.”

Lorraine Allard: “I still have dreams, and certain things come back. I don’t know what age I am [in the dreams], but life is quite normal. Whatever we’re doing is an everyday happening. And this is when I wake up. As old as I am, I’m still sobbing.”

Fitting In

Between 1933 and 1938, the Nazi government passed laws banning Jewish children from public schools, parks, theaters, and other public places. (See box on page 8.) These laws had tangible implications for the children: they not only lost access to vital necessities, but they found themselves increasingly persecuted and isolated from their communities. As a class, discuss what it means to be an outcast, and consider the effectiveness of the

*“My father said,
‘She’s my pride and joy,
and she needs everything
I can get for her.’”*

Lory Cahn

Lory Cahn, age 6, in Breslau
with mother and father



Nazis' methods of exclusion. Give examples of other episodes in history or current events in which people were excluded because of who they were, rather than what they had done.

Ursula Rosenfeld: "The table was set. We were—I was sort of very excited. Nobody came. Not a single child came to this birthday party. And so, that was the first terrible blow to me. I know it sounds trivial, but it was the first sort of comprehension for a child to understand that you're ostracized, that there's something different about you."

Jack Hellman: "I feared every day. I just was most unhappy going to school. I was walking on the street, six or seven boys came, called me 'Jew bastard,' and then attacked me and threw me through the plate-glass window. I was cut severely, and I had to go to the hospital for stitching and I didn't want to go to the school there anymore, either. I just felt that I was threatened constantly."

Individual Assignment:

At many points in this film, the *Kinder* discuss experiences of being excluded or of not belonging. Citing the two quotations above and the historical background on pages 8-10, write an essay describing the impact that the Nazis' antisemitic laws had on the children. How did the laws lead to their exclusion from their communities and former way of life? As they found themselves increasingly isolated, what happened to their sense of identity?

"Basic Values"

On November 20, 2000, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated: "This film recalls a time in Germany when all basic values were brutally rendered invalid. The values most affected were human kindness and human dignity." In 1938, the Jews were the primary group that was targeted for isolation and persecution. Based on the events described in the first part of the film and the historical background on pages 8-10, discuss how the Germans targeted the Jews specifically, and in what ways these policies and attacks affected the *Kinder* on a personal level. In what ways are attacks on specific groups and individuals attacks on the "basic values" of humanity? As a class, make a list of those qualities you consider to be "basic values." Give examples from current events in which people are denied some or all of the qualities you have listed. Discuss the importance of "human kindness" and respect for "human dignity."

"Suddenly, I couldn't go to my normal school anymore."

Kurt Fuchel



Kurt Fuchel, age 6, Vienna



Jack Hellman, age 6, first day of school, Tann, Germany

Discussion: Part 2

A Light in the Darkness

(19:41 - 46:40)

*"I was told this was
the best thing that
could happen..."*

Lorraine Allard

Summary

In response to public outrage after the violence of "Kristallnacht," the British government quickly establishes the Kindertransport program, and the first groups of children leave German territories. Rescuers recall their participation in this effort. The Kinder describe their parents' painful decisions to send them to Great Britain and their own efforts to understand their situations. They describe their journey to an unknown future and their arrival in Great Britain.



Lorraine Allard, age 14, with parents in Germany

A Parent's Choice

The first part of this section focuses on the extremely difficult choice that many children's parents had to make—whether to send their children to an unknown place and a chance of safety, uncertain whether they would ever see them again. In class, discuss the different choices that the parents made and the historical factors that contributed to the decisions. Under what circumstances might parents or guardians send a child away?

Lore Segal: "My father said, 'Mommy and I cannot leave, but you're going to leave.' I said, 'What do you mean, I'm going to leave?' 'You're going to England,' he said. 'When?' 'Thursday,' he said."

Franzi Groszmann (Lore Segal's mother): "I knew that I ought to want to send her away, but I couldn't imagine to give permission for her to go. My husband said, 'She must go.' And he didn't listen to me. He just arranged everything for her. And I had to give in, and I saw in the end that he was right. But the hurt is unbelievable. That cannot be described."

Eva Hayman: "So now both of us [she and her sister] would go. And that must have been very hard. That would have been hard to decide that we both go."

Lory Cahn: "And I held my hands and I said, 'I have to let go! I have to let go!' 'No, no, no, no! I don't want you to go!'...And he took me by my hands and he pulled me out of the window."



Create a chart illustrating how a choice or succession of choices in your life, in current events, or in history determined a consequence. Describe how a different action would have altered the outcome. At home, interview a parent or guardian about a difficult decision he or she has had to make in your upbringing.

A Nation's Choice

In 1938, the world community was faced with a dilemma: What was the appropriate response to the German government's ruthless treatment of the Jewish population under its control? Discuss this question as a class, and establish criteria for deciding when a nation should come to the defense of a people persecuted by another government. Sociologist Helen Fein has suggested that people have a "universe of common obligation"—those within such groups as family, community, school, or nation to whom we feel a sense of responsibility. Outside the "universe of common obligation" are those people toward whom we feel no responsibility. How is this applicable to our understanding of why Great Britain received the Kindertransport and why the Wagner-Rogers Bill (*see box on page 13*) did not succeed? The class should consider the following quotations from Norbert Wollheim and Nicholas Winton in its discussion of these questions.

Norbert Wollheim: "My youth leader said, 'Call Otto Hirsch, there is a job for you to be done.' So I went and saw him and he said, 'Listen, I have a request. We have been informed that the British government, the House of Commons, had discussed the destiny of Jews in Germany after all this publicity, and they are disgusted. They came to the conclusion to accept children for a certain time. We have an office for the operations. See what you can do.'"


Nicholas Winton: "We had to produce somebody who'd guarantee 50 pounds against their re-emigration, which I suppose is about a thousand pounds [approximately \$1,500] today. It was quite a lot of money. And then I had to find a family who'd take each individual child. It certainly wasn't easy, but it wasn't that difficult. I mean, it's more easy to get somebody to take a child than to take a grown-up. I tried to get America involved and wrote to a lot of the senators and got a lot of answers saying how concerned they were and all the various reasons why they couldn't do anything."



Kind plays violin on the train

Group Assignment:

Split the class into debate groups to argue for and against the Wagner-Rogers Bill (*see box on page 13*), which, if passed, might have created a U.S. equivalent of the Kindertransport. Have students conduct their own research to gain an understanding of the quotas set by the U.S. Immigration Laws of 1921, 1924, and 1929. Students should also become familiar with the reasons given at the time by the U.S. government and the general public for restricting entrance to refugees of all ages. The students may choose to compare and contrast this situation with that in Great Britain, including the British government's decision to accept the children of the Kindertransport.

 Alternatively, students may conduct the above research and use the findings to write a persuasive letter to one of the then-senators to whom Nicholas Winton might have been referring in his quotation at left. In the letter, argue for or against the Wagner-Rogers Bill. When writing the letter, students should consider the opposing arguments and attempt to refute them.

What Did They Take?

The German government limited the children traveling on the Kindertransport to one suitcase and one backpack, containing only items for personal use. No jewelry, items of financial value, musical instruments, cameras, or money in excess of 10 *Reichsmarks* (less than \$50 in today's currency) were allowed. What possible reasons might the German government have had for imposing these limitations? How did these limitations impact the *Kinder*? What did the *Kinder* pack that would bring comfort and a connection to their home and family? Ask students to select an example from the film of an object that the *Kinder* chose to take on their journey and to describe to the class why it seemed to hold particular significance.

"In hindsight, I think my sister and I, we owe my father's death that we have survived."

Ursula Rosenfeld



Shoes worn by two-year-old Esther Rosenfeld Starobin on the Kindertransport

“The children went with the hope that the parents would follow.... I did not realize, and I could never realize, that only a year and a half later, from the same railway station, trains would go in the other directions to Hitler’s slaughterhouses.”

Norbert Wollheim

Ursula Rosenfeld: “My mother prepared all our clothes, lovingly embroidered our names in every piece of clothing, even every handkerchief, every sock, everything.”

Lory Cahn: “I think I took my teddy bear. And, my mother always slept on a little pillow on top of her big pillow. And I asked her whether I could take that with me. So she said, ‘Sure.’”

Using the stories you have heard in the film, reflect on the meaning of home. What parts of home can and cannot be taken with you? In a poem, a story, or another medium of creative expression, write about the ways in which refugees in the past, as well as today, have attempted to create home in a new place.

Separation

Parents sending their children on the Kindertransport had to quickly prepare them for an indefinite separation. They tried to ease the pain by organizing clothes for them to take, giving them advice, and reassuring them. In the words of Bertha Leverton, “Every parent promised their child, we will soon come and follow. How otherwise did the parents get the little children onto the trains?” How did the “unknown” affect the children’s reaction to the situation? What do the responses of Hedy and Inge reveal about the ways people react to the trauma of separation?

Hedy Epstein: “I said to my parents, ‘I’m really a “Gypsy” child, and you’re now trying to get rid of me. You adopted me, and now you no longer want me.’ I must have really deeply, deeply hurt my parents.”

Eva Hayman: “We had about a fortnight [two weeks] before we left. And into that fortnight, both mother and father were trying to give the instructions, the guidance that they hoped to have their whole life to give.”

Inge Sadan: “When my sister and brother left, all the other parents were crying bitterly, and I was so afraid. I didn’t want my mother to cry because she was a very strong person, and I thought if she cries, then terrible things will happen. And I kept looking at her, and I said, ‘Don’t cry. Don’t cry. You won’t cry.’ And she didn’t.”

Write about a time when you departed from a place that was very important to you. What and who made it difficult to leave? Consider the lessons or values your parents, guardians, or friends have taught you throughout your life. What qualities in those people do you appreciate, do you take for granted? How have they prepared you to face the world? How might you offer a tribute to one of these individuals?

Kindertransport packing list

Eigentum des Auswanderers: <i>Julius Friedman</i> (Name)					
Lfd. Nr.	Stück	Art	Zeitpunkt der Anschaffung	Wert der nach 1.1.35 erworbenen Gegenstände	Bemerkungen
1	1	Ganze Anzüge od. Kleider			
2	1	Schürzen			
3	2	Pullover			
4	1	Weste			
5	3	Hosen			
6	1	Jacken			
7	2	Nachtkleider			
8	1	Pyjamas			
9	4	Tagkleider			
10	1	Hemdchen			
11	6	Unterhosen			
12					



Eva Hayman (left) and
Vera Gissing with their father
in Czechoslovakia

Discussion: Part 3

Into the Arms of Strangers

(46:40 - 1:09:19)

Summary

Once in Great Britain, the Kinder attempt to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and to living without their families. While all of them adjust in their own ways to their new lives, some of them turn to address the challenge of rescuing their families from German control.

Cultural Dislocation

After arriving in England, the *Kinder* encountered a variety of cultural and economic differences. As a class, read the background history on pages 12-13 and discuss the implications of these differences. What new and different challenges did the *Kinder* face in fitting in and adapting to their foster homes or hostels? What meaning do specific items of food, clothing, and language bring to a sense of place, and what does it mean to be different? Consider the quotations below. Why are these details significant to them?

Bertha Leverton: “The culture shock was very great. And also the fact that my clothes were better than hers. And she took great exception to that. And she took the clothes and all.”

Jack Hellman: “When it was time for dinner, they said, ‘We’ll see you tomorrow.’ I was so excited—I was absolutely so exuberant, I ran to my house mother and told her, ‘Somebody who’s not Jewish wants to see me tomorrow.’”

Lorraine Allard: “They didn’t speak one word of German, and I didn’t speak one word of English.... I went up to her and put my arms around her and she pushed me away. And the words were ‘That’s sissy.’”

Kurt Fuchel: “And then the family got together for a chicken dinner, and that I remember—that’s a language I could understand. And I started to feel more at ease.”



Kurt Fuchel (left) and John Cohen,
Norwich, England

Individual Assignment:

Write a letter introducing your own family to an unknown child from another culture who is coming to live with you for an extended stay. Address the following issues in your letter: Would it be easy or difficult for this child to fit into your home or community, and why? What will he or she have to know to feel at home? Are there things such as food, clothing, language, customs, or music that are unique to your family or that reflect the place in which you live? What aspects of your home and family would likely be similar to those of your visitor's?



Write about a time when you traveled. What items such as food, clothing, language, customs, or music did you notice? Could people distinguish you as a visitor? Why or why not?

On the Shoulders of Children

In Part 2 of the film, Lore Segal says, “Before long, I had a list of people who I, at 10 years old, had promised to save from Hitler.” In the context of the Holocaust and World War II, people made decisions and relied on one another in ways that might seem unthinkable today. Though the children were safe in England, they still found themselves struggling against greater forces—circumstances well beyond their years. Discuss the quotations below. How do Lore, Lorraine, and Bertha challenge expectations of what it means to be a child? Create a working definition of “hero.” Do

their efforts qualify them as “heroes”? Are they any less heroic if their attempts were ultimately unsuccessful? Cite examples in the film of adults who stepped forward to help the children’s parents or other family members. At what points did the innocence of childhood end for the *Kinder*? When did the responsibility of adulthood begin?

Lore Segal: “I think I had a sense...while I was playing, while I was laughing, that was the moment in which I could’ve been and should’ve been doing something about this demand on me that I should bring my parents out.”

Lorraine Allard: “My biggest problem was to try and get my parents out and that was difficult because it was either finding them a job, and bearing in mind my father’s age, or getting this hundred-pound [\$3,000 in today’s currency] guarantee, which was just nowhere to be seen. I proceeded to find large houses and knock at the door to find out whether I could get them a job—my mother as cook, bottle-washer, my father as gardener—anything just to get them out.”

Bertha Leverton: “...I said to him, ‘Because Inge has red hair, I leave her at home in Germany?’ ...And he calmed down in the end, and he did accept her into the house.”

Parenting from Afar

Choose students to read each excerpt of letters from parents to their children who had been sent away to Great Britain. Reflect as a class about what is explicitly said and what is *implicitly*, but not directly, said.

Marietta Ryba’s mother: “As you can well imagine, you have been constantly in our thoughts. We still see your face before us in that window of the railway carriage.”


Sylva Avramovici’s father: “My dearest little mouse, hopefully this letter will reach you already in your new home, where you surely will enjoy your stay. Be a very good little girl. Be obedient.”

Sylva Avramovici’s mother: “I was very happy with your dear little letter, only there shouldn’t be so many spelling errors!”

Lilly Lampert’s mother: “If only I could see you just for a tiny moment. But as it is, I can only write letters full of longing.”

Lorraine Allard’s mother: “I keep running to the mailbox. Every line from you overwhelms me. Every day I thank God that you are in such good hands. But please show your gratefulness.”

Lorraine Allard’s father: “Your letter of yesterday was again so sweet and written with so much love that tears came running down your mommy’s face. Your writing is so natural, it makes me imagine that you’re standing before me.”

 Write a letter to a parent or guardian, or to someone who is important to you who lives far away. Once you have completed this letter, shorten it to 25 words, including salutation and closing—the limit on the postcards that the Red Cross could deliver during the war. Can you convey the same message? How does it change?



Kind arriving at Harwich, England, December 1938

Letter to Sylva from her “Mutti”

Handwritten letter in German:
 Liebe Sylva! Mag, 14. Aug.
 Teile Dir mit, dass wir jetzt
 Haus fahren. Ich hoffe, dass Du
 Schatz gut geht und wir bald
 Kissen hoch herrscht Mutti



Sylva Avramovici, age 10

Discussion: Part 4

War and Deportation

(1:09:19 - 1:35:25)

Summary

The war begins, and the lives of the Kinder are transformed yet again. Some are relocated for their own protection; Alex Gordon is arrested and deported as an “enemy alien.” For many children, the war shatters the hopes of reunion with their parents. The Jewish community left behind in Germany and German territories is ravaged by the Nazi regime, and news begins to reach the Kinder. As the years go by, the children continue to assimilate into British culture, and some join the war effort.

Loss

The quotations below reveal the reactions by the *Kinder* to the loss of parents or of home. As a class, silently read the quotations and then discuss the different ways in which the children dealt with trauma and irrevocable loss. Think about the ways we all react to the loss of a home, a loved one, or anything else that we value.

Lorraine Allard: “Everything we’d ever talked about or written about it, thought about it, had all collapsed. Everything had collapsed. I think I cried for, not weeks, not months, I cried for years.”

Hedy Epstein: “She’s saying that she’s traveling to the east, and is saying a very final goodbye to me. But for many, many, many years, I mean, I would see the postcard in front of me, and I would see she’s saying ‘traveling to the east,’ and yet I would understand that she’s saying that she’s traveling in an easterly direction. And then I would say to myself, ‘Well, maybe she’s going back [home] to Kippenheim, and maybe that’s good.’ And the final goodbye, I didn’t understand.”

Mariam Cohen: “He [Kurt] didn’t cry, not at all—not at all. Couldn’t understand it. Just once—they used to like to listen to some programs on the wireless, and he used to come sit on my knee. And there was something—something in the news. I just heard him once go—you know, a little sob and that was all.”

Kurt Fuchel: “The other signs that I had a lot inside me was that I’ve always had some intestinal problems—until I went in the army, and then I had the most terrible food, and felt fine.”

Robert Sugar: “I went to school, and a fellow came up to me and he said, ‘Who are you?’ And I just knocked him down.”

Lore Segal: “I have an analogy for this. When all of us have had the experience of finding a bird with a broken wing, and you pick up this bird and you hold it in your hand. And you think it’s going to sit there, quietly, sweetly with its warm feathers and be darling. It’s not. What it does is immediately to use its muscles, and it’s a very uncomfortable thing to hold in your hand because there’s this fluttering. What he wants is to get away. It may need you to hold it and to nurse it, but what he wants is to get the heck out of there. And I think that’s what we were like. Certainly, that’s what I was like. I was not nice to have around.”




Theresienstadt

“I never dreamt that one could be so lonely and go on living with this constant fear for our loved ones.”

Eva Hayman

Deported

 Consider your reaction to a personal loss and the various ways you tried to understand that loss. Did the people around you know what you were experiencing? How did their reaction contribute to what you were feeling? Create an analogy like Lore Segal's that illuminates or clarifies your own experience.

*"I felt like everybody else.
The people on my left,
the people on my right—
we were all the same."*

Lorraine Allard

Deportation

While some *Kinder* were transported from the cities to protect them from air raids, Alex Gordon was among others who were forcibly relocated for an entirely different reason. In class, discuss the reasons for Alex's arrest and his description of life on the HMT *Dunera*.

Alex Gordon: "We had no idea where we were going, except it must have been Australia. We were starving daily. They were treating us like pigs. Being hungry every day, people were lining up in the kitchen to get an empty pot, you know, where the jam was, just to scrape it out—and having one slice of bread.... Years later I'm looking at it—this didn't happen to me—it must have been somebody else because it was horrible, too horrible, to describe."

Individual Assignment:

Write a persuasive essay arguing against or in defense of the British government's internment and relocation of "enemy aliens." Research the arrest and forced internment of Japanese-Americans from the West Coast of the United States during World War II. Compare and contrast the motivations of the governments, public response in the two countries, and the outcomes of both acts of internment.

Work of Importance

As the war progressed, approximately 1,000 German and Austrian teenagers served in the British armed forces, including combat units. Several dozen joined elite formations such as the Special Forces where their German-language skills could be put to good use. Lorraine Allard and Alex Gordon were among the *Kinder* who enlisted; Eva Hayman became a nurse. As a class, discuss the different reasons that the children had for serving Great Britain during the war. Why did Alex, specifically, decide to fight for the nation, given his treatment on the HMT *Dunera*? (See the previous discussion topic.) How does the war contribute to the desire to do, as Lorraine Allard says, "work of importance"? What are the students' reasons for contributing to work in their own communities and how do they compare or contrast with the reasons given in the film testimonies and the quotations below? How are they similar to or different from the quotations of Norbert Wollheim and Nicholas Winton in Part 2? (See page 21.)

Alex Gordon: "Those who want to go back to England, they would send back under one condition: they would join the army. I was anxious to get into this. First of all, I hated the Germans. I hated their guts, and I wanted to be part of it. Besides, what was I going to do in Australia? Sit there in Australia throughout the whole war? God forbid."

Lorraine Allard: "When I was 18, I had to do either work of importance or join the forces. And I decided to join the forces. And I also felt I was saying thank you to England for saving my life."

Eva Hayman: "I wanted to do something to help finish the war, and I said I wanted to go [into] nursing."



Alexander Gordon, age 23, Sergeant, British Army, occupied Germany



Lorraine Allard in the ATS, Oxford Circus, London, 1945

Discussion: Part 5

None to Comfort Them

(1:35:25 - 1:57:12)

Summary

V-E (“Victory in Europe”) Day in May 1945 is a moment of great joy. For most Kinder, however, the end of the war is the beginning of the end of hope for reunion with their families. Some family members have survived, but most Kinder eventually learn that they have lost their parents, their families, their homes, and many traces of their early childhood. In the film, the Kinder also assess what has become of their own lives and move forward into the future.

Hope and Acceptance

After reading the following quotations, discuss as a class the meaning of hope and the anxiety the *Kinder* experienced not knowing what happened to their family members. Why is it important to know? Compare and contrast the ways in which the *Kinder* learned about their parents’ deaths. How might the manner in which they heard the news about their parents’ fate influence their ability to accept their loss?



Eva and Vera’s parents, Irma and Karel Diamant, photographed after the girls’ departure

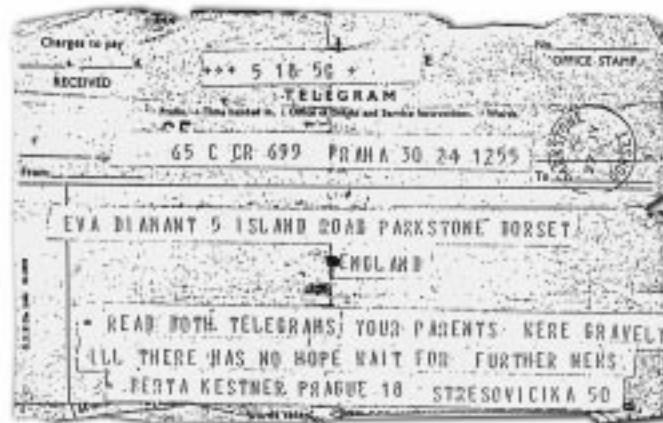
“I remember V-E Day very clearly. It was just wonderful, wonderful.... I went straight back and wrote to both of them...in Theresienstadt. The letters were returned to me about three, four months later—took a long time. All it said on the back: ‘Deported to Auschwitz, October ’44.’”

Lorraine Allard

Ursula Rosenfeld: “Eventually we got a letter from [the Red Cross] to say my mother had been killed in Minsk, in Russia, where she was deported. It’s very hard to come to terms with when you’ve always had that hope. And, of course, we’ve had no—no grave really, no parting, no end, no funeral, no...it’s that sort of faint feeling in the air of hope, and that hope suddenly fading.”

Eva Hayman: “I was called to the telephone and there was a telegram for me. I asked her, would she read it? And so she read over the telephone: ‘Your parents were gravely ill. There was no hope. Wait for further news.’ ...It was such a shock. Suddenly the future which we had always painted wasn’t there. There was no future. There was just an emptiness.”

Hedy Epstein: “I knew my parents didn’t survive, but...as long as I didn’t go back [home] to Kippenheim, I could still say, well, that maybe they’re back in Kippenheim. Which doesn’t really make a lot of sense, but I think it was just my survival mechanism. I just wasn’t ready yet to accept the fact that I no longer had parents, that I hadn’t had parents for a long time.”



Telegram to Eva Hayman, 1945

Reunions

After discussing the parent-child reunions described in the film, consider what contributed to the complex reactions of Kurt and Inge to their parents' return. In a situation like Inge's or Kurt's, what has changed? What makes it difficult to recreate circumstances from a time or place in the past?

Inge Sadan: "After about two years of not hearing from our parents, life sort of stretched on endlessly, but suddenly we heard that our parents had reached Spain.... The telegram said, 'Arriving Friday, 4:45.' That was all.... I remember rushing down to meet them and knew they were my parents, but it wasn't the same parents I'd left. They were much older, and they were worn out. And we, obviously, we weren't the same children they'd sent off."

Mariam Cohen: "We met, and Kurt's father, who was more demonstrative than the mother, put his hand through Kurt's curls, and Kurt went like that and gave him a— a wallop. And my husband said, 'Don't you ever do that again, Kurt. Your father is showing you—you know, his affection.'"

Kurt Fuchel: "My parents let go of a seven-year-old, and got back a 16-year-old. And my mother, especially, wanted to carry on where she'd left off. And a 16-year-old doesn't like to be treated like a seven-year-old. So when we got back to France things were very difficult. 'Course, I'm very lucky. I mean, I realize this: whereas most of the *Kinder* never saw their parents again, I not only had mine back, but another set of parents as well. What more could one ask for?"



Bertha Leverton (right), with sister Inge, brother Theo, and parents in Munich, 1935

Remembering

In the quotations below, Hedy Epstein and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder speak of two different kinds of remembering. What is the implication of each kind of memory, for an individual and for society? What do the quotations indicate about our responsibility to remember?

Hedy Epstein: "I certainly do my share of remembering, but remembering also has to have a present and a future perspective. You can't just stop at remembering. I don't think I ever made a conscious decision to devote myself to human rights and social-justice issues. Someone helped me. I can't pay back or thank some of the people who helped me, but I can do something for other people."

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder: "In those days, murderers were ruling Germany; today, state and society join together in opposing the neo-Nazi gangs. But that does not mean we are exempt from our duty to remember. Nobody is asking those generations born after the war to feel guilty about our history. But still the young people should learn to deal with the present, and the future, by understanding the past."

"Survival is an accident."

Norbert Wollheim

Kurt Fuchel, age 18, with mother and father, Toulouse, France, 1949



Individual Assignment:

Discuss an event in U.S. history that might be painful for us to remember as a society. Propose a plan through which your class or your school might remember the past by taking action to help those in need today.



Ursula Rosenfeld (left) with sister Hella

"I never belonged when I was a child. I wanted somewhere to find roots. I feel in the latter years of my life that I've been accepted. Nobody's ever said to me, 'You weren't born in this country.' I was entirely accepted as everyone else, and I gradually felt I had somewhere I belonged."

Ursula Rosenfeld

Discussion: In Retrospect

Living with the Past

(After Viewing the Film)

"A Tiny Glimmer of Hope"

Sara Bloomfield, the director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., described the story of the Kindertransport as "a tiny glimmer of hope during an enormous catastrophe. That it happened is cause for hope; that it was so tiny is cause for concern." History is not inevitable; it is determined by choices made by people and their government. What does the story of the Kindertransport convey about the importance of the choices made by individuals and nations currently affecting the lives of people in need?

Mariam Cohen: "You felt you wanted to do something.... And then some photographs were handed around, and I remember there were some boy twins. Oh, my heart ached, but, well, we couldn't afford it in those days. We didn't know what was going to happen, you know. So that's when we took Kurt."

Jack Hellman: "And I said, 'Uncle Paul, you've got to get my parents out of Germany.' He says, 'I can't do it.' After me being so insistent, he finally said, 'I'll give him an affidavit if he has a working permit.'"

Jack Hellman: "I said to him, 'Baron Rothschild, my father's cousin will give him and my mother a visa providing he has a working permit.' Without hesitation, he said to me, 'Would he work on a chicken farm?' I said, 'He'll do anything.' He went to a notary, which wasn't terribly far, but—and made out a working permit for my parents."

Lore Segal: "Nevertheless, they did, as I say, what most of us don't do, which is to burden the household—the kitchens, and the bedroom, and the living room—with this little foreigner."



With the help of your teacher or librarian, research historical incidents in the United States or the world in which a tiny glimmer of hope existed during an enormous catastrophe. Describe what made it a glimmer of hope, the conditions from which it arose, and the impact it had. In what ways did it benefit individuals and/or the world? How did it outlive the crisis, and why was it able to do so?

Actions and Consequences

The Talmud, commentary on the Bible, states, "Whoever saves one life, saves a world entire." As a class or individually, identify some recent examples of choices made by individuals or groups that follow this same principle. What action can you take today that would make a positive difference in the life of another? Might you or your family take in a child? What circumstances would help facilitate this choice? Why are the events in this film significant, and what implications do they have for everyday life? Use the following quotations to help formulate your answers to these questions.

On-Screen Text: “The Kindertransport was an act of mercy not equaled anywhere else before the war. Nearly 1,500,000 children perished in the Holocaust.”

Alex Gordon: “And I’ve come to one conclusion: I was meant to survive, not because of myself, but the Jews would survive, and I would bring up another generation and they would live. And I look at my children, and my grandchildren, and I know there was a purpose to my life.”

Eva Hayman: “I ceased to be a child when I boarded the train in Prague. It’s strange that it’s only six years out of a long life and those six years will affect the rest of your life.”

Inge Sadan: “To be a refugee is the most horrible feeling because you lose your family, you lose your home, you’re also without an identity. Suddenly you’re a nothing. You are just reliant on other people’s good nature and help and understanding. And that’s why I think, living in Israel, I feel for the new immigrants. I feel for the Russians, and the Ethiopians, and anybody who’s new, especially if they come without their families. Then, you know, if I can do anything, I do it.”


Lorraine Allard: “He says, ‘Anything you haven’t had, you’ve got now,’ which is so true. And I’m very grateful and very proud of the whole family.”



Franzi Groszmann, Lore Segal, and Lore’s grandson Benjamin, New York, 1999

“It seems to me it was a gift—didn’t think so at the time.”

Lore Segal

 Despite the tragic consequences of the Holocaust for the children of the Kindertransport, the reflections of those at the end of the film indicate that they were able not only to move forward with their lives but also to find ways to use their experiences as a basis for positive change for themselves and other people. How did they accomplish this? Write about a person who has responded to difficult circumstances and positively affected his or her life or the lives of others. Describe the actions that were taken, and why they cause this specific person to stand out in your mind.

“Go Forth...and Be a Blessing”

The children of the Kindertransport were given the opportunity by the parents, rescuers, and foster parents to “Go forth...and be a blessing,” as the book of Genesis says. How have the individuals in the film done that? Many people took great risks and made tremendous sacrifices to ensure the children’s survival. In closing, consider the following questions: Who are the people in your life who have played a role in ensuring your safety and well-being? What “gifts” have you been given by your family or friends that will allow you to make the most of your own life?



Lorraine Allard with grandchildren (left to right), Jonathan, Georgina Lore, and Andrew, London, 1999

Timeline

1933	January 30	Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
	February 28	The Nazi government of Germany suspends constitutionally protected freedoms, including freedom of speech, assembly, and press.
	April 1	The Nazi Party declares a nationwide boycott of Jewish-owned businesses in Germany.
	April 7	The German government enacts a new law excluding most “non-Aryans” from government employment, prompting the subsequent firing of Jewish civil servants, including university professors and school teachers.
	May 10	On Hitler’s hundredth day in office, students and many of their professors enter libraries and bookstores in cities throughout Germany, carting away books by Jewish authors, or non-Jews deemed “un-German,” for book burnings in cities and towns across Germany.
1935	September 15	The German government passes the Nuremberg Laws, which deprive Jews of citizenship and forbid marriage between Jews and non-Jews. The laws define Jews biologically—based on the religion of their grandparents rather than their own religious practices or identity.
1938	March 13	Germany occupies Austria and proclaims the union (“Anschluss”) of the two countries.
	July 6-15	Representatives from 32 countries meet at Evian, France, to discuss refugee policies. All countries but one—the Dominican Republic—refuse to relax immigration standards.
	October 1	The German army enters the Sudetenland, a largely German-speaking region of neighboring Czechoslovakia. The occupation follows the Munich agreement, in which Great Britain and France cede the territory in exchange for Hitler’s promise of an end to territorial ambition. Jews begin fleeing to unoccupied portions of Czechoslovakia.
	November 9-10	The German government instigates a nationwide series of anti-Jewish pogroms called “Kristallnacht.” (See box on page 10.)
	November 15	Jewish children are officially expelled from public schools, forcing the creation of segregated Jewish schools.
	November 21	The British House of Commons approves the Kindertransport program. (See pages 11-13.)
	December 1	The first Kindertransport departs from Berlin, Germany.
	December 10	The first Kindertransport departs from Vienna, Austria (now part of greater Germany).
1939	February 9	U.S. Senator Robert Wagner and Representative Edith Rogers introduce a bill to permit 20,000 refugee children from Germany to enter the United States. This bill will ultimately die in committee. (See box on page 13.)
	March 14	Germany initiates the partition of Czechoslovakia and occupies the western portion of the country. Kindertransport organizers begin plans to rescue Jewish children from the city of Prague.
	May 17	The British government issues the White Paper of 1939, placing severe limitations on Jewish immigration to Palestine. No more than 15,000 Jews will be allowed to immigrate to Palestine each year for the next five years. For most of the Jewish population of Europe, one of the most promising avenues of escape is effectively closed.

1939	September 1	Germany invades Poland.
	September 1	The last Kindertransport departs from Germany.
	September 3	Great Britain, France, and other countries declare war on Germany.
1940	April 9-June 26	The German army invades and defeats Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and France.
	May-June	The British government orders the internment of refugees between the ages of 16 and 70 from enemy countries, including Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria.
	May 14	The last Kindertransport departs the Netherlands as the Dutch army surrenders to German forces.
	July 10	The HMT <i>Dunera</i> sails from Liverpool, England.
	September 6	The HMT <i>Dunera</i> arrives in Sydney, Australia.
	November 14	The German <i>Luftwaffe</i> (air force) begins the massive bombing of Great Britain known as the “Blitz.”
1941	June 22	Germany invades the Soviet Union. The German troops are accompanied by mobile killing units who murder Jews, Roma (“Gypsies”), Communists, and others in the conquered regions.
	December 7	Japanese airplanes bomb Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, prompting the United States to enter the war on the side of Great Britain.
	December 8	The first Jewish prisoners to be systematically murdered by poison gas are killed at the Nazi death camp known as Chelmno.
1942	January	German SS and state officials convene the Wannsee Conference to coordinate the “Final Solution”—the German plan to systematically murder the Jews of Europe by deporting them to extermination camps, already under construction.
	February-July	The Nazis begin operating the gas chambers of the Auschwitz, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka death camps, the chief apparatus by which millions of Jews will be killed over the next three years.
1945	January 27	With the German army in retreat, Soviet troops liberate the Auschwitz concentration camp and its remaining prisoners.
	April 15	British forces liberate Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.
	May 7	Germany surrenders to the Allies in the west.
	May 9	Germany surrenders to the Allies in the east; V-E (“Victory in Europe”) Day is proclaimed.



Glossary

Anschluss: German word meaning “union,” designating the incorporation of Austria into Germany on March 13, 1938.

Antisemitism: The hatred or persecution of Jews.

“Aryan”: An idealized race of people which the Nazis glorified as superior to other races. In Nazi ideology, the “Aryans” were the only suitable people to be members of the German “master race.”

Auschwitz: The Nazis’ largest concentration camp. Established in German-occupied Poland in 1940, it grew to include a labor camp, Buna-Monowitz, and the death camp known as Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Nazis murdered more than 1.2 million people at Auschwitz.

Bar Mitzvah: Traditional ceremony recognizing that a 13-year-old Jewish boy has attained the age of religious duty and responsibility.

Bergen-Belsen: Nazi concentration and transit camp to which German officers marched more than 100,000 prisoners and abandoned them to die in the last weeks of the war.

Buchenwald: A major Nazi concentration camp established in 1937 in north-central Germany. In November 1938, 10,000 Jews arrested during and after *Kristallnacht* were interned at Buchenwald.

Evian Conference: International conference held in July 1938 to discuss the plight of refugees from Nazi persecution. (See page 10.)

Home Secretary: The British state secretary responsible for internal affairs, including immigration and constitutional issues.

HMT Dunera: Ship on which the British government deported “enemy aliens” to Australia, under inhumane conditions, in July 1940.

“*Kristallnacht*”: Brutal anti-Jewish pogrom on the night of November 9-10, 1938. (See box on page 10.)

Pogrom: An organized attack on a minority group, often encouraged by a government or other official organization.

Race: Commonly used to refer to a group of people related by common descent, blood, or heredity. Over the last century, race has been largely dismissed as a scientifically meaningless concept.

Reich: German word for “empire” and “realm.” The term “Third Reich” was used by Nazi leaders to create a sense of continuity with two previous German empires.

SA: Short for the German word *Sturmabteilung*, which means Storm Troopers. These military units of the Nazi Party, also known as “Brownshirts,” facilitated Adolf Hitler’s rise to power.

SS: Short for the German word *Schutzstaffel*, which means Protection Squad. The SS formed in 1925 as Adolf Hitler’s personal bodyguard unit and grew into the fundamental apparatus through which the Nazis perpetrated and supervised the Holocaust and other campaigns of terror.

Theresienstadt: Concentration and transit camp established in 1941 near Prague. The Nazis used this camp and its prisoners as a propaganda device, creating the illusion of a “model Jewish settlement.” Tens of thousands of Jews died there or were deported from there to death camps in occupied Poland.

Wagner-Rogers Bill: Failed 1939 congressional legislation that proposed to admit 20,000 refugees into the United States. (See box on page 13.)

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Additional Resources

Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport Website **www.intothearmsofstrangers.com**

The website for the film provides further resources, including documents, correspondence, film footage, photographs, historical background, and excerpts from interviews. Supplementary materials on the making of the film are also available.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum **100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW** **Washington, D.C. 20024**

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., has created a resource guide for educators entitled *Teaching about the Holocaust: A Resource Book for Educators*, which includes helpful guidelines, bibliographies, videographies, historical information, and other materials. To order or for further information on the Museum and its programs, please call (202) 488-0400 or visit www.ushmm.org.

Kindertransport Association, Inc. (KTA) **www.kindertransport.org**

The Kindertransport Association is a North American organization of Kindertransport survivors and subsequent generations. The KTA publishes a quarterly journal entitled *The Kinder Link*, and sponsors regional informational and social gatherings. Its speakers' bureau provides materials and speakers for public forums.

Dunera News

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Kindertransport Journey: Memory into History

KTA Visual Exhibit, designed and produced by Robert Sugar

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*“Nevertheless they did, as I say, what most of us don’t do,
which is to burden the household—the kitchens, and the bedroom,
and the living room—with this little foreigner.”*

Lore Segal



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PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
 Thematic Elements

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