

SUITCASE: EDUCATION BOOKLET

What to take.

12 dresses	✓	1 toothbrush	✓
2 coats	✓	1 soap	✓
2 pullovers	✓	1 tube of toothpaste	✓
1 waistcoat	✓	1 flannel	✓
12 trousers	✓	2 pairs of shoelaces (black and brown)	✓
2 jackets	✓	1 folder with letter paper and pencil	✓
8 day shirts	✓	1 fountain pen	✓
7 nightdresses	✓	1 lucky charm bracelet, white alloy	✓
1 pyjama	✓	1 photo album	✓
2 aprons	✓	1 family register	✓
3 pairs of shoes	✓	1 picture book	✓
1 pair of slippers	✓	1 porcelain toy	✓
6 pairs of tights	✓	1 puppet	✓
6 pairs of socks	✓		
2 pairs of gloves	✓		
18 handkerchiefs	✓		
4 caps	✓		
1 comb or brush	✓		
		Light luggage for travel:	
		school bag with:	
		1 nightdress	✓
		1 towel	✓
		Some fruit	✓

SUITCASE: EDUCATION BOOKLET

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THE EDUCATION BOOKLET

THIS BOOKLET AIMS TO PROVIDE SOME TEACHING IDEAS AND BACKGROUND MATERIAL TO COMPLEMENT THE PERFORMANCES OF 'SUITCASE', A SHOW ABOUT THE KINDERTRANSPORT AT STATIONS AROUND THE U.K.

Each section starts with an image of an object or people, which encapsulates the ideas and content that follow.

Sections include historical context from the period of the play and information about the Kindertransport specifically and about refugees in general. The booklet seeks to draw parallels between important historical events and current issues which the whole world now faces. It includes stories of individuals with close connections to the theme and explanations from 'Suitcase's' deviser and director.

The teaching activities, which are colour coded in blue are just starting points for teachers to follow or adapt to suit their classes and planning requirements. Although the play and the booklet is targeted at KS3 pupils, we believe that they will have relevance and interest for a range of abilities and year groups and the dramatic performance, like all good plays, will have cross curricular resonances for all age groups.

Besides aiding historical enquiry and analysis, the activities also underpin creative approaches to history such as drama, debate, poetry, description and writing in role.

Although the piece is devised, it is based on actual accounts and testimonies from the people involved and from extensive research.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM.

ROS MERKIN: WHY I WROTE 'SUITCASE'

I was brought up by a mother who came to England from Vienna on the Kindertransport, so the story was always part of my life and that of my sister, Jane. She didn't talk about it very often but would sometimes remember little details – a coat specially made in the English style so she would not look out of place, or spending the first few weeks in a hostel in London. But now, the story is a lot more distant. It's not part of people's everyday lives in the way it has been part of mine and many people do not know much, if anything, about it. So the 75th anniversary is a good time to remind people of the time when English people opened their doors to children and invited them to come and stay in their homes. Nobody knew how long it would be for or quite what was going to happen. The arrival of the war meant those children stayed for a long time and many made England their home and the families who took them in became their own families.

But it's not just about reminding people about a moment in our history. The story of children arriving alone is one that is still happening today. Although now they are coming from different places, the story of the Kindertransport has much to tell us about how it might feel to arrive in a country where you don't speak the language and where everything, including the food, is strange. How do we treat the children? Do we want them to come here (in the play, Edith argues that we should look after our own people first)? Would we open our homes to them? How might they be feeling when they arrive?

The 75th anniversary is also the last significant anniversary that many of the Kinder will be able to attend. Many of them are now in their 80s. My mother was born in 1927 and was 10 when she came in December 1938. Today she would be 86. It is one of the last chances we have where they can share their stories in person and some of these are in the play. It is also one of the last chances where they can come to the performance and talk to other people who are also watching.



JANE AND ROS MERKIN

Johanna Hacker was born in Austria in Deutschkreutz (known as Zelem by the Jewish community), on the border with Hungary in 1927. She had two younger sisters - Paula and Melanie - and a baby brother, Max, born in February 1938, just one month before the Nazis marched into Austria. Within weeks, the Jews of Zelem were forced to leave. Very soon after Kristallnacht, in November 1938, Johanna's parents managed to get all three sisters onto one of the first Kindertransports from Vienna to England. Johanna was 10.

Arriving in London on 22nd December during Chanukah - the Jewish festival of lights, the girls spent a few weeks in a hostel in London until 3 separate families were found for them in Sunderland. The family Johanna was placed with wanted her to look after their new baby and she wasn't allowed to go to school when she reached the age of 14. Undaunted, she discovered some cousins who had managed to get to safety in London and at the age of 15 she ran away to join them.

Johanna's parents lived in Vienna until they were deported with Max, who had been too young to accompany the girls on the Kindertransport, to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, in October 1942. Koloman, her father, was sent to Auschwitz in September 1944 and then to Kaufering (a satellite camp of Dachau), where he died in January 1945. Franziska - her mother - and Max were deported to Auschwitz in October 1944 and there is then no further record of them. It is presumed that they were gassed on arrival. In 2010, three Stones of Remembrance in memory of Koloman, Franziska, and Max were placed on the pavement in front of the building they lived in (Grosse Schiffgasse 9). "The Stones of Remembrance mean that as hard as the Nazis tried to wipe our grandparents and uncle from the face of the earth, they now form a permanent part of the fabric of this city." (Ros and Jane Merkin).

You can read more about the Stones of Remembrance project here:
www.steinedererinnerung.net



JOHANNA HACKER 1940



(L TO R) MELANIE, JOHANNA AND PAULA HACKER 1943

ÚSTŘEDNÍ KARTOTÉKA — TRANSPORTY.

Číslo došle do Terezína z různých území

Hacker Max

rodná data *26. 7. 1938*

adresa před deportací _____

Deportace na východ: Číslo *E-359*

dne *23. 11. 1944*

(přesná transportní číslo: *567 - II/14-7*)

111

MAX HACKER DEPORTATION DOCUMENT



STONES OF REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

4217

This document of identity is issued with the approval of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to young persons to be admitted to the United Kingdom for educational purposes under the care of the Inter-Aid Committee for children.

THIS DOCUMENT REQUIRES NO VISA.

PERSONAL PARTICULARS.


1829

Name HACKER MELANIE.

Sex F. Date of Birth 22. 4. 22.

Place Vienna

Full Names and Address of Parents
HACKER. KOLOMAN.
9. Grosse Schiffg.
Vienna II.



ABOVE: ENTRY DOCUMENT TO BRITAIN FOR MELANIE HACKER



LEFT: FRANZISKA AND KOLOMAN HACKER, DEUTSCHKREUTZ, JANUARY 1927

KINDERTRANSPORT

WHAT DOES THE WORD MEAN?

The German word 'Kindertransport' translated literally into English means 'the transportation of children'. It enabled Jewish parents to move their children out of Germany and other Nazi-occupied countries to safety.

WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

On the evening of 9-10th November 1938, Jewish homes, businesses, places of worship and individual Jews were attacked by state-sanctioned civilian and paramilitary terror units in German-occupied territories. This devastation was known as Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. Ten days later a delegation of British Jewish and Quaker leaders appealed in person to the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, and requested that the Government permit the temporary admission of unaccompanied Jewish children into the country.

The British Cabinet debated the issue the next day and subsequently prepared a Bill to present to Parliament. That bill stated that the Government would waive certain immigration requirements to allow the entry into Great Britain of unaccompanied children, ranging from 5 years old up to the age of 17. No limit upon the number of refugees was ever publicly announced, although 5,000 was considered to be a realistic target goal.

Every child would have to have a guarantee of £50 sterling to finance his or her eventual repatriation, as it was expected the children would stay in the country only temporarily.

On 1st December 1938 the first Kinder transport left Berlin with German - Jewish children on board. The first Kinder transport from Austria was 10th December 1938 and the first from Czechoslovakia was March 1939. In the nine months before World War II began, nearly 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish and other children escaped on trains and headed for the freedom of Britain. All hoped it would be a brief separation but for most it was a final farewell. The last train left Germany just two days before the start of the war.

WHAT WAS THE JOURNEY LIKE?

The journey was a frightening experience for many. The children left in trains at night and these trains were grimly sealed. The children had to take trains to Holland so that they would not 'sully' German ports. Their luggage was torn apart by guards searching for valuables. In some cities, parents were not even allowed to say goodbye at the train stations so as to avoid any public spectacle.

In Holland, the trains were met by committees of volunteers, who gave the children refreshments and helped them board the boats taking them to their new homes.

WHEN DID THEY ARRIVE?

The first Kindertransport ferries arrived in Britain in early December 1938, each carrying about 200 children.

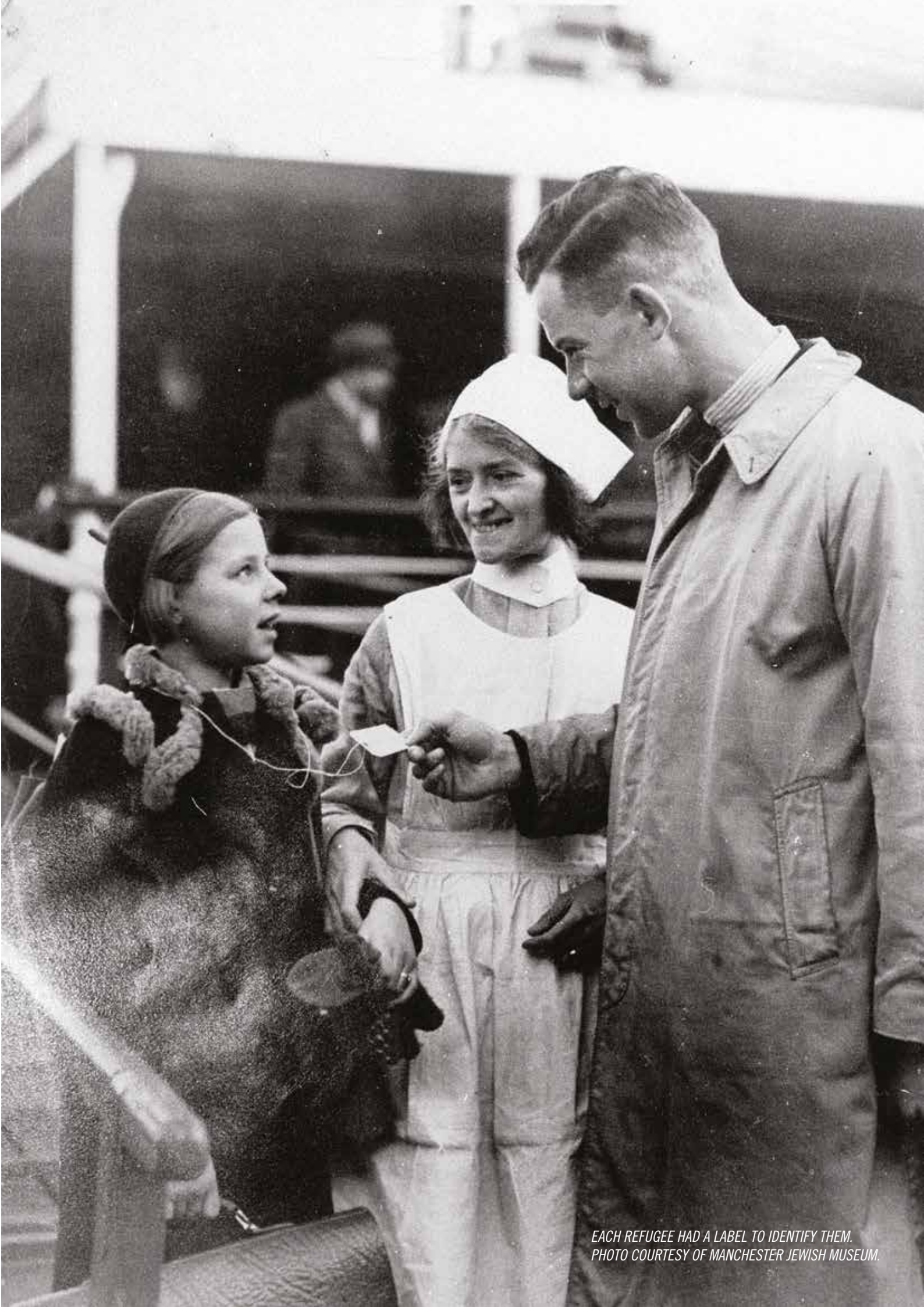
Afterwards, about two transports per week landed until June and July 1939, when they landed daily. The organisation, which found accommodation for the children in Britain, was called the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany (later shortened to the Refugee Children's Movement). The Movement generally billeted or fostered the children with local families, or settled them at hostels or other institutions around the country.

WHAT HAPPENED DURING AND AFTER THE WAR?

In 1940, the British Government ordered the internment of all male 16 to 70 year old refugees from enemy countries. These were so-called friendly enemy aliens. Some of the Kinder who had arrived in earlier years were now young men, and so they were also interned. Approximately 1,000 of these young people were interned in these makeshift internment camps, many on The Isle of Man. Around 400 were transported overseas to Canada and Australia. As the camp internees reached the age of 18, they were offered the chance to do war work or to enter the Army Auxiliary Pioneer Corps. About 1,000 German and Austrian prior-Kinder who reached adulthood went on to serve in the British Armed Forces, including in combat units. Several dozen joined elite formations such as the Special Forces, where their language skills were put to good use during the D-Day Invasion and afterwards, as the Allies progressed into Germany.

British internment of friendly enemy aliens lasted only for a short period, generally a few months, until they were processed by the Government and released.

At the end of the war, children who had arrived on the Kindertransport were desperately trying to find the families they had left behind. Agencies were flooded with requests from Kinder seeking to find their parents, or any surviving member of their family. Some of the children were reunited with their families, who were scattered around the world. However, the majority of the 9,500 children rescued by the Kindertransport never saw their parents again.



EACH REFUGEE HAD A LABEL TO IDENTIFY THEM.
PHOTO COURTESY OF MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM.

TIMELINE

1918

- Germany surrenders and WWI ends.
- Germany signs the armistice at 11am on 11th November and WWI ends.

1919

- Treaty of Versailles is signed.
- Germany is allowed to keep the majority of its territory but, to satisfy France, agrees to swingeing payments in reparation, which it will not be able to meet.
- The German National Socialist Workers' Party (NSDAP or Nazi party) is founded in Munich, one of many political groupings at this time.
- It demands 'the uniting of all Germans within one greater Germany' and insists that only 'persons of German blood' (Aryans) could be nationals.
- Adolf Hitler, a corporal in the Great War, joins, organises and consolidates the party's influence and standing.
- Hitler advocates virulently antisemitic and anti-communist views, combining them under the heading, the 'Jewish-Bolshevik' tyranny.

1923

- France occupies the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland, because of German inability to repay the monies demanded by France at Versailles.
- Hyperinflation occurs in Germany. Britain and America fear German collapse and persuade France to leave the Ruhr.
- Hitler attempts to seize power in Bavaria (the 'Beer Hall Putsch'), with the intention of marching on Berlin and overthrowing the Weimar Republic Government. The attempt fails and Hitler is arrested and imprisoned.
- Hindenberg is elected President of Germany.

1926

- The British political establishment is concerned by the 'rise of the masses'.
- This contributes the ruling elite's wish to see a strong Germany, as a bulwark against Russian style communism.

1929

- The first Labour Government is elected in Britain.
- The Wall Street crash occurs in America. The Great Depression begins.
- The effects of the American Depression are felt across Europe.
- This leads to major gains for the Nazis in the 1930 elections (107 seats in the Reichstag, the German Parliament, making it the second largest party in Germany. In 1928 they only won 12 seats).

1932

- In the New Reichstag elections, the Nazis become the largest party with 230 seats, with increased support from the unemployed, the middle classes and younger people.

1933

- Hitler becomes Chancellor and antisemitism becomes a central plank of his party's policy. On April 1st, an official one-day boycott of Jewish shops and businesses is announced. The Jews are becoming the target of hate.
- The burning of the Reichstag, an act that is blamed on communists but may well have been initiated by Hitler himself, allows Hitler to move against all dissident groups, such as communists and trade unionists, as well as Jews. Civil liberties are abolished and an enabling law gives him supreme powers. Many Germans acquiesce in these actions, as they feel that Hitler has made Germany a confident and proud nation once again after the defeat and humiliation of 1918 and the years that followed.

1934

- Hitler moves against the 'Brown-shirts' who are perceived as a threat to him. This is known as the 'Night of the Long Knives'.

1935

- Marriages between Jews and Aryans are banned by the Nuremberg Laws, which also deprives Jews of citizenship and any rights and responsibilities.

1936

- In the year of the Berlin Olympics, Germany reoccupies the Rhineland. The Western Powers do not intervene.
- Italy and Germany form an alliance (axis).
- Italy and Germany support the fascist general, Franco, as the ruler of Spain.
- France and Britain do not intervene in the Spanish Civil War, although many volunteers fight for the Republican cause.

1938

- Austria is annexed into within the German Reich through the 'Anschluss.'
- Anti-Jewish measures are adopted in Austria.
- Plans are put in place for the 'Aryanisation' of Jewish businesses.
- Western powers start to make efforts to enable Jewish emigration.
- 17,000 Polish Jews are expelled from Germany and left at the Polish border. Poland refuses them entry. In response, a German diplomat in Paris is assassinated by a young Jew. Germany declares it an 'act of war' and unleashes the state sanctioned 'Kristallnacht' (see page 7). This term denotes acts of extreme violence and riot when Jewish individuals, businesses, homes and synagogues were attacked and destroyed.
- More than 1000 synagogues and 7000 business premises are looted and burned, at least 91 are murdered and thousands rounded up and herded off to concentration camps.
- 'Kristallnacht' accelerates efforts to evacuate Jewish children from Germany and Austria. This programme allows only young children to leave providing countries can be found to accept them.
- Britain takes 9,500 unaccompanied refugee children and appeals are made by the BBC for foster homes.
- Germany occupies the Czech Sudetenland. Chamberlain makes his infamous 'Peace in our time' speech on his return from Munich.

1939

- A fascist government is formed in Spain under Franco.
- Germany occupies the rest of Czechoslovakia.
- Italy invades Albania.
- Germany signs a non-aggression pact with Russia.
- Germany invades Poland.
- Britain and France declare war on Germany in September. WWII begins.

1940

- Germany invades and takes over much of western Europe including Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and northern France.
- Winston Churchill becomes leader of the British Government.
- Germany launches an air attack on Great Britain. These attacks last many months. This is known as the Battle of Britain.

1941

- The Japanese attack the US Navy in Pearl Harbor. The next day the US enters World War II on the side of the Allies.

1944

- D-day and the Normandy invasion. Allied forces invade France and push back the Germans.
- The Germans launch a large attack in the Battle of the Bulge. They lose to the Allies sealing the fate of the German Army.

1945

- Adolf Hitler commits suicide as he knows Germany has lost the war.
- Germany surrenders to the Allies.

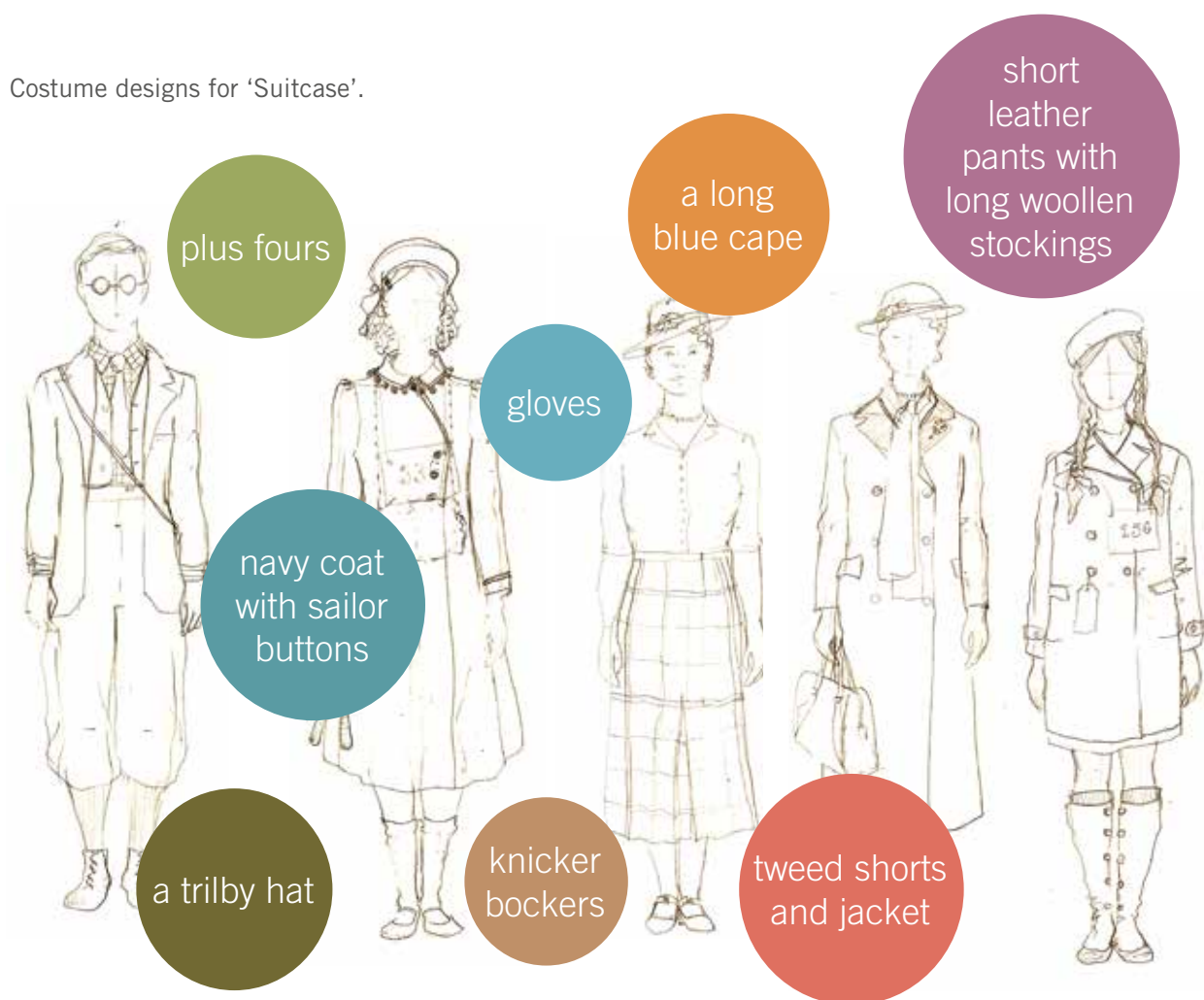
THE PLAY: CHARACTER

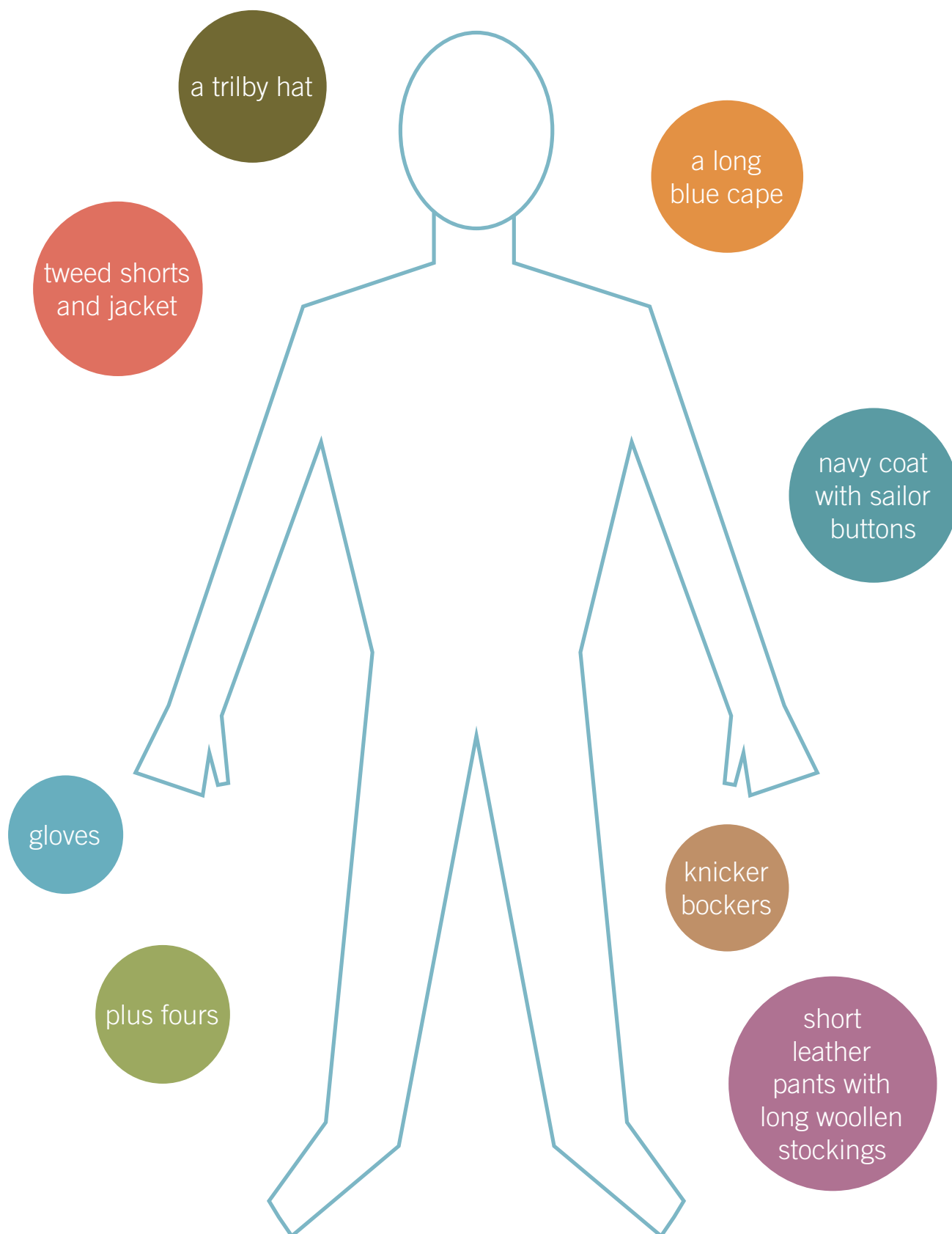
A COSTUME DESIGN

OUR PLAY, SUITCASE, HAS A RANGE OF CHARACTERS, BOTH OLD AND YOUNG, FROM DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, CULTURES AND COUNTRIES. THESE CHARACTERS ARE THRUST TOGETHER BY FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES AND MANY OF THEM WILL BE SHARING HOMES FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

Before they encounter one another, each group has expectations of the new people that they will meet. These colour their preparation and reactions as they come together for the first time. The Kinder were often dressed in their smartest clothes. Contemporary letters and evidence suggest that the following items were typical of the kind of clothes worn by the Kinder: a long blue cape; a trilby hat; navy coat with sailor buttons, short leather pants with long woollen stockings; gloves; knickerbockers; plus fours; tweed shorts and jacket.

Costume designs for 'Suitcase'.





TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- ✓ These Kinder were often from working class backgrounds and the clothes they wore often didn't blend in easily with British fashions of the time. Ask the class to research clothing of the time. The pictures above may help. Encourage the class to design costumes for two children, one German one English, of similar age to show a contrast between them. They can use an outline shape (Role on the Wall) like the one above to draw costumes onto.

B

EXPECTATIONS: THOUGHTS, WORDS AND FEELINGS

HERE ARE EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE PREJUDICES AND CONCERNS VOICED BY CHARACTERS WITHIN THE PLAY AND SOME OF THE RESPONSES TO THEIR FIRST IMPRESSIONS. THESE SHAPE CHARACTERISATION AND ATTITUDES:

Kurt (aged 8) wonders...	- whether Jews can skate in England as they are not allowed to in Germany? He thought the English would all look like Sherlock Holmes.
Eric's (aged 14) English hosts...	- killed a pig to welcome Eric and roasted it in spite of the fact that Jews cannot eat pork. - Eric went to church with his adoptive family (his own family was not orthodox). This gesture was intended to be kindly but not all English people received the refugees positively as the next example illustrates.
Blackshirts protested and asked...	- Why are we collecting for aliens when poverty and unemployment is rife in England?
Quakers...	- welcome the children and organise funding and support for the refugees. While...
The Government imposes...	- a £50 levy for each child (£2000 + today) to make sure they do not cost the state any expense when they are repatriated.

- Draw up rules and instructions for the refugee children's behaviour such as:

Say please/thank you; speak English

You can see further examples on the list of instructions on the inside back cover of this booklet.

C

CHARACTER FOCUS:

Mrs Hilton:

"Lovely to see so many smiling faces."
 "There are lots of things we need to organise today."
 "Oh dear... it's all rather disorganised here today."
 "Don't forget to say thank you, even when you get a ticket on the bus."
 "We don't like loud behaviour here so conduct yourself quietly and politely."
 "...pronounce words carefully."
 "Don't make yourself conspicuous by what you wear."
 "Oh my...Oh my...who are you? Where have you all appeared from? This just will not do.
 One moment please. I must check my list. No, no. Please stay where you are until..."

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Ask the pupils to look at each of the above phrases and sentences spoken by Mrs Hilton. What do they indicate about the person or organisation they are attributed to?
- ✓ They could draw an outline figure – Role on the Wall – like the one above. It might be useful to choose three or four phrases or sentences and put the quotes outside the outline. Then decide on adjectives describing each statement and write them on the inside.
- ✓ Mrs Hilton, what some people thought of the arrival of the Kinder. Using a Role on the Wall character students can put in thought bubbles to show what Mrs Hilton is really thinking of the Kinder lining up in front of her. Have a person in the class be this character and let her sit in a circle while the rest of the pupils voice her feelings about the children. Let them practise the appropriate tone and register in the first person, as they offer their ideas to this central character.

The Porter, Bill:

Bill has been moved by the former prime minister,
Mr Baldwin's speech,
when he declared: "*Time is of the essence ...and delay may
prove literally fatal.*"
He says: "I looked at our Norman and began to think..."

"...As soon as I saw them, the grouchiness disappeared. I
suddenly felt guilt."
"How could children that age be forced to leave everything they
know?"
"I worked non stop till 6pm, making sure they found their new
homes."
"Ladies, what about the outfits in your wardrobe that you don't
wear or that don't fit."

He refers to the generous donations received:
"10 bob (10 shillings i.e. 50p but a lot more in today's money),
received from a pensioner and birthday party money donated by
a young child."

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Using the above excerpts from the text of the play, explore and explain what motivates Bill.

- ✓ What might he be thinking at the moment that he looked at his son, Norman?
- ✓ How is Bill different from Mrs Hilton?
- ✓ Who is the more sympathetic character?
- ✓ Pupils should give reasons for their views.
- ✓ How typical would these views be of the 30s and today?

Foster parents – Edward and Emma:

These are interesting characters as they undergo a big change
as the scene unfolds.
They are 'well-to-do'.
At the outset they are well meaning but later Edward changes....
They are thrilled by what they perceive to be a fascinating and
exciting experience. For example:
Edward has researched Jewish holidays and diet. He says:
"We've tried to learn a few simple phrases, nothing fancy."
But the 'madchen' they think that they are due to welcome does
not mean 'man' or 'boy'.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- ✓ What does 'madchen' mean, do you think?
- ✓ Pupils could take a guess by comparing it to similar English words.
Finally check it out in a German English dictionary.
- ✓ In the end Edward storms off, much to the embarrassment of Emma.
- ✓ "I don't really care what we do. I just don't want her..."
- ✓ "Not only is she a girl, she's also stupid."
- ✓ How could one account for Edward's behaviour?

OBJECTS AND SYMBOLS

THE KINDER OFTEN REFER TO OBJECTS THAT THEY HAVE BROUGHT WITH THEM. THESE MAY HAVE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OR SENTIMENTAL MEANING.

Renie (9 years) has a gold locket hidden in her face cream. Gold is a precious metal which is always transferable into cash or can be bartered for food, accommodation etc. So, bringing this and carefully hiding it, shows planning and awareness as it was illegal to take anything valuable.

Stephan (13 years), however, brings earth which has no practical usage but has a great deal of meaning for him. The handful of dust represents his native country, Czechoslovakia. This, then, 'symbolises' his native land and he carries it in his luggage.

Eric (14 years) wants to bring his violin but that is bulky and fragile so he leaves it behind.

Musical instruments were often not allowed as they were valuable and could be sold. Some Kinder brought objects like mouth organs. A mouth organ could be regarded as not just a musical instrument but as an artefact with deep cultural significance. It might well have been made from local wood in a local factory and it will have played remembered tunes, which were last heard at special occasions like birthdays, celebrations and moments of laughter and tears. It might have been passed down from generation to generation. This cultural meaning reflects the history, the ownership and the usage of the object, almost as if it has a personality and character of its own. So, some objects had deep, symbolic and sentimental importance to the Kinder. A simpler possession with an obvious function like the notebook with empty pages is intended to record the children's experiences so that they could write down and remember their time in Britain.



Soil from
Czechoslovakia



Hat with feather



A mouth organ

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- ✓ There is a list of clothes and essentials that the Kinder had to bring, inside the front cover of this pack.
- ✓ What would your pupils take from their homes that has some symbolic or sentimental meaning for them? Ask them to say why they have chosen this object and to discuss their choice with a neighbour.
- ✓ Do the lists of essential items listed on the inside cover omit anything of importance? If so, what is missing?



- ✓ What might this object be?
- ✓ Why would a child have it with them?
- ✓ Space was limited and books are heavy, what is so special about this book?

Answer: Jewish prayer book



KINDER ARRIVING IN ENGLAND BY BOAT.
PHOTO COURTESY OF MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM.

KINDER EXPERIENCES:

CLEARLY THIS DIVERSE GROUP OF YOUNGSTERS WERE LIKELY TO HAVE UNDERGONE A RANGE OF DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES. ADAPTING TO A DIFFERENT CULTURE WITH DIFFERENT CUSTOMS WOULD HAVE PRESENTED CHALLENGES TO THE KINDER. THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES ARE FROM 'SUITCASE', BUT ARE BASED ON ACCOUNTS FROM KINDER. YOU CAN ALSO REFER TO THE STORY OF BEN ON PAGES 19-21. YOU MIGHT ALSO CARE TO LOOK AT THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO THE KINDER ABOUT HOW THEY SHOULD BEHAVE IN THE HOST COUNTRY THESE ARE INSIDE THE BACK COVER.

GOOD

- fish and chips
- country lanes
- Zoo
- first kiss
- first pair of high heels
- dancing on V.E day

BAD

- a visit to the dentist
- news of parents being sent away
- language difficulties
- A Kind is separated from his older sister and is moved around from family to family
- A girl finds out that her parents were deported to Auschwitz on 28th October 1944

These experiences were often detailed in the children's diaries and letters.

Letters home: The children sometimes wrote false reports of their experiences, so that their parents would not be too upset. For example Renie (aged 9) started her letter home by writing her true feelings:

"Dear Mutti...I am so unhappy here. Mrs Fraser is always telling me off and says I am lazy..."

However, she screws up this first attempt and rewrites her letter home along these lines:

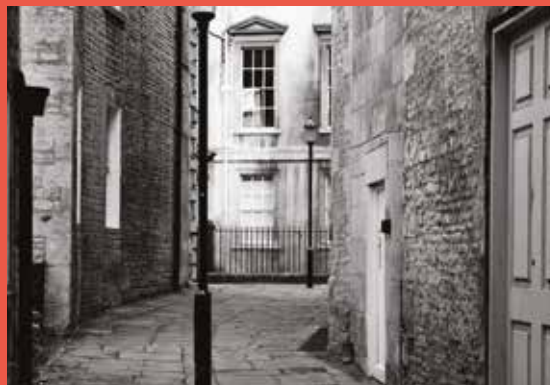
"Dear Mutti.... Everything here is good. Auntie Fraser is so kind and....."

She then turns towards the audience and asks them what they would have done.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

You could ask the class to respond to the following:

- ✓ What are the reasons for her re-write?
- ✓ Write a postcard or letter with the more palatable version of things in your life in green and the reality (subtext) in red.
- ✓ On the internet you might well find suitable photographic images of beautiful, romantic, English scenes to contrast with more depressing portrayals of English life like the examples below in the late 1930s.



- ✓ Write a diary of a Kind's daily life in Britain where you describe your activities and experiences and reflect, as if you were a refugee, on how they contrast with life back home.

You can come up with your own ideas or refer to what follows.

Here are some of the activities outlined in the play and in contemporary evidence which you may choose to include or not:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ the arrival of a letter from home | ✓ learning ping pong |
| ✓ a visit to Kew Gardens | ✓ trying on and buying your first pair of high heels |
| ✓ the arrival of a parcel of chocolate | ✓ misunderstanding the culture of the hosts and vice versa |
| ✓ being separated from your sibling(s) when you are sent to stay with another family | ✓ anti Jewish prejudice |
| ✓ being told off by your hosts for bad behaviour | ✓ missing your mother's cooking |
| ✓ news that your parents are being transported to the East | ✓ being interned as an enemy alien when the war started (after age 16) |
| ✓ cycling in the country | ✓ getting lost |

THE PARENTS' VIEWPOINT

You might like to set up a moment at a railway station in Germany or Czechoslovakia where the Kinder get on the train and the parents wave them goodbye (often for the last time as it happened). Create the image with the children and ask them to 'freeze the moment'. Blow a whistle and ask the watching children to voice the parents' fears and feelings as they wave them on their way...

REFUGEES TODAY

The situation for refugees nowadays, however, is very distressing and devastating. Many, like the Kinder, flee areas of conflict because of the dangers of remaining, even if they are not the direct targets. Many are innocent victims whose homes are bombed in the course of conflict. Middle Eastern refugees, for example, often have no homes to return to and where their homes are not destroyed they may well face persecution if they return. The antipathy of the people in the countries where they seek asylum is a further factor, as was experienced by the Kinder in the 1930s (see pages 8, 14 and 26).



BEN AGED 14



BEN IN 2008

BEN'S STORY: A KIND FROM PRAGUE

Early morning on March 15 1939 I heard an unfamiliar loud rumbling coming from outside. I looked out of the window and saw hundreds of German armoured cars parking along the street. I turned on the radio and heard the announcement that the population should remain calm, that all the Czech security forces were co-operating with the armed forces of Germany and that schools would be closed today. I rushed to the phone to let my best friend Marci know about the German occupation, and of course, the good news, that there would be no school that day. We stayed all day glued to the radio listening to the official proclamations.

On the surface, life went on as usual. So far, there were no major restrictions on Jews. On the main boulevards of Prague, German soldiers and officers were mingling with the rest of the population. I continued to go to high school. I was now on the football team of my class playing against other high schools on regular football fields refereed by the physical education teachers.

At home, the conversation was filled with this relative or that friend who received a permit or visa or affidavit to America or Australia or some other far away country. People lined up day after day at embassies looking for ways to emigrate. One day my parents surprised me: "Would you like to go to England to study?" That sounded like a fantastic idea to me; were not the English football teams the best in the world? My parents heard about an organisation that arranged placement of Jewish children from Czechoslovakia, Germany and Austria in English families. It was called Kindertransport. It required a guarantor in England, a person or a family that would vouch for the child's

welfare, and a payment of £50 sterling. As I learnt 60 years later, the man who was the driving force in this organisation for the Czechoslovak children, was a young English stockbroker, Nicholas Winton. My sister would also apply to go to England on a work permit as a maid. This would be an ideal solution to have us out there together. In the meantime, my parents would try and get out another way. We all had our photographs taken for the many application forms we had to file.

I realised how much pain my anticipated departure was causing my parents. I made an effort to conceal my eagerness to leave by appearing sad. My father took me aside: "Bedřišku no one is forcing you to leave." I was quick to respond. "I am sad, but I do want to go." My mother prepared all my things as though I was going to summer camp, with my name Fritz Abeles stitched on all my shirts and underwear. The night I left for England, July 20th, we were all sitting in the family room around the large table, my parents, my sister, Aunt Ida and Uncle Josef, their son Willie Steiner with his wife, eating dinner. The atmosphere was serious. The family saw me off on the night train from the main railway station Wilsonove Nádraží together with 75 other children. My father paced with me up and down the platform: "Never lie or steal, study hard, clean your teeth twice a day, wash your feet, change your socks every day, keep your things in order." I nodded my head attentively, but my mind was already on the train speeding off toward an exciting new world. Soon all of us children boarded the train. The families were standing in clusters on the platform. The train started to move. My family was waving to me. The last glimpse I had of my mother was her contorted weeping face. I realised that something momentous was happening in my life, that I might not see my family for a long time. I was on my own now. All of a sudden I felt very grown up.

THE JOURNEY

The train pulled out of the station into the darkness of the night. The children were mostly quiet and subdued. A little girl in my compartment was sobbing quietly. "What's the matter?" I asked her. "I want my mummy." I picked her up and she clutched me hard around my neck; I felt her tears on my cheek. I sat her on my lap: "Would you like to hear a fairy tale?" She nodded, tears still streaming down her cheeks. After I almost exhausted my repertory of tales, she fell asleep. I put her gently down on the bench. I settled back on my seat. I thought of my family taking the tram back home and wondered what they would be talking about. Then I let my mind wander to my new life in England – I imagined myself wearing a blazer and cap that I had seen in films. I was walking next to English schoolboys, talking to them in English, playing football in the school uniform. I eventually nodded off to the "ta ta tam..." rhythms of the train. When morning came we were a lot more cheerful. We sang folk songs and watched the beautiful landscape of the German countryside unfold. We passed through railway stations bedecked with Nazi banners and flags and large portraits of Adolf Hitler. Early afternoon, the train stopped at the German-Dutch border and uniformed custom officials and police with armbands displaying the hated swastika went through each of the compartments. I avoided looking into their eyes. I was fearful that they would arrest me and take me off the train, perhaps to a concentration camp. Nazi flags were flying everywhere. After what seemed to me like an eternity, the train started squeaking and inching out of the station and then picking up speed. As the train crossed the borders into Holland we cheered. The train came to a stop at a railway station on the Dutch side of the border. Custom officials again boarded the train, this time with smiles on their faces and checked our papers. Then ladies came on the train and gave us lemonade and buns and spoke to us kindly in broken German and hugged us. What a difference from our encounter at the German border just a short time ago.

ARRIVAL

We arrived at Liverpool Street Station early afternoon. The platform was incredibly large. Our main station in Prague would have fitted into it several times over. We were assembled in one area. A crowd of people craning their necks stood waiting behind a barrier to pick us up. A woman sitting behind a folding table read out our names. Finally I was called; a dark haired, slim, tall woman about the age of my mother, elegantly dressed and bejewelled stepped out. This was my guarantor Mrs. Wolff. She embraced and kissed me. She spoke to me in English and French, neither of which I could understand.

We got into a cab. It looked like a converted carriage with an isolated cabin for the driver up front. Everything looked so different from Prague. No electric tramways or horse drawn carriages. Instead double-deckers buses and hundreds upon hundreds of cars packed bumper to bumper moving through wide streets with buildings much taller than in Prague. The Wolffs lived on Wimpole Street, a fashionable street where famous medical specialists lived and had their offices. Dr Wolff was an ophthalmologist, a short balding man with a grey moustache. Their daughter Audrey, a girl a little older than me, took me exploring London. I was able to converse with her in my broken English since she took the pain to speak slowly and I wasn't afraid to ask her to repeat it. She took me to Harrods, a huge department store, stocked with incredibly rich wares and to the underground with escalators going deep down into the earth. We had a great time running all over London. I decided to ignore the fact that she was pimply and would marry her anyway and live in that rich house of theirs. The next morning, I was introduced for the first time to an English breakfast: a grapefruit with a cherry in the centre, deliciously crunchy cornflakes with milk, kipper, eggs and bacon, toast and jam and tea. After breakfast, we took off with Mrs Wolff and her younger sister in their car for my school. They were chatting in French the whole trip. I didn't understand a word.

NEW SCHOOL

Taplow Grammar School was near Maidenhead in Berkshire, about 25 miles out of London. We were received by the headmaster, Mr Williams, in his office. He was a balding, portly man in his early fifties, with a ruddy complexion and fine veins visible on his cheeks. After some pleasantries, Mrs Wolff and her sister left and left me alone to face the headmaster. He proceeded to give me a long speech. I could hardly understand a word. No wonder, I soon learned he was Welsh and spoke with a heavy accent. He rang a bell and two boys entered the office. They took me under their wing. Harry was a chubby 14 year old boy from Berlin with red hair, freckles, pointed face and glasses. The other was a handsome 16 year old boy from Vienna, Paul Nathanson, with dark hair and a dark complexion. They too came with the Kindertransport to England, but on an earlier transport than I. "Right now there are only a few Jewish refugee kids here. The English kids will only arrive in September", Paul said in German. Harry chimed in, "We are not allowed to leave the school grounds without permission. You have to watch out for Mr Williams. His office windows face the entrance to the school. He can spot anyone leaving or entering the grounds."

After three days at school I received my first letter from home. It was from my father, written in Czech. My mother always wrote in German.

24/7/39

My dearest Bedřišku (1) ,

You cannot imagine the pleasure we had with your cards and letters. For now it is our only consolation and you must continue to write to us daily. They need not be long letters, just a few lines. Yesterday was Sunday and in the evening we sat and remembered sadly our rascal. Mama cried and so did I. Mutz (2) misses you too. But it is a great fortune for your future. We were so pleased that you will be going to a high school. You are after all a talented boy and studying is better than becoming a tradesman. Bedřišku , just please study hard. In this way you will be helping us. Times are serious now and only if you have an education will you count for somebody in England. And of course, only boys who are successful at school can then as foreigners continue in their studies. My son a doctor, I would be overjoyed. Bedřišku , my darling, I beg you in the beginning study even the whole day until your precious head hurts. As a foreigner, you must study even

harder than the others. I have confidence in you. I know that you are a bright boy and that you will not disappoint your parents who know no other happiness than your success. I know well that you did not feel like studying, but only because you are too young to understand what great fortune it is for you to study in England. The English University opens the door to the whole world. We are already very curious about how you will like the school. Just take good care of your things. Keep everything in order. Clean your teeth and so on. Mama was overjoyed with your letter and was running all over Prague, just so she can say, " My son is a genuine English student and I am his happy mother." I too am proud to be the father of this noble Lord. Mama travelled this morning to Hradec Kralove and she will write to you tomorrow.

We are waiting impatiently for further news from our Bedřiška and we kiss him 1000000000000 times.

Your Dad.

The next few weeks were like summer camp. In the mornings, we studied English. In the afternoon we played board games or kicked a football on the school field or played volley ball. Twice a week, in the afternoon, the older kids were allowed to leave the grounds of the school and spend the afternoon in Maidenhead, half an hour's walk from the school. In the park, along the bank of the Thames, couples were stretched out on the grass, children were flying kites, families were riding tandem bicycles and people were rowing and punting on the river. It was a joyous scene compared to the grey and bleak mood in Prague bedecked with Nazi flags and German soldiers in their Wehrmacht uniforms choking the streets.

This is the true story of one boy's experience of the Kindertransport and how life changed for him (if you look on www.suitcase1938.org.uk you will find out more of Ben's story including how he ended up being one of the co-inventers of the battery for outer space missions including Voyager 1).

(1) Bedřišku: Note that Ben's father addressed him as Bedřišku. Ben says, "I have changed my first name as a chameleon My mother called me Fritz, my father by my Czech name Bedřich (Bedřišku is the diminutive in the vocative <http://grammar.about.com/od/tz/g/vocativeterm.htm>. When I came to England I changed to Fred. In Israel I became Benjamin and now people call me Ben."

(2) Mutz: Ben's sister's nick name was Mutz, in Czech it was Marie.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Encourage the children to look at the letter sent from Ben's father.
- ✓ As a historian looking at one piece of evidence, what can we deduce about their relationship?
- ✓ What can we tell about how educated Ben's father was? How can we tell this?
- ✓ What else can we deduce perhaps about Ben's attitude to study, as a 14 year old?
- ✓ A second piece of evidence is Ben's first person story. What else do we discover about his attitudes to study and his relationship with his family in this? The more pieces of evidence you can look at the clearer picture you can get about history.



HOLOCAUST EDUCATIONAL TRUST:

BRITISH HEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST - LESSON PLANS

INTRODUCTION

THIS LESSON PLAN EXPLORES THE ACTIONS AND MOTIVES OF BRITISH CITIZENS WHO HAVE BEEN HONOURED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR THEIR ROLE IN ATTEMPTING TO RESCUE JEWS DURING THE 1930S AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

The plan makes use of cards from the British Heroes of the Holocaust resource produced by the Holocaust Educational Trust. The resource consists of a series of 15 profiles. The following 8 profiles should be used for this lesson plan:



This resource can be downloaded from www.tinyurl.com/q4f9ovn.

AIMS

- To reflect on what makes someone a role model
- To consider what heroism is
- To learn how some people became 'rescuers' during the Holocaust

STARTER

WORKING IN PAIRS, INSTRUCT STUDENTS TO ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO EACH OTHER, FOR NO MORE THAN A FEW MINUTES:

- Who is your hero and why?
- What do heroes do?
- Who is your role model?
- Collect a selection of responses and make a note of any significant remarks on a white board.
- Pair up pairs to create small groups. Allow groups a few minutes to discuss the following questions before collecting ideas. Add these to the other remarks on the whiteboard, and explain that in the lesson they will be learning more about people who did remarkable things during the Holocaust.
- Are heroes the same as role models?
- What characteristics do good role models need to have?
- Why do we need role models?

ACTIVITY

WORKING IN SMALL GROUPS, DISTRIBUTE THE PROFILES SO THAT ALL 8 ARE SHARED AMONG THE CLASS. EXPLAIN TO STUDENTS THAT THEY WILL HAVE A LIMITED AMOUNT OF TIME (SOMEWHERE AROUND 5 MINUTES) TO READ THROUGH THE PROFILE THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN, IDENTIFY THE KEY INFORMATION AND MOTIVES OF THE PERSON, AND RECORD THESE AS NOTES. STUDENTS MAY WISH TO USE THE FOLLOWING AS HEADINGS:

- What was their name? Where did they come from? When were they born?
- What did they do?
- Why did they risk so much?
- What words would you use to describe them?
- After 5 minutes a buzzer or bell is sounded, at which point the groups swap their profile with each other. This is repeated until all groups have seen each profile.
- Collect feedback on the activity from the students. This might be structured by way of the following questions:
- Why did these people act the way they did?
- What choices did they have and how did they respond?
- Are there common reasons why people became rescuers?

PLENARY

INSTRUCT STUDENTS TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS FIRSTLY IN THEIR GROUPS AND THEN AS A CLASS:

- Were the rescuers good role models?
- What do we learn from them and their actions?
- How can we become role models?

This might be followed up by students providing written answers to these questions for homework, or using their discussion of these questions to launch a campaign in school to raise the profile of one of the rescuers.

PROPAGANDA AND BIAS

A

“Hasn't anybody told you we have problems of our own here?”
“Haven't you heard about unemployment and the depression?”

B

FAMILY OF 12 REFUGEES LAND IN UK -
AND ARE HANDED A £6,000-A-MONTH HOME, PAID FOR BY YOU

C

Child refugees from Europe - How could any country let those children go?

D

Thousands of children come to the UK to claim asylum every year on their own. It is the great tragic side effect of conflict and upheaval around the world... the thousands of unaccompanied children who somehow get to the UK to claim asylum each year.

E

PREJUDICE AND IGNORANCE SKEW PUBLIC VIEW OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

TEACHING IDEAS

Look at the following sources of information in the form of quotes and headlines. Let the pupils read/hear the sources on the left hand page. Ask them to speculate on the origin of this information and their reasons for their decisions.

Are all of the headlines from newspapers and quotes historical or are any of them contemporary? Discuss whether different generations seem to have similar or contrasting views about refugees and asylum seekers.

- What are their own views on asylum seekers?
- Where did they get their views from?
- Encourage a discussion about political bias in newspapers.
- The correct sources are appended below.

A

Edith, a character in 'Suitcase' who is created from some individuals' views about accepting the children from the Kindertransport into Britain in 1938 and 1939 ('Suitcase', 24th February 2010)

B

Daily Mail article 21st April, 2011
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1379150/Family-12-refugees-handed-6k-month-UK-home.html>

C

Guardian News and Media 13th December, 1938
(from article on front of 'Suitcase' programme, 24th February, 2010)

D

The Guardian 8th June, 2010 (from article 'Where do child asylum seekers to the UK come from?')
<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/jun/08/child-asylum-seekers-data-uk>

E

The Independent 8th June, 2009 (title of article)
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prejudice-and-ignorance-skew-public-view-of-asylumseekers-1699213.html>



PHOTO COURTESY OF
MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM.

FAISAL'S STORY

Faisal fled Afghanistan at the age of 15, and after arriving in the UK, was held in a detention centre as an adult because the authorities did not believe he was a child. Faisal tells us in his own words of his horrific experience in the detention centre and how he felt he wasn't treated like a human being:

"My name is Faisal. I'm from Afghanistan. My mother and father were killed by the Taliban. Someone helped me escape and they put me in the lorry with other people. I was inside the lorry for many days. I was so scared I couldn't even breathe. I thought I would die in the lorry. But when I was found in the lorry the police took me out. They asked me lots of questions - how old I was. I told them I was 15, but they didn't believe me. Maybe it was because my hair was long but that's because I was in the lorry for a long time."

"They put me in the detention centre - they said they were going to deport me back to Afghanistan. I was feeling so bad, I was looking for something in the room to kill myself. The first 3 days, I didn't eat anything. I was begging them to let me go. I was crying and crying but they just laughed and made a joke. It was like a nightmare, they treated me like an animal. I didn't feel like I was a human being. When I first heard that someone had come to see me I was really happy. They said it was someone from the Refugee Council. He said 'Don't worry, I will help you.' Then one day, many officers came to my room. When they took me out I thought they were going to send me back to Afghanistan. I was so scared and my heart was beating so fast I thought I was having a heart attack."

"Later I got a call from the Refugee Council. He said you will be released today. I was in the detention centre for 32 days. I remember walking through so many doors...thinking this is only a dream. The man from Refugee Council came and helped me. He was like an angel - if not for him I would have probably been sent back to Afghanistan and I would be dead by now."

Animations of refugee stories can be found at: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/animation

FAISAL'S CONTINUING STORY....

For Faisal, the intervention of Refugee Council workers meant that he is at college and living in semi-independent hostel accommodation, but the trauma of his teenage years is far from over. When he turns 18 he may still be sent back to Afghanistan. "I try to study, but it's hard to think of the future," he said. "I feel very hopeless. I'm scared they will come for me and put me back in detention or deport me. I cannot go back to Afghanistan. If I had not left I would have been dead. If I go back, I will die."

(The Guardian, May 2012)

REFUGEE CHILDREN TODAY

In 2012 1,100 separated children arrived in the UK with the highest number from Afghanistan, Albania, Eritrea, Iran and Vietnam.

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

WHILE YOU ARE IN ENGLAND: HELPFUL INFORMATION & GUIDANCE FOR EVERY REFUGEE

The Tolerance and Sympathy of Britain and the British Commonwealth

The traditional tolerance and sympathy of Britain and the British Commonwealth towards the Jews is something which every British Jew appreciates profoundly. On his part he does all in his power to express his loyalty to Britain and the British Commonwealth, in word and deed, by personal service and by communal effort.

This loyalty comes first and foremost, and every Refugee should realise how deeply it is felt.

The Jewish Community in Britain will do its very utmost to welcome and maintain all Refugees, to educate their Children, to care for the Aged and the Sick – and to assist in every possible way in creating new homes for them overseas. A great many Christians, in all walks of life, have spontaneously associated themselves with this work. All that we ask from you in return is to carry out to your utmost the following lines of conduct. Regard them please as duties of which you are in honour bound:

Spend your spare time immediately in learning the English language and its correct pronunciation.

Refrain from speaking German in the streets and in public conveyances and in public places such as restaurants. Talk halting English rather than fluent German – and do not talk in a loud voice. Do not read German newspapers in public.

Do not criticise any Government regulations, nor the way things are done over here. Do not speak of “how much better this or that is done in Germany.” It may be true in some matters, but it weighs as nothing against the sympathy and freedom and liberty of England which are now given to you. Never forget that point.

Do not join any Political organisation, or take part in any political activities.

Do not make yourself conspicuous by speaking loudly, nor by your manner or dress. The Englishman greatly dislikes ostentation, loudness of dress or manner, or unconventionality of dress or manner. He values good manners far more than he values the evidence of wealth. (You will find that he says “Thank You” for the smallest service – even for a penny bus ticket for which he has paid.)

Try to observe and follow the manners and customs and habits of this country, in social and business relations.

Do not spread the poison of “It’s bound to come in your country.”

The British Jew greatly objects to the planting of this craven thought.

Above all, please realise that the Jewish Community is relying on you – on each and every one of you – to uphold in this country the highest Jewish qualities, to maintain dignity, and to help and serve others.

If you are planning to make your permanent home overseas, regard this stay in England as a “mark time” period during which you are preparing yourself for your new life. Do not expect to be received immediately in English homes, because the Englishman takes some time before he opens his home wide to strangers.

Use your energies and your special skills to help those even more unhappy than yourself – the lonely Refugee Children, the Aged and the Sick, in your neighbourhood.

Spread courage by word and deed.
There is a new and better future before you!

BE LOYAL TO ENGLAND, YOUR HOST.

*THIS PAMPHLET WAS PRODUCED BY THE GERMAN / JEWISH AID
COMMITTEE AND THE JEWISH BOARD OF DEPUTIES IN BRITAIN.*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND LINKS

Suitcase	www.suitcase1938.org.uk
Hope Street Ltd	www.hope-street.org
Holocaust Educational Trust	www.het.org.uk
Refugee Council	www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
Manchester Jewish Museum	www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com

Designer for Suitcase Lois Maskell

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