“A Covert from the Tempest”: Responsibility, Love and Politics in Britain’s *Kindertransport*

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“[W]e could deal [with children] in large numbers, provided they were sponsored by responsible bodies and responsible individuals. Here is a chance of taking the young generation of a great people...a chance of mitigating to some extent the terrible sufferings of their parents and their friends.”

**ADDRESSING THE HOUSE OF COMMONS** on the plight of Jews and other “non-Aryans” in Nazi Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, Great Britain’s Home Secretary, Samuel Hoare, used these words to introduce the British child-rescue scheme now termed the “*Kindertransport.*” On this evening of November 21, 1938, Members of Parliament reacted with horror at the Nazi-organized pogrom, *Kristallnacht*, of less than a fortnight earlier. Some advocated relaxing Britain’s stringent immigration requirements. Others worried that refugees would threaten a fragile economy, taking jobs from British citizens and requiring public support. Admitting unaccompanied children for temporary refuge seemed a reasonable compromise. Between December 1938 and early September 1939, organizations and individuals collaborated in the *Kindertransport*, bringing nearly 10,000 children to Britain from Nazi-controlled lands by train and ferry. Moved in some cases by politics, in others by a sense of moral, cultural or religious responsibility, in still others by familial duty and love, a wide array of bodies and individuals made essential contributions to the *Kindertransport’s* success. Their varying motivations demonstrated the complexity of effective response to an international humanitarian crisis and fostered a new sense of social responsibility for the welfare and rights of individuals.

**A Developing Humanitarian Crisis**

Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (the Nazis) took power in Germany in 1933 vowing to abolish Jewish citizenship and
eliminate Germany’s Jewish population by encouraging mass exodus.\textsuperscript{5} Nazi laws immediately began to strip Jews of their civil rights, rights to participate as full members of political society and to access opportunities and amenities on the same terms as others. Jews were barred from civil service positions (1933), medical, legal and other professional practice (1933) and work in theater or movies (1934).\textsuperscript{6} The Nuremberg laws of 1935 followed, revoking Jewish citizenship and banning marriages and sexual relations between Jews and those of “German or related blood.”\textsuperscript{7} Soon, escalating restrictions prohibited Jews from making business contracts with the state and curtailed their economic transactions with non-Jews. After German annexation in 1938, these laws quickly took effect in Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia.\textsuperscript{8}

Contrary to internationally recognized children’s rights, Nazi persecution also imperiled the intellectual development, physical well-being and psychological security of Jewish children.\textsuperscript{9} They were banned from public schools, parks and theaters and suffered physically and psychologically when parents were imprisoned or lost employment or property.\textsuperscript{10} Susanne Goldsmith, who rode the first \textit{Kindertransport} train leaving Vienna, recalls, “Other children no longer played with us. It was very depressing. Every week new rules and regulations were directed at Jewish families.”\textsuperscript{11}

Between 1933 and 1938, these rights deprivations led to voluntary Jewish emigration from Nazi territories. Still, many thought Nazi control a passing phase. They hesitated to leave homes for strange lands, unfamiliar people and economic disadvantage.\textsuperscript{12} This attitude altered as the escalating oppression of 1938 inflicted increasingly degrading treatment on Jews and assailed their liberty and security. Now, soaring numbers sought to emigrate, but stringent immigration laws in many countries thwarted their attempts. Restrictions stemmed from anti-alien and anti-Semitic feelings and from fear, in the widespread depression of the 1930s, that immigrants would burden national economies.\textsuperscript{13} While thirty-two nations attended an international immigration conference on the problem in Evian, France during summer 1938, only the Dominican Republic offered to increase immigration quotas for those fleeing Nazi territories.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Kristallnacht} and Policy Change in Britain

On the night of November 9, 1938, brutal attacks on physical security, liberty and property transformed Nazi rights deprivations into a humanitarian crisis where peril was immediate and large-scale suffering acute.\textsuperscript{15} Nazi sympathizers throughout Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland destroyed thousands of Jewish businesses and synagogues and terrorized Jews, killing approximately 100.\textsuperscript{16} Nazi officials arrested and imprisoned 30,000 Jewish men, later sending many to concentration camps.\textsuperscript{17} The events of this \textit{Kristallnacht}\textsuperscript{18} shocked the world and marked a turning point in British refugee policy. Reports from American consuls in Germany described merciless “attacks upon a helpless minority”\textsuperscript{19} and cited evidence that German officials had planned the violence.\textsuperscript{20} In Britain, letters to \textit{The Times} emphasized the Nazis’ “cold brutality”\textsuperscript{21} and
condemned “this fresh onset of persecution.”22 Some advocated taking “more than our fair share of these…tortured people…not a new Evian, but a new spirit.”23

History often portrays moral responsibility as the impetus for humanitarian response. However, the official British response was foremost political. The government faced national and international criticism for ceding parts of Czechoslovakia to Nazi control under the Munich Pact.24 At home and abroad, its obstruction of Jewish immigration to Palestine, which it controlled, also fueled criticism.25 Influential Jewish groups within Britain urged that immigration restrictions be eased,26 and citizens’ humanitarian pleas were widespread.27 Minutes of a 16 November 1938 Cabinet meeting show Britain’s Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, and his ministers anxious to curb criticism and hopeful that a refugee plan might win support from the United States and improve “public opinion” in Britain.28

The Kindertransport plan, developed by Home Secretary Hoare and refugee advocates including Quakers and members of Britain’s Jewish community, seemed likely to serve these political aims efficiently and without arousing opposition.29 The British public would sympathize with unaccompanied refugee children, who could enter Britain under an existing program allowing European children temporary residence for educational purposes.30 As ultimately implemented, the plan required a sponsor for each refugee child, an individual or organization committed to providing care and education until the child left Britain. Sponsored children under age seventeen could enter with an identity card rather than German travel documents or a British visa, simplifying and hastening the immigration process (see Appendix A). From March 1939, the government also required that sponsors guarantee £50 per child to fund later emigration from Britain. Organization, finance and execution, described in the next section, fell to private individuals and agencies.31

The government thus aimed to quell national and international criticism and satisfy Jewish organizations and concerned citizens after Kristallnacht’s horrors. Other key Kindertransport participants, by contrast, acted from a sense of responsibility. As will become clear, though, even when moral duty was one element of this motivation, it did not typically operate alone.

**Responsible Bodies: Combining Religious, Cultural and Moral Duty**

In referring to “responsible bodies” in his 1938 speech to the House of Commons, Home Secretary Hoare had in mind those with legal authority to organize and supervise children’s immigration and guarantee their later emigration. Charitable organizations mobilizing the Kindertransport, however, were also “responsible” in the sense that they were motivated by a multifaceted sense of duty. The largest and most active of these, ultimately charged with overseeing all Kindertransport children in Britain, was the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany, later called the Refugee Children’s Movement (RCM). It perfectly illustrates the contributions and motivations of organizations involved in this program.32
Immediately following Hoare’s announcement to the House of Commons, the RCM began its work, coordinating volunteers and bureaucrats across Europe and negotiating with Nazi officials, who continued to favor Jewish emigration. Its first transport of 206 children left Berlin via train and arrived in Harwich, England by ferry on December 2, 1938. Typically, children departed by train from large cities including Berlin, Vienna and, later, Prague and travelled to the Hook of Holland in the Netherlands. There, volunteer workers fed them and helped them board a ferry (see Appendix B). “Guaranteed children” had individual sponsors in Britain, ordinarily family or friends, sometimes a designated foster family, and went directly to their homes. The RCM or like organizations sponsored “non-guaranteed children” who were selected by Jewish social-service organizations in Germany and Austria after parents or guardians submitted requests. Until foster homes were available, they resided in British “holiday” camps or similar facilities.

The RCM’s origins helped it assemble assistance across Europe. Jewish organizations in Britain had a long history of helping European Jews to emigrate. From 1936, the focus of the Council for German Jewry, a joint British and American organization rooted in earlier groups, had been to aid those fleeing Nazi persecution. The RCM, in turn, grew from the Council, whose active members were essential in negotiating the Kindertransport plan with Hoare and now played central roles.

Unlike earlier refugee organizations, though, the RCM relied on active participants who were religiously and culturally diverse and driven by varied conceptions of responsibility. Christian contributors included Quaker facilitators in Nazi-controlled countries and Dutch volunteers. They also included Lord Ronald Gorell, who served as Chairman, and Lord Stanley Baldwin, a former prime minister whose public appeals raised £550,000 for Jewish immigration, much of it for the RCM. Some, including Lord Baldwin, acted from a felt moral duty to provide children “a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest.” For others, with a cultural or religious bond to refugees and long association with Jewish aid organizations, it was these special ties that drove a sense of responsibility “to get Jews out of the Nazi hell.”

Responsible Individuals: Moral Duty, Familial Duty and Love

Independent organizers and Jewish parents were as essential to Kindertransport success as the government and civic organizations. Again, varied motivations, including commitments of duty, drove their contributions. In January 1939, a young British stockbroker traveling in Czechoslovakia found refugees from Nazi persecution living in appalling conditions. This traveler, Nicholas Winton, asked British contacts about child immigration policies and soon was appointed Chairman of the Children’s Committee for Czechoslovakia. His tireless, hands-on approach and refusal to work closely with existing committees distinguished him. As his letters and papers show, Winton understood that refugee children in desperate poverty, without access to education, suffered deeply: “The very bare necessities of life are lacking, [and] their education has ceased. It would
be a tragedy if they should be left to starve physically and intellectually.” In Czechoslovakia and Britain, Winton worked with families and maintained a hectic social schedule, hoping each luncheon would bring sponsors or funds. His reaction to oppression revealed a sense of moral responsibility, and his energy showed affinity for challenge. These together helped Winton save 664 children via Kindertransport.

Parents were likewise central in finding many children Kindertransport access. Familial duty and love drove their actions. When the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia in March 1939, respected Czech farmer and patriot, Arthur Nohel, was in London, negotiating Czech immigration to Africa. As he sought British papers for his family, trapped near Prague, his wife, Irene, willing “to take any risks to unite [her] family,” secured their children Kindertransport passage. Her clandestine escape through Poland two months later allowed them to meet in Britain and emigrate to the United States as war began.

Unlike the Nohels, thirteen-year-old Benno Black arrived in Harwich from Breslau, Germany in July 1939 as an unguaranteed child. His parents, kept from the United States by immigration quotas and fearing for their son after his father’s Kristallnacht detention, had placed him on a Kindertransport. Unselfish love and family responsibility colored his mother’s farewell. Unable to bear a public parting, she instructed Black that she, his grandmother and his aunt would stand “on the street just below the first viaduct, and as the train would pass over, at a slow speed, they would wave to me.” Meticulous packing lists written for sons and daughters preparing to travel (see Appendix C) and letters from parents left behind tell similar stories of sacrifice from love and family responsibility. A young German mother, for example, wrote to her teenage niece, Paula, begging the girl to send detailed news of her children “because they are all I have to live for.”

A Legacy of Social Responsibility and Inclusion

The Kindertransport’s immediate result was the rescue of 10,000 children. In the longer term, this effort underwrote new legal responsibilities in Britain and fostered an attitude of social responsibility and inclusion among British citizens and in rescued children and their descendants. When Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, Britain declared war, Nazi-controlled borders closed and the Kindertransport ended. From 1942, news of Nazi atrocities revealed that most Kindertransport children in Britain now likely were orphans with no family to whom to return. Some had found loving foster homes. Given foster parents’ preference for younger children, though, many lonely teenagers languished in group settings. Others had been abused by foster parents or detained as enemy aliens. Questions of adoption for younger children and parental consent to marriage for older ones now also arose.

Britain’s Guardianship Act of 1944 acknowledged that Kindertransport children were not temporary residents and that practical and moral concerns demanded a trustee responsible for their welfare. Pursuant to that law, Lord Gorell, RCM Chairman, was appointed legal guardian of refugee children without parents in Britain who had entered after 1936. These included Jewish Kindertransport
children, but also Catholic and other Christian children. As Gorell later emphasized, through his appointment Britain embraced legal responsibility to protect children across cultures, religions and national origins: “[T]he guardianship of thousands was quite new to the law of England. New also was a guardian to Jewish children who was not himself a Jew, [and] a Protestant guardian to Roman Catholic children.”

Two years later, Britain further reflected this new attitude of social inclusion by offering to naturalize orphaned refugee children, in essence reinstating civil rights the Nazis had extinguished and accepting refugees as fellow citizens.

Now-adult refugees and their children likewise voice a commitment to social responsibility and inclusion born from the Kindertransport experience. At a 2001 reunion, Kindertransport refugees offered insights to improve child refugees’ legal access to education and counseling and committed themselves to work for legal recognition of the kinds of basic children’s rights once violated by Nazi laws. Reflecting on his father’s Kindertransport rescue, teacher Richard Nohel today expresses “a sense of responsibility to put something positive into the world” through his life and work. Susanne Goldsmith often challenges school children “to make friends with people of different backgrounds, [for then] we will not have hate groups.” These examples voice not merely moral concern for the welfare of fellow human beings, but commitment to an inclusive community where individual rights are recognized and protected.

Conclusion

The success of Britain’s Kindertransport required legal negotiations, multifaceted organizational efforts, hands-on, spontaneous work of individuals and fierce determination of desperate parents. While moral responsibility motivated some of these actors, a sense of religious, cultural or familial duty as well as political incentives and parental love were the compelling forces that drove others. For nearly 10,000 children, the resulting effort eased the suffering that significant rights violations and violence together inflicted and proved that successful humanitarian response can find its source in a fusion of motivations. The Kindertransport legacy, a new sense of social responsibility that includes a commitment to individual rights, directly challenges and rejects the disregard for rights and human well-being that characterized the Nazi era. It suggests that a mix of actors and motivations not only is crucial to effective humanitarian response, but also fosters the broad commitment to social inclusion that is essential to forestalling future humanitarian crises.
Notes

2. The German “Kindertransport” means “children’s transport.”
5. Jaques Fredj, The Jews of France During the Holocaust (France: Gallimard, Mémorial de la Shoah, 2011), 31. Not only practicing Jews, but also those of Jewish heritage and other “non-Aryans,” suffered Nazi persecution. In this paper, I focus on all those of Jewish heritage and use the adjective “Jewish” broadly to cover all of these people.
17. Judith Tydor Baumber-Schwartz, Never Look Back: The Jewish Refugee Children in Great Britain, 1938-1945 (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press), 64. For first-hand accounts of Kristallnacht see Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, eds., Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000),

18. The Nazis originally gave the events this name, which means “night of broken glass.” It refers to the shattered glass from thousands of broken windows that covered streets after the violence.


29. As Home Secretary, Hoare was the Cabinet member responsible for British immigration policy.


31. Gottlieb, *Men of Vision*, 101-107 provides a good summary of the details of the *Kindertransport* plan. The term “*Kindertransport*” is sometimes also used to refer to transports that moved children from Nazi territories to unoccupied countries including France and the Netherlands as well as to the movement of children from concentration camps to Britain after World War II. Here I use the term, as is common, only to refer to British transports between 1938 and 1939. For discussion see Fast, *Children’s Exodus*, xv-xvi, 17-40.

32. Among the many other groups participating in *Kindertransport* rescues were a variety of Protestant and Catholic organizations and the Chief Rabbi’s Religious Emergency Council (CRREC), an Orthodox Jewish institution. Religious disagreements sometimes made coordination of efforts difficult. For discussion see Fast, *Children’s Exodus*, 97-131.
35. The application process varied depending on where children lived. Some sites required a letter or oral request, others a formal interview. Initially, emphasis was on rescuing children whose circumstances were most dire. Later, attempts were made to transport children who were attractive and well behaved in hopes of insuring continued support for the program from the British public. See Claudia Curio, “‘Invisible’ Children: The Selection and Integration Strategies of Relief Organizations,” *Shofar* 23.1 (Fall 2004): 41-56; Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe’s Families After World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 66-70; Harris and Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers*, Interview with Norbert Wollheim, 77-78.
37. On the history of Jewish refugee organizations in Britain see Baumel-Schwartz, *Never Look Back*, 23-44. For an account from one who was intimately involved see Bentwich, *They Found Refuge*, 30-49.
42. Bentwich, *They Found Refuge*, 30. This seems to capture Bentwich’s own motivations as an active member of Jewish aid societies and contributor to the refugee effort.
47. Harris and Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers*, 281.


56. Bentwich explains that this unprecedented step allowed British citizens to adopt these children. See *They Found Refuge*, 72-73. For others the offer of citizenship evidences British society’s acceptance of Kindertransport refugees as members. See Linda Rabben *Give Refuge to the Stranger: The Past, Present, and Future of Sanctuary* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2011), 108.

57. Iris Guske, *Trauma and Attachment in the Kindertransport Context: German-Jewish Child Refugee Accounts of Displacement and Acculturation in Britain* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 34-40.


59. Susanne Goldsmith, interview.
Appendix A

This is one of the special travel documents that replaced the British visa for Kindertransport children. From *We Came as Children (A Collective Autobiography)* by Karen Gershon.
A map of the route followed by Nicholas Winton’s *Kindertransport* from Czechoslovakia to Britain. The route through Austria and Germany to the Hook of Holland is similar to that used by the British *Kindertransport* program generally. From *Saving Children from the Holocaust: The Kindertransport* by Ann Byers.
Appendix C

A packing list made by parents for daughter, Karoline Lara Schischa, a Kindertransport child from Vienna, Austria. Contents include everything from dresses and pajamas to a backpack. Schischa Family Papers, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, D.C., Permanent Collection.
Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources


This is Baldwin’s published appeal for contributions for refugee relief to the people of Britain. It gave me an example of a central figure acting from moral responsibility for the well-being of refugees.


Written by a key figure in Jewish relief, this source provided me with an understanding of the relationship among older and more recent agencies and of the motivations of participants in the Refugee Children’s Movement. Because it is written from Bentwich’s first hand experience with the Kindertransport and other refugee efforts, it is a primary source.


Mr. Black, now of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, escaped Nazi Germany in 1939 at age 13 on a *Kindertransport*. His presentation at William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul, described his experiences from 1939 until he settled in Minnesota as an adult. His moving story gave me first hand insights into the experiences of a non-guaranteed teenager in Britain. Like so many *Kindertransport* children, Black lost both parents to the Holocaust. Because the audience for this presentation was small, I was able to enhance my understanding by talking with him in person afterwards.


This article helped me understand the international criticism Britain faced on the question of immigration into Palestine and the government’s sensitivity about the issue.


The American Consul’s report provided me an excellent example of foreign witnesses’ shocked responses to the violence of Kristallnacht.

Goldsmith, Susanne. Interview by author, December 31, 2013. Email communication.

Susanne Goldsmith traveled in the first *Kindertransport* from Vienna to Harwich in 1938 as a seven-year-old child. She lived with two loving foster families, one before the war, and one after evacuation to the countryside when World War II began. She was one of the fortunate few *Kindertransport* children whose parents survived the Holocaust. This interview provided me with a first hand account of what the *Kindertransport* experience was like for a young and relatively fortunate child. It also gave me insights into the sense of responsibility that *Kindertransport* children derived from their experiences.

Here, Lord Gorell explains his role as Chairman of the Refugee Children’s Movement and as guardian for refugee children under the Guardianship Act of 1944. His essay gave me insight into Britain’s new sense of legal responsibility for World War II refugee children and its growing commitment to social inclusion.


The Nohels’ family history gave me a detailed account of the experiences of Arthur and Irene Nohel and their children, John and Nany, in Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia, of their escape from the Nazis, and of John Nohel’s Kindertransport experiences. It provided me with an excellent example of one of the happier Kindertransport stories. While the Nohels’ nuclear family survived, however, numerous relatives perished. John’s son, Richard Nohel, kindly allowed me to read this unpublished family history.


This newspaper article soliciting homes for refugee children also provided a detailed description of the Kindertransport plan.


Through this original report, I was able to see that witnesses understood from the beginning that the Kristallnacht violence was not spontaneous, as the Nazis claimed, but planned. Nazi officials alleged that the violence was a reaction to the assassination of diplomat Ernst Vom Rath by a young Polish Jew.


This letter from an aunt in Germany to her niece in Britain concerning the aunt’s young children, also in Britain, shows how much Kindertransport parents cared for their children and suggests motivations of love and familial duty behind parents’ participation in the Kindertransport. I was able to find and read this letter during research at the Museum archive in Washington. I translated the portion quoted in my paper from the German. To view this and other documents in the Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, I first accessed the Museum’s online catalog and identified files related to the Kindertransport. I then contacted Museum archivists via email, asked to examine specific files and registered as a researcher with the Museum. I examined files on December 30-31, 2013.


The Geneva Declaration shows that children’s rights received international recognition before World War II and helped me appreciate the nature of those rights and their connection to Nazi abuses and to the Kindertransport legacy. The site is maintained by the Conference of NGOs.

This letter provided me with insight into British reactions to *Kristallnacht*. It is a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, so he speaks for more people than just himself.


This letter advocating an increase in British immigration quotas shows the intense reaction citizens had to the violence of *Kristallnacht*.


Here, I obtained a better understanding of the vast array of restrictions that Nazi laws inflicted on Jews. Perusing twenty pages of restrictions in the original German helped me appreciate how oppressive life was for Jews living under Nazi rule even before mass extermination began.


This article provided me with an indication of the opposition within Britain to the Munich Pact. It suggests that the government had political reasons to attempt to improve its image. David Lloyd George was an influential politician and former prime minister who was especially popular in his native Wales. He had once favored Britain’s relationship to Nazi Germany, so his opposition to the Munich Pact suggests that disfavor with Chamberlain in Britain was strong and widespread.


This article shows international opposition to the Munich Peace Pact and indicates that the British government had to worry about its international image. Rabbi Wise was an influential American Reform Rabbi and an outspoken critic of the Nazis.


This is a further source reflecting international criticism of the Munich Peace Pact and suggesting that the British government had reason to be concerned about its image.


My interview with the son of *Kindertransport* refugee John Nohel revealed effects of the *Kindertransport* experience on the children of refugees, especially regarding their development of a strong sense of moral responsibility. Richard Nohel grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, where his father was a professor of mathematics, and now teaches high school in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This packing list for Karoline Lara Schischa, a Kindertransport child from Vienna, gave me a sense of how carefully parents of these children planned for their future needs. Perhaps this is because parents knew they might never see children again and wanted to express their love and carry out their familial duty. I examined the packing list while doing research at the Museum archive in Washington, DC.


These minutes of a meeting between Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his Cabinet suggest that their motivations in supporting the Kindertransport plan were substantially political. The site where the minutes are available is maintained by the U.K. National Archives.


I used this House of Commons debate, and Home Secretary Samuel Hoare’s speech in particular, to better understand the political discussion surrounding the decision to undertake the Kindertransport plan and to appreciate the motivations involved in its creation. The UK Parliament maintains this site.


From this House of Commons debate, I gained a better understanding of the existing educational program that was expanded in order to quickly admit Kindertransport children into Britain. The UK Parliament maintains this site.


This House of Commons discussion of the Guardianship Act of 1944 provided me a better understanding of the Act’s provisions, the concerns that gave rise to it and the new, more inclusive, attitude towards refugee children that it represented. The UK Parliament maintains this site.


This document gave me an example of the wide variety of human rights endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly and helped me understand Nazi persecution from a present-day human rights perspective. The site is maintained by the United Nations.


This document allowed me to understand the extent of the deprivations of civil rights that those of Jewish heritage suffered under the Nazis. Because it is a translation provided by a respected source, I cite it as a primary source. The site is maintained by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Here, Nicholas Winton communicated the importance of providing aid to refugee children in Czechoslovakia. His letter also asked whether it would be possible to bring these children to Britain, and if so, how. The letter is an example of Winton’s effective and energetic operation. I examined the Winton file, including an extensive set of letters, during research at the Holocaust Museum archive in Washington.


This letter demonstrates some of the ways by which Winton raised funds to transport children from Czechoslovakia to Britain. It suggests that Winton loved a challenge.


This letter concerning the plight of refugee children shows Winton’s true concern for children’s welfare and his moral motivation.


In this letter to his mother, Winton describes his circumstances and expresses his concerns. Here, he also explains why he wants his office to be distant from other less-efficient refugee offices. This source was useful because it provided insight into Winton’s feelings about other groups and his personal goals.

Secondary Sources


This excellent source provided me with a detailed account of the events leading up to the British Kindertransport, both in Europe and in Britain. It also provided comprehensive information on the operations of the Refugee Children’s Movement and similar organizations.


Curio’s article offered insights into the selection process for Kindertransport children within Nazi-controlled countries and explained why either the most needy or the most appealing were often chosen over others.


This book described the experiences of six cousins from Leipzig who were rescued by the Kindertransport and sheltered by foster families in Cambridge, U.K. It related the story behind Clara Koppold’s heartbreaking letter to her teenage niece, Paula Grünbaum, and helped me to better understand the letter.


Here, I gained a basic understanding of Winton’s work.

Fast’s book was especially useful in providing a detailed account of Kindertransport organizations other than the Refugee Children’s Movement. Her work also explained the relationships and conflicts among these groups, in particular between Orthodox Jewish organizations and others.


This exhibition book contains reproductions of the photographs and documents, as well as accompanying text, from the permanent exhibition of the Mémorial de la Shoah in Paris, France. I visited this memorial and museum in August 2013. Both the visit and the exhibition book gave me a good general history of the Holocaust. They also provided me with a way to compare the responses of different governments and people to Nazi persecution of the Jews. For example, the exhibition includes information concerning the efforts of French citizens and communities to aid Jewish refugees.


Gershon’s book provided me with a wide selection of personal reflections by Kindertransport children. Children’s reflections on their final memories of their parents were particularly moving and showed how frequently Kindertransport children departed from home believing that their parents would soon join them.


Gilbert’s book gave me a background understanding of the importance of Kristallnacht to later events, including the Kindertransport.


This book gave me an excellent background understanding of the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the debate surrounding its adoption.


With the help of Gottlieb’s book, I was able to get a good basic understanding of the Kindertransport program and those who organized it. It was especially helpful in describing key participants in the Refugee Children’s Movement.


This discussion gave me insights into the psychological issues faced by adult Kindertransport refugees and about their sense of social responsibility to current child refugees.


Hacker’s documentary provided me with my first chance to hear now-adult Kindertransport refugees discuss their experiences. It gave me insight into parents’ motivations, the impacts of the transports on children’s psychological states, parents’
sense of love and familial responsibility and the effects the *Kindertransport* had on the children of refugees. Because the interviews included in the documentary were edited, I list it as a secondary source.


This collection of interviews with *Kindertransport* children, parents, foster parents and organizers offered detailed accounts of experiences and interactions of those involved with the *Kindertransport*. The interviews it contains are edited, so I list it as a secondary source.


Newman’s discussion provided me with an overview of Nazi denials of Jewish civil rights between 1933 and 1938. It also provided an account of the historical circumstances preceding and surrounding these denials.


From Nicholas’s book I was able to gain an excellent understanding of the context in which the Nazis came to power, the explanation for narrowly restricted immigration quotas and the conditions under which *Kindertransport* children lived in Britain.


Rabben’s work provided me further grounds for concluding that British society of the 1940’s came to accept *Kindertransport* refugees as fellow citizens.


Rutter offers a helpful discussion of refugee children sheltered in Britain during World War II. Her work was especially useful for understanding how Christian and Catholic refugee children came to Britain and how they were housed and cared for.


This article offers insights into the ways in which the Refugee Children’s Movement and other *Kindertransport* organizations collaborated with further groups, the Quakers in particular. The site where it is available is maintained by the Society of Friends.


Through Zahra’s work, I gained further understanding of the methods used to select children for Britain’s *Kindertransport*. 