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Winton's children in Scotland

Bachelor Thesis

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Declaration:

I declare that I have written this thesis by myself. All sources and literature, used within, have been duly cited. The work was not used to obtain the same or a similar degree.

In Prague, on the 28.06.2023

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I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my dear family and Mr. Zaoral for their unwavering support in my pursuit of this research.

Abstract

Sir Nicholas Winton, a publicly revered figure that has been the target of demythization efforts as of late, underscoring the collaborative nature of *kindertransports*, and underlining the other, so far not very well-known contributors. At the same time, the conditional aspect that allowed certain groups of *kindertransportees* to reach outstanding levels of notability on their own professional merit, and the background in their childhood that impacted their chances of success, are generally not touched upon. Using comparative, qualitative methods of background analysis on a geographically limited group of Winton's rescues that contains such a number of outstanding individuals, allows us to gather material that may be compared with quantitative data, indicative of wider trends. This gives us an opportunity to look where similarities with other groups of lesser known *kindertransportees* start on personal stories, describe what role Scotland played in their nurture as a migrant destination, and analyse whether Winton's refugees form a self-standing coherent group in this sense.

Abstrakt

Sir Nicholas Winton se poslední dobou, jako idol hrdiny stal terčem snah o demytizaci, přičemž bývá vyzdvihován kolaborativní aspekt evakuací tzv. *Kindertransportů* a na světlo přichází doposud nepříliš známé osoby, které se na nich podílely. Zároveň však podmínky, které umožnily určitým skupinám těchto uprchlíků dosáhnout nebývalé pozoruhodnosti ve vlastní profesi a role jejich dětství, které se podepsalo na jejich šanci na úspěch, zůstávají mimo centrum pozornosti. Užitím komparativních, kvalitativních metod na analýzu zázemí takovéto zeměpisně ohraničené skupiny, zahrnující větší počet pozoruhodných jedinců, nám umožní získat materiál který pak lze srovnat s kvantitativními daty, naznačujícími širší trendy. To nám umožňuje hledat podobnost s ostatními, méně známými skupinami uprchlíků z *Kindertransportů* na bázi životních příběhů, popsat jakou roli hrálo Skotsko v jejich výchově jako samotný cíl migrační vlny a analyzovat, zda Wintonovy děti v tomto smyslu tvoří ucelenou skupinu.

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Introduction

Ever since the unravelling of his remarkable deeds preceding the Second world war, Sir Nicholas Winton has been subject to a great deal of published academical work and media attention. Great emphasis is, however, generally put either on his character and life story specifically, or the circumstances of the transport and the process itself, including stories of smuggling or other creative ways to bypass the often-uncooperative bureaucracy machine and other adverse conditions. Popular perception usually draws a line precisely at this point – tending to look past the existence of organisations and efforts Winton was a part of. Elsewhere, light is also shed on other numerous so-called *kindertransports* – evacuations of refugee children, with a predominantly Jewish background. In contemporary Holocaust-related academic literature, Winton’s effort is therefore commonly analysed as part of a broader movement to save persecuted children from the horrors that would await them with the application of Nuremberg Laws, especially considering the complete failure of the Évian conference to spearhead a state-led relief-emigration effort for the endangered Jews. The popular narrative is, nonetheless, understandable. After all, when the rescuers’ story was covered for the first time in the 1980s, Winton was (aside from the notable Bill Barazetti, whose role would get uncovered at a later point) likely the only rescuer still alive and fit in all regards to be interviewed and put in a public spotlight. His focus on Jewish children from Czechoslovakia also made him a publicly well-known and revered figure among Czechs, further solidifying his symbolic status.

The specific case of transports organised by Winton also bears another common denominator – they’re comparatively well-mapped and researched, thus establishing firm accounts of the journey and preparatory work, but also leave a healthy thread to follow up on the fates of the transportees themselves – an area of research that hasn’t received nearly as much attention as the circumstances of the transport (though this was partially remedied in recent years). A layman’s glimpse on the fates of ‘Winton’s children’ reveals a striking number of individuals, who were so successful in their careers and life’s work to the extent that they achieved a certain degree of international recognition. While this could be easily brushed off and blamed on disproportionate media attention, focused on the best-known group of rescues, it is hard to forgo certain questions that come to mind: How significant was the impact of the rescues’ host country on their societal prospects? Did these new opportunities differ strongly from prospects they’d have had at home, if it weren’t for life-endangering persecution? Have the circumstances afforded them with a better education compared to their country of origin? Given that the children originated in a certain structure and social class – many of them were born in reasonably well-off families – does this mean that a sizable number of individuals was robbed of a potentially better outlook in terms of education and resources for their future life? Or was it the contrary? And most importantly – did they retain cultural ties to their previous home and their predominantly Jewish culture?

It's hard to find a satisfactory answer, considering that hundreds of life stories would have to be analysed just from Winton’s transports alone, expanded to several thousand if we were to take all *kindertransportees* into account. But within these rescues, there is a comparatively narrow selection of individuals that stands out when closely examined – specifically children who were placed into foster homes and institutions in Scotland. Upon closer inspection, they seem to stand out especially when it comes to their notability in later

life. They also seem to exhibit a greater degree of global mobility when compared to their peers who ended up elsewhere after leaving their home country. Why is this highly migratory tendency unique to Scotland-based rescues? Moreover, is it possible that this is tied to the perceived international success of these people? Some of these traits and phenomena, are seemingly shared among all *kindertransportees* whose destination was Scotland, others are unique to Winton's group only. Coupled with relatively good accounts of their life stories, this provides an impulse and motivation to study them in greater detail, looking for emerging patterns, searching for an explanation of their prominence and the role Scotland, its institutions, and other local factors that may have influenced their later success and prospects.

Questions and goals

This publication aims to uncover commonalities and attempt to explain similarities between the *kindertransportees* rescued through Winton's transports who ended up emplaced in Scotland, including their comparative outlook on acculturation, reached degrees of education, and possible internationalisation. Specifically, this entails the following questions that are utilised as primary research guidelines, through which it is hoped to establish a root cause for their similarity in the aspects mentioned above:

- Was the environment the rescues were placed into substantially different from their expected outlook at home in material and societal regards?
- Would the rescues' educational opportunities and achievements significantly outmatch their expected schooling prospects at home?
- Was there a substantial difference between Scottish schooling and schooling in the rest of Britain, as afforded to the rescued children?
- Why were Winton's children in Scotland so prone to emigrate elsewhere and do these rates differ significantly from other *kindertransportees*' emigration rates in Britain?
- Did the children grow up accustomed to Jewish religion and culture, or were they growing up in a Scottish environment and did this differ significantly to groups in other parts of Britain?
- What were the primary means of choosing emplacement in Scotland for the rescues? Was there a core foster group or institution that influenced their commonality?
- Did Czechoslovak rescues impact the historical and contemporary community of Czech expatriates in Scotland?

Research methods & available sources

While the ideal way of approach would be a controlled interview with surviving *kindertransportees*, there is a very limited number of surviving individuals from Winton's transports. Unfortunately, most of them are not fit enough anymore to partake in in-depth research of their wartime lives and post-war fates, while the remaining pool of potential interviewees is unfeasible and impractical for a work of this scope. This forces us to resort to published literature and work with existing records of their fates. Luckily, many of these are up to standards for the purpose of this thesis and utilising several sources on a single person allows us to puzzle together a greater interpretative picture. Thus, the methods used within will be primarily dependent on a comparative analysis of individual biographical research (which the relatively limited circle of relevant individuals permits), which shall subsequently

serve as our means to establish a line of comparison against quantitative cohort data. Apart from existing projects by oral history conservationists and other publishing bodies (such as Post Bellum's archive - *Memory of Nations*), we will also refer to contemporary literature on *kindertransports*. While academic literature is generally not likely to provide us with specific insight on Winton's rescued children as a focus group (since, as has been mentioned above, contemporary research rather tends to approach the *kindertransportees* as a wider, more holistic group), it will provide us with valuable insight into more systemic trends and tendencies among other affected children, many of whom were emplaced in Scotland too. This thesis was guided onto the relevant literature by the published work of Andrea Hammel, whose widespread work on pre-war refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe is a cornerstone of many academical texts on the matter. In fact, Hammel is credited with somewhat similarly conceived research texts, but centred on Wales and utilising an even more holistic approach (including adult refugees and relief effort directed at Central Europe in general). A second major researcher to take into consideration, even specialising in Scotland-based pre-war rescues, is Frances Williams, who dedicated an entire monography to the topic at hand – *The Forgotten Kindertransportees: The Scottish Experience*. Primary manuscripts (similar to and including Doreen Warriner's *Winter in Prague*) as first-hand accounts of the relief work at hand and the challenges that played a role in the children's emplacement, may also be frequently called upon. Lastly, biographies and self-written accounts from the survivors themselves will be key to establish links against general cohort trends (generally extracted from datasets, built on f.e. the Association of Jewish Refugees' 2007 surveys, which are commonly used in contemporary historiographic literature on the topic). My knowledge of the German language will also warrant use of both period documents on the transports themselves and other holocaust-related literature, while many interviews of the rescues are available in Czech and English, combining a rich selection of sources from three languages.

Kindertransports and their background

Situation in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia

Ever since the rise of Hitler's NSDAP to power in Germany, Jewish emigration was generally on the rise. Throughout the years 1933-35, Jewish refugees, facing immediate persecution were mainly bound for France or other continental destinations, but direct routes overseas were barely utilised.¹ Nevertheless, the severity of the situation altogether didn't seem as threatening. The largest organisation offering consultations and help with emigration, *Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden*, didn't even consider a massive refugee wave to be likely at this point². In fact, Jewish emigration even declined throughout the year 1934 and in the face of partially imposed restrictions on the number of accepted refugees across Europe, the *Hilfsverein* declared that German Jews as a whole consider the country their homeland and that they would continue to actively shape it and participate in its public affairs, effectively rendering all outgoing migration to the public as purely economical in nature. The *Hilfsverein*'s position effectively reinforced the post-Depression era public perception of Jewish refugees as a threatening inflation of workforces in western Europe, suffering from

¹ Mark Wischnitzer, 'Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938', *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 1 (1940): 26.

² Wischnitzer, 27.

high unemployment at the time³ (retrospectively, the presence of a foreign labour force turned out to be a rather minor contributor to it, esp. when compared to the impacts of inflexible fiscal policies at the time⁴).

The situation deteriorated rapidly with the introduction of the Nuremberg laws in 1935. While persecution was arguably life-threatening for Jews at this stage, German officials were, at least in official terms, still trying to foment a widespread expulsion, as opposed to outright liquidation. The Haavara Agreement between Germany and various Zionist organisations, concerning the advance transfer of Jewish-owned German goods (which turned into one of the few feasible ways to get personal Jewish capital out of the country), had enabled a secure migratory framework for thousands of Jewish refugees to Palestine since 1933.⁵ However, the 1936 Arab uprising and British reluctance to keep Palestine open for emigration allowed only for a very short timeframe during which migration was relatively unobstructed. Even as Jewish rights in Germany were curtailed and acts of violence escalated, institutions that guided Jewish communities in self-help continued to function. The Jewish *Reichsvertretung* (originally founded and presided over by rabbi Leo Baeck) in its varying incarnations was still a reasonably independent body and maintained an open connection to foreign relief organizations which lasted all the way through to the outbreak of the war – but crucially focused mostly on the relief effort for Jews, who stayed in Germany (before eventually. Although the organisation was formally intended as a representative body for the collective interests of Jewish folk in Germany, it continually suffered from legitimacy issues because of power struggles among different congregations (and peer umbrella organisations), not to mention the divide between orthodox and liberal Jews, crowned with an outright rejection of all internal reconstruction efforts by Zionist organisations that focused their efforts on Palestine. Meanwhile, the *Hilfsverein*, responsible for aiding most Jewish migration through and from Germany since its inception in 1901, became itself heavily dependable on outside aid. In its 1936 report, the leadership acknowledges a shift in its abilities to sustain emigration on its own, mentioning the *American Joint Distribution Committee*, the *Council for German Jewry* and the *Jewish Colonization Association* as notable partners in emigration affairs⁶. Despite this, the *Hilfsverein* continued to focus on Eastern European Jews just as much – consistent with its main pre-1933 line of duty. Travelling subsidies, provided by the organisation, reached an all-time high at the end of 1935, but exhausted the organisation which would now face the issue of increased border closures for migrants among British dominions and in other prospective destinations.

Through 1937, the Nazi state was embroiled in a rethinking of its original strategy on Jewish expulsion. Jews had already been stripped of their citizenship, but still had their passports, because the Nuremberg citizenship law intended to administratively differentiate the remaining *Reichsbürger* through the *Reichsbürgerbrief* – a certificate that was separate from existing identification documents⁷ (though these were actually never printed and handed

³ Wischnitzer, 28.

⁴ T. Syme, 'Public Policy and Unemployment in Interwar France: An Empirical Approach', 2000, 21, <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:a8e2f569-7f20-413d-a02f-2cf4fcef886b>.

⁵ Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust: Its History and Meaning*, Revised third edition (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2016), 142.

⁶ *Arbeitsbericht des Zentralausschusses der deutschen Juden für Hilfe und Aufbau (Berlin, Germany)*, 1, accessed 28 June 2024, http://archive.org/details/arbeitsberichtde00unse_0.

⁷ 'Erste Verordnung Zum Reichsbürgergesetz', 100 Reichsgesetzblatt § 2 - (2) (1935).

out⁸). Contradicting statements and opinions were put forward by the Nazi regime in light of the British Peel Commission's forthcoming conclusion (the body was appointed after the Arab uprising in Palestine to submit future plans for the governance of Mandatory Palestine). The commission's principal recommendation would shape the future of emigration to Palestine. Neurath's foreign ministry distributed instructions for German embassies in June, rejecting a concentrated Jewish state (positing that this would merely give the 'world Jewry' a base of operations) and supporting expulsions that would fragment the Jewish population further.⁹ But Hitler's own statements contradicted this – mentioning on several occasions throughout the summer of 1937 and in January 1938 that he was in favour of Jewish emigration to Palestine.¹⁰

However, even with some 140'000 Jews leaving the country by 1938¹¹, the overall number soon surpassed the pre-1933 resident numbers after Austria got annexed. This is owed to the large population of Jews in Vienna (which possessed the 3rd largest concentration of Jewish inhabitants out of all cities in Europe).¹² Prior to the *Anschluss*, Austria was generally considered a relatively safe environment (albeit even here, death rates among the Jewish population were on the rise and discrimination was increasingly widespread – especially that of the economic kind¹³) because prior dependency of the state on foreign aid and international efforts to keep it stable made it unfeasible to target Jews too overtly, even though acts of antisemitism enjoyed considerable popular support and the Austrians. Additionally, the Catholic church, on which Dollfuss' and Schuschnigg's autocracies heavily depended, was opposed to strictly racially profiled antisemitic laws by principle. Discrimination based on religious adherence with explicit rejection of the race theory still existed¹⁴, but it was feared that this would likely provoke a major conversion tendency among Jews to escape the persecution laws, thereby endangering the state's foundation again as public opinion could easily blame the church for helping the Jews make an indirect escape. Policy was therefore comparatively lenient, and the Jewish population remained stable.¹⁵ Within the first weeks of *Anschluss*, violent discriminatory policy was carried over from Germany and thousands of Jews tried to leave the country through aid organisations, but some 4'000 emigrated purely through their own efforts.¹⁶ The *Hilfsverein* now had thousands of prospective emigrants seek advice in its offices (up from several hundred weekly in 1937), and interest in leaving the country grew higher than ever before, but an increasing number of states closed borders to Jewish refugees, so these people lacked an accessible destination.¹⁷ Momentary hope was brought by the announcement that an international convention would take place to deal with Jewish emigration – the Évian conference.

⁸ Ingo von Münch, *Die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit: Vergangenheit - Gegenwart - Zukunft* (Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 65.

⁹ Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (OUP Oxford, 2010), 67.

¹⁰ Longerich, 68.

¹¹ Wischnitzer, 'Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938', 30.

¹² Wischnitzer, 31.

¹³ Daniel Mähr, *Antisemitismus Und Die Vaterländische Front*, 2014, 82, <http://unipub.uni-graz.at/obvugr/242730>.

¹⁴ Mähr, 46.

¹⁵ Mähr, 122–24.

¹⁶ Wischnitzer, 'Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938', 31.

¹⁷ Wischnitzer, 32.

This gathering was purposefully hosted on French soil – the usual facilities of the League of Nations in Geneva could not be used due to Swiss concerns that their relationship with Germany would be poisoned if the conference took place there.¹⁸ U.S. president Roosevelt was a major proponent of the meeting and emphasised the need for a common participative plan to either help the Jews get out of danger. Jewish organisations eagerly awaited the results, and so did the Nazi regime, with Hitler mentioning that he’s hoping for ‘practical aid’ to materialise on the side of countries that have sympathies with ‘Jewish criminals’ – being still in favour of Jewish emigration himself.¹⁹ On paper, America was one of the most welcoming countries for Jewish refugees, with a yearly limit for up to 27’370 immigrants from Germany and Austria.²⁰ However, prior to the Évian conference, this limit was never utilised to its full extent, with the U.S. thus underperforming in the number of immigrants it would absorb on real terms. Up to this point, a lion’s share of Jewish emigration was directed at British dominions – especially the Palestinian mandate, with thousands also arriving f.e. in the Union of South Africa prior to 1937, when the Aliens Act was tailored to stop the influx of Jewish refugees (save for a later concession stranded family members who already had relatives in South Africa), without explicitly mentioning this as a goal.²¹ The conference itself – aimed at establishing an international relief effort, descended into an echo of noncommitment from the participating nations. Non-governmental organisations attended the negotiations on their own volition (among them was Marie Schmolka, who’d play a key role in co-organising refugee transports as part of the British Refugee Committee of Czechoslovakia just a few months later²²) but were not permitted to speak or establish themselves as parties to a potential international agreement. The hastily established *Sub-committee for the Reception of Organizations Concerned with the Relief of Political Refugees coming from Germany (including Austria)* was created in part to allow a select list of Jewish representatives to appear at a formal hearing and testify to the current situation. But the hearing ended up being a frustrating experience for both the committee (which was short on time and decided to hear 23 individuals on a single afternoon in separate blocks of 10 minutes, later reduced to 5) and the Jewish representatives themselves (who generally possessed no experience in appearing at a hearing and felt as though they were subject to a rushed trial).²³ Further questions were practically never asked and most of the procedural time was taken up by translating the statements to French.

The conference itself ended on an empty note for the Jews. Most countries underscored their existing contributions to refugee relief and expressed sympathies with the unprecedented brutality they had to face in Germany but stopped short of condemning the Nazi regime for in a closing resolution. European countries and British dominions bemoaned their own lamentable employment figures and economic output, arguing that they were in no

¹⁸ ‘Switzerland and the Refugees: Jews Turned Back at the Border 1938-1939’, accessed 26 June 2024, <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/academic/switzerland-and-the-refugees-fleeing-nazism.html>.

¹⁹ Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES, ‘HITLER IS PLEASED TO GET RID OF FOES; In Comment on Hull’s Plan He Says Some Opponents of Nazis Deserve to Die’, *The New York Times*, 27 March 1938, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1938/03/27/archives/hitler-is-pleased-to-get-rid-of-foes-in-comment-on-hulls-plan-he.html>.

²⁰ Wischnitzer, ‘Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938’, 34.

²¹ G C Cuthbertson, ‘Jewish Immigration as an Issue in South African Politics, 1937-39’, n.d., 126.

²² Anna Hájková, ‘Marie Schmolka and the Group Effort’, *History Today* 68, no. 12 (December 2018): 44.

²³ Paul R. Bartrop, *The Evian Conference of 1938 and the Jewish Refugee Crisis* (Cham, SWITZERLAND: Springer International Publishing AG, 2017), 85–86, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuni/detail.action?docID=5049858>.

condition to do more and accept refugees in greater quantities and would not try.²⁴ Latin American countries emphasised the agricultural nature of their economies and demands for a swift integration²⁵, which practically turned out to be country-specific conditions, impenetrable for the largely urban segment of German and Austrian Jews²⁶ (the *Hilfsverein* tried to remedy this by investing into agricultural artisanship requalification²⁷). A notable exception was Bolivia, whose representatives weren't participating for most of the conference but left closing remarks that emphasised humanity above policy – becoming an outstanding example of Jewish refugee acceptance throughout the most crucial years. Of particular importance was Lord Winterton's closing speech on behalf of the UK, shattering any hope of restarted mass migration to Palestine, and considering it to be, in light of the investigative conclusions centred on the Arab uprising and administration of Mandatory Palestine, "wholly untenable".²⁸ In part, authority of this conference was also undermined by the fact that most of the official state representatives were people possessing little executive power and prominence. None of the countries sent a head of state as part of the delegation, instead putting forward the occasional government minister as the highest-ranking individual at best – an unsurprising roster, considering that the conference was largely devolving into a political excuse for reluctance to help the Jews.²⁹ After its conclusion, German propaganda embarked on a spree of sarcastic remarks at the conference's expense. The hypocrisy of western democracies (who were abridged, in typical Nazi fashion, as 'Marxists') was pointed out in the words of condemnation aimed at German brutality, which was coupled with a complete lack willingness to respond. The Reich used this opportunity to once again dehumanise Jews as individuals whom no one in the world would want to take in.³⁰ This was followed with harsher curtailment of Jewish rights, eliminating some of the last (usually highly qualified) professions Jews could legally work in (or limiting the scope of their services solely to Jewish customers). By October, Jewish passports would be declared invalid (though permanent emigration was still possible) and violent expulsion strategies would transform into a focus on directly eliminating Jews, starting with the *Kristallnacht*.³¹

Momentary hope was, however, gained with the continual establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (ICR/IGCR), which was projected to work in cooperation with the High Commission for Refugees from Germany and form a tangible solution for the refugee crisis – initially spearheaded by ideas for a resettlement scheme, negotiated with the Germans and willing destination countries. These attempts were, however, deeply ineffective (which eventually led to the ICR's disbandment after the war started, with no particular success attributed to its name).³² The committee only met for the first time in August 1938, and within a month the situation would become increasingly complex again

²⁴ Bartrop, 57–62, 70–76.

²⁵ This was notably also the case for Trujillo's Dominican Republic – contrary to the oft-repeated erroneous claim that an offer to take in 100'000 Jewish refugees was made by its representative. The figure comes from a press release, published later that year and pertains to a general migration outlook for the country – appealing on agricultural professionals around the world, not Jews specifically, to consider the beneficial conditions that Trujillo's government would supposedly provide.

²⁶ Bartrop, *The Evian Conference of 1938 and the Jewish Refugee Crisis*, 52–70.

²⁷ Wischnitzer, 'Jewish Emigration from Germany 1933-1938', 29.

²⁸ Bartrop, *The Evian Conference of 1938 and the Jewish Refugee Crisis*, 98.

²⁹ Bartrop, 103–5.

³⁰ Bartrop, 101.

³¹ Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 152.

³² Bartrop, *The Evian Conference of 1938 and the Jewish Refugee Crisis*, 100.

with the Munich agreement, as yet another safe haven for Jews was brought to the brink of inevitable collapse. The situation also worsened as other categories of refugees were forced out of the Sudetenland as well, appearing on the newly established border of Czecho-Slovakia (colloquially known as the Second republic) with an uncertain future.

After the Munich agreement

The newly developed situation created something unique that hadn't occurred with Austria, which had simply been annexed at once. When the Third Reich took possession of the Sudetenland, thousands of Czechs, antifascist Germans and Jews tried to escape inland, while exiles who fled Germany and resided in Czechoslovakia now found themselves endangered by Hitler's encroaching Reich once again. The situation was dire as pressure mounted on remnants of a country that was ill-prepared to handle such a massive population shift. Border police frequently turned away German-speaking refugees, including many Jews³³, but temporary inland camps began to fill up regardless.³⁴ The newly established Czechoslovak government observed a tight line between subservience to Hitler's Germany and a somewhat independent diplomatic course. In some ways used similar practices to the Austrian pre-*Anschluss* dictatorship – instituting press censorship, ruling by means of an analogy to Hitler's "Enabling Act", and grouping all suitable parties into a single ruling bloc and allowing only a token official opposition.³⁵ Largely however, discrimination against Jews would be spearheaded by private organisations (f.e. the Bar Council and Medical Association – which kicked all Jewish members out on grounds of overrepresentation³⁶) or political groups (f.e. the youth wing of the National unity party, which took photographs of 'Aryans' in Jewish shops to shame them³⁷). While the government occasionally joined in on the rhetoric, its pursuit of a British loan that'd relieve the disjointed economy made openly antisemitic laws practically impossible to implement, leaving most of that legislation in an eternal drafting phase and leaving PM Rudolf Beran to promise merely "a swift solution to Jewish emigration", to the great dismay of fascists and hardline conservatives.³⁸ Crucially, a portion of this loan would be used to secure the refugee camps, while another part would be used to facilitate Jewish emigration. State refugee relief existed in the Second republic under the auspices of the newly created Institute of refugee care, but its capacities were constantly overburdened and largely focused on the reintegration of ethnic Czechs from the Sudetenland.³⁹

The loan, guaranteed by Britain and France, had been smaller than requested – 8 million pounds were provided in credit, and a further 4 million were given as a gift. This was

³³ Markéta Metlická, 'ŽIDÉ V ČECHÁCH A NA MORAVĚ OD 1. ŘÍJNA 1938 DO 21. ČEVNA 1939' (Bakalářská práce, Západočeská univerzita v Plzni, Faculty of Education, 2013), 20, <https://theses.cz/id/kiwmak/?lang=sk>.

³⁴ Francis Dostál Raška, 'Uprchlícké Tábory v Čechách a Na Moravě Po Mnichovském Diktátu', *Soudobé Dějiny / CJCH* 8, no. 4 (1 December 2001): 734.

³⁵ Stanislav Balík et al., *Politický systém českých zemí 1848-1989*, vol. M (Masarykova univerzita, 2007), 84–96, <https://is.muni.cz/publication/833286/cs/Politicky-system-ceskych-zemi-1848-1989/Balik-Hlousek-Holzer-Sedo>.

³⁶ 'Druhá Republika a Židovští Uprchlíci | Holocaust', accessed 27 June 2024, <https://www.holocaust.cz/dejiny/soa/zide-v-ceskych-zemich-a-konecne-reseni-zidovske-otazky/druha-republika-a-zidovsti-uprchlici/#remark-11>.

³⁷ Metlická, 'ŽIDÉ V ČECHÁCH A NA MORAVĚ OD 1. ŘÍJNA 1938 DO 21. ČEVNA 1939', 17.

³⁸ Metlická, 19.

³⁹ Jakub Hablovič, 'Právní úprava uprchlictví v ČSR do roku 1939' (Diplomová práce, Západočeská univerzita v Plzni, Fakulta právnická, 2014), 32, <https://theses.cz/id/3h84b3/>.

in stark contrast to the requested 30 million by the government. Out of the gifted money, 500,000 pounds were allocated solely for Jewish emigration to Palestine, and the British government insisted that the rest should be used for aid in general emigration as well – appointing Robert J. Stopford (who'd already been acquainted with Czechoslovakia as a member of the Runciman mission that was sent to investigate ethnic tensions in the Sudetenland after Hitler's overtures) as a refugee liaison at the British legation in Prague.⁴⁰ Capital flight caused by emigrations was starting to put a large strain on the Second republic's national bank, and hefty fees were imposed on Czechoslovaks, Jews and Sudeten Germans, who wanted to take higher sums abroad, alike. The limits, valid for ethnic Jews and Sudeten Germans, were more draconic and dictated emigrants to leave behind a half of all money in excess of 7500 Kčs, while Czechoslovaks would only surrender up to a third in excess of 15'000 Kčs. The hard ceiling for exported money was two-tiered in a similar manner.⁴¹ The British loans helped alleviate this issue somewhat and were further supported by Czech permissions to export goods in a similar manner to the 1933 Haavara agreements – a move that helped procure immigration certificates to Palestine for hundreds of Jews. Yet as unstable as the situation was financially, money was rarely the main issue for prospective Jewish migrants (when Hitler occupied the Second republic, only a fifth of the money had been spent) – the lack of sufficient slots for official settlement in Palestine was (although the British government agreed to reserve 2500 slots for Jews from Czechoslovakia – a figure that still couldn't keep up with demand, especially as the actual number of certificates amounted to less). This is where various underground organisations, that tried to smuggle Jews into the mandate territory illegally, came into play. The British government obviously couldn't be approached to support this, but the Second republic was glad to aid any and all emigration prospects. The transport in question would then simply have a different official destination, frequently in South America. These illegal crossings usually originated in Slovakia and took advantage of the Danube's status as international waters.⁴²

Jews who were bound for South American countries faced similar issues like their earlier compatriots in Germany and occupied Austria. Hasty requalification courses were organised in Jewish communities to turn lawyers and doctors into agricultural workers and craftsmen. Sometimes, academical titles would be deliberately omitted from newly issued passports, to increase the chances that a visa would be granted. Some Jews also tried their luck by applying for visa to Britain, but these were hard to get by, in contrast to political refugees – f.e. German social democrats from the Sudetenland, who had a sympathetic support base to fall upon that was relatively well-connected and could arrange their visa approval through effective political pressure. This coincided with the activities of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, whose associates were frequently members or adherents of the Labour party. A sense of urgency could also be more easily conveyed, which British preferences for the accepted refugee's nationality reflected⁴³. Even as brutal massacres of the *Kristallnacht* were perpetrated by the Nazi regime, Germany was still officially in favour Jewish emigration (an impression that wouldn't bear to stand a closer look behind the curtains, as the question of emigration progressed into a more nuanced conflict of various

⁴⁰ Hana Velecká, 'Britská Pomoc Uprchlíkům z Československa Od Okupace Do Vypuknutí Války v Roce 1939', *Soudobé Dějiny / CJCH* 8, no. 4 (1 December 2001): 662.

⁴¹ 'Druhá Republika a Židovští Uprchlíci | Holocaust'.

⁴² 'Druhá Republika a Židovští Uprchlíci | Holocaust'.

⁴³ Velecká, 'Britská Pomoc Uprchlíkům z Československa Od Okupace Do Vypuknutí Války v Roce 1939', 665.

factions in favour of expulsion or elimination, within the German administrative sphere, especially after street violence became more commonplace due to the *Kristallnacht* massacre⁴⁴), but would likely eliminate political opponents internally without giving them a chance to escape.

Relief work in Prague & Winton's role

After the Sudetenland occupation, there was little in terms of immediate emigration relief and prospects were bleak. After Doreen Warriner travelled to Prague with a few hundred pounds of personal money and donations from friends, she toured the refugee camps set up outside of Prague with Wenzel Jaksch – leader of the *Deutsche sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei in der Tschechoslowakischen Republik*, the prime social democratic German party in the country. Coordinated humanitarian efforts had yet to materialise, because significant funding had not been made available so far. Later, she found a rather small group of Labour party representatives and associates at the British legation. William Gillies and David Grenfell had plotted a transit of roughly 250 people who'd receive pre-approved visa from foreign affairs secretary, Viscount Halifax, composed of leading social democrats, communists and other antifascists from the Sudetenland and their families. The lack of guarantors and associated downpayment, required by the British immigration administration due to concerns of trade unions that refugees would engage in the job market (which they were prohibited from doing by law), was to be sorted out later. The transit could not go through Germany (on the assumption that these people were already on the list of either the Gestapo or the SD and would be arrested). In addition, rail service was suspended and certainly not running to the Polish border at the moment. Warriner and Grenfell succeeded in cooperating with the Czechoslovak Travel Agency *Čedok*, which agreed to send out chartered trains through Poland to ports in the Baltic Sea, where they'd board ocean liners to Britain. The transfer was successful, and the initial transport of 50 people was soon joined by more, until all visa-holding Germans got out. This was a proof of concept that encouraged further migration through chartered trains (and later flights). When the Lord Mayor's Fund was consulted for visa obtainment, financial resources and other organising action, Warriner's efforts were confronted with the prevalent belief that long-term action, spread over the course of many months and possibly years, was preferable as the Sudeten Germans were expected to eventually return to Germany and that the fund was to be used for accommodations in refugee camps. Jews from the Sudetenland were generally understood to fall within this category as well (given that they were predominantly German speakers).⁴⁵

In November, Sir Walter Layton stopped in Prague, visited some of the refugee camps and entrusted Warriner with the News Chronicle fund and local representation of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, to distribute immediate aid. He also contributed significantly to HICEM⁴⁶ – an umbrella organisation focused on Jewish Zionist emigration that merged the internationally operating Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the Jewish Colonization Association, and Emigdirect. The originally spread-out organisations formed the backbone for one of the most robust networks for Jewish emigration across

⁴⁴ Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 156.

⁴⁵ Doreen Warriner, 'Winter in Prague', *The Slavonic and East European Review* 62, no. 2 (1984): 209–19.

⁴⁶ Warriner, 216.

Europe (and even continued to operate on the continent after war broke out).⁴⁷ Marie Schmolka was a notable associate with HICEM and was later instrumental in co-organising the Prague *kindertransports* with Nicholas Winton.⁴⁸ At this point, Warriner and her colleagues had enough manpower to mostly focus on the work in Prague itself, not having to accompany the trains by herself – except for emergencies – as was the case when *Čedok* and the *Gdynia-America Shipping Lines* conspired to try and ship the refugees exclusively through their low-frequency schedule liners (which was deemed to be an unnecessary risk and delay, provided that alternative boats ran on the route to Britain).⁴⁹

At the same time, Jews became more than ever directly endangered after *Kristallnacht* violence overtook the country, marking a departure from the sly, underhanded tactics used by the Nazis up to this point. Göring and Himmler were furious with Goebbels for riling up such a large-scale, publicly visible attack against the Jews (ostensibly as retribution for the murder of Ernst vom Rath) – afraid of the public and international reaction (and the latter also because he thought the SS was not informed sufficiently in advance).⁵⁰ Internationally, the pogrom garnered a plethora of negative responses, mostly diplomatic protests and public outcry or manifestations abroad. One of the very few positive, tangible effects was the debate on “Racial, religious and political minorities”, held in the UK’s House of Commons ten days later at the behest of Labour MP Philip Noel-Baker. Present at this sitting was Grenfell (who’d returned from Prague by this point) and Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare. The debate was largely affirming the tough situation surrounding the visa issuance (Hoare mentioned that an unaltered policy meant the consulates would continue to have a daily maximum throughput of 50-70 documents in face of thousands of applications, but that he much preferred this to a general easing, which would necessitate finite quota on the number of acceptable refugees). Ultimately, nothing about the process was changed, with old arguments about unemployment overwhelming the floor once again. The final resolution called for international effort to solve the refugee crisis and indirectly appealed back to the Évian conference (to which many references were made in the speeches pertaining to this motion):

“That this House notes with profound concern the deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious, and political minorities in Europe, and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem, would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy.”⁵¹

Nevertheless, in face of this debate and an appeal for aid by Jewish organisations on the 15th of November, a measure was later approved by cabinet that allowed for unaccompanied children under the age of 17 to be admitted to Britain, as long as a guarantee

⁴⁷ z‘EHRI - HICEM’, accessed 27 June 2024, https://portal.ehri-project.eu/authorities/ehri_cb-395.

⁴⁸ Hájková, ‘Marie Schmolka and the Group Effort’, 44.

⁴⁹ Warriner, ‘Winter in Prague’, 217.

⁵⁰ Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, 155.

⁵¹ ‘RACIAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL MINORITIES. (Hansard, 21 November 1938)’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1938/nov/21/racial-religious-and-political-minorities>.

of 50£ was put down to cover their eventual emigration from Britain.⁵² The meeting was not public and whether there was a limiting target number that was aimed for is unknown.⁵³

After Christmas, the London stockbroker Nicholas Winton had to abort his annual skiing trip with Martin Blake who went to Prague, receiving a telegram several days later, that read:

“600 children in Prague and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia urgently require emigration to England. 300 originally from Germany and Austria, 300 Sudetens and No Mans Land. Please stress seriousness of position to Council for German Jewry. Real danger expulsion necessitates equal treatment with German and Austrian Children.”⁵⁴

The telegram was sent by Blake, Marie Schmolka and Hannah Steiner (president of the Women’s International Zionist Organization’s local branch⁵⁵). In a matter of days, Winton was on his way to join his friend in Prague, unaware of the specifics of the situation on the ground, and only filled in by Blake after he flew in.⁵⁶ At first, Winton joined Warriner’s new secretary – Bill Barazetti, a former agent of the Czechoslovak intelligence, who spied on Germany, but blew his cover. Upon his return, the intelligence directorate severed ties with him, and lacking employment, he became a Red Cross volunteer and subsequently worked for the BCRC, also posing as bait for German agents who tried to penetrate the organisation, leading them off the trail and keeping an overview of their activities. The two men bonded quickly and spent the whole day receiving a long line of mostly women, who’d come to plea for help at Warriner’s door. Handing out meagre sums of money for local sustainment from Warriner’s tiny budget was unfortunately all they could do. A pregnant Catholic woman in particular, due to give birth in a month and unable to get help because her husband was Jewish, along with the fact that many women had been suffering with children of their own in the camps, convinced Winton that they should organise evacuations for the children, who’d so far largely been omitted from the evacuation scheme.⁵⁷ Warriner had already collected 15 parentless children from refugee camps around the country, brought her to the YWCA and found recipient foster families for them in Britain. However, on everyone’s insistence that the German antifascists were in greater danger (considering the ever-present risk of German agents locating and abducting them), she hadn’t been able to get them visa.⁵⁸

⁵² The National Archives, ‘The National Archives - Kindertransport: Britain’s Rescue Plan | The National Archives’, text, Archives Media Player (The National Archives, 26 February 2010), <https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/kindertransport-britains-rescue-plan/>.

⁵³ There seems to be an unconfirmed general understanding, that 10’000 was an actual agreed limit on unaccompanied children. This is likely due to the total intake of *kindertransportees* reaching almost 10’000 and an earlier decision of the Colonial Office to reject plans for a resettlement of 10’000 refugee children to Palestine, but has now known backing otherwise.

⁵⁴ Laura E. Brade and Rose Holmes, ‘Troublesome Sainthood: Nicholas Winton and the Contested History of Child Rescue in Prague, 1938–1940’, *History and Memory* 29, no. 1 (2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.2979/histmemo.29.1.0003>.

⁵⁵ ‘Steiner, Hannah | Encyclopedia.Com’, accessed 27 June 2024, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/steiner-hannah>.

⁵⁶ Edward Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword History, 2023), 45, <https://www.vlebooks.com/vleweb/product/openreader?id=none&isbn=9781399011518>.

⁵⁷ Abel Smith, 55.

⁵⁸ Warriner, ‘Winter in Prague’, 219.

Staying in Prague for 10 more days against the wishes of his employer, Winton set out a flurry of instructions for his mother, to find out the requirements for bringing unaccompanied minors to Britain. Meanwhile, acting on Warriner's advice, he decided to collect lists of children with as many specific details as possible. Cleverly stepping around the mistrust various refugee groups had between each other (afraid that if they'd be the first ones to send out a list, it would be given to a rival organisation, thereby diminishing the chances for their own list, as other organisations would structure their own reactively), he posed the matter as urgent, and mentioned that if he was not to receive a list, other groups that already sent them would get precedence (but this was a lie and he had none to speak of at the time). Within 5 days, he had a list totalling over 700, but with very varying degrees of details for each child. He set up interviews with parents in his room at Hotel Šroubek⁵⁹ and did guided tours of refugee camps around Prague for prominent guests who could be convinced to champion the cause in Britain (among them independent MP Eleanor Rathbone and Conservative MP Sir Harold Hales, both of whom got involved with lobbying in Britain). Winton was also along for the departure of children, guaranteed by the Barbican Mission to the Jews – a missionary organisation run by Jewish Christian converts. Winton himself was not fond of the forced dilemma of either giving up children for conversion or being unable to evacuate them (but ultimately favoured saving lives and cooperated with the Barbican Mission on several occasions). He also felt that interreligious conflict was superficial, mentioning at one point that:

“If you believe in God, then I do not understand what difference it makes if you believe as a Christian, a Jew, a Buddhist, or a Muslim. The fundamentals of all religions are basically the same: goodness, love, not to kill, and to look after your parents and those close to you. I believe people should think less about the aspects of religion that divide them and more about what these beliefs have in common, which is ethics.”⁶⁰

The KLM flight's boarding and take-off was, due to its prominence as the first true *kindertransport* – a transfer of unaccompanied minors, covered by a group of journalists, and an Associated Press reel caught Winton on camera, holding one of the children in his arms.⁶¹ This was the only *kindertransport*, whose departure Winton attended, and was notably not organised by him. Evacuations, which he held responsibility for, were not sent off by him, given his work on the transports took place in Britain. Winton was instead on the receiving side - at Liverpool Street station in London.

Trevor Chadwick and his colleague Geoff Phelps were two other notable arrivals in Prague, that'd shape the *modus operandi* of Winton's section of the BCRC. Both men represented a school in south England and were to pick two children which the school promised to take in. Following a tour of the despair in refugee camps, given by Winton, two boys were picked out, and in a sudden change of heart, a girl was added on top to be cared for by Chadwick's mother. Moved by the sight, Chadwick decided to stay in Prague and work with Winton, forming the basic dynamic under which most BCRC *kindertransports* were to be organised. All three men returned to Britain in January, Winton assembled a team, consisting of his own mother, Martin Blake and Blake's friend Barbara Willis, who acted as a

⁵⁹ Known today as 'Hotel Evropa'.

⁶⁰ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 67.

⁶¹ Nurit Grossman, 'The Emergence of the Kindertransport in Prague: The Barbican Mission to the Jews, a Unique Endeavour', *Jewish Historical Studies* 51 (2019): 216.

secretary for the British team. In the meanwhile, Trevor Chadwick departed for Prague to arrange the first *kindertransport* organised by Winton's section: 20 children were to be emplaced in available foster families that'd been offered by partnered organisations in Britain. Chadwick was proud of the flight, but ultimately sad, thinking about the hundreds of children that weren't as lucky as those he successfully accompanied on the plane to London, and returned to Prague at once.⁶²

The next batch of families and institutions, willing to take in foreign children, would not be as easy to prepare. Delays in Winton's confirmation as head of a new BCRC section by the central leadership (apparently for fears of not being able to sustain another migratory group under its wings) meant that until May, forged letterheads – bearing the marks of a BCRC section that technically didn't exist yet⁶³, were used by Winton in official communication with prospective foster homes. More planes brought children to Britain (Warriner's personal group of 15 orphans was among them) and one notable flight aimed at Sweden. Winton's 3-week stay in Prague previously brought him close to a fellow hotel guest, who claimed she worked for the Swedish Red Cross and, upon further discussion, revealed that she could arrange for a transport to Sweden. Barazetti was positive that she was a Gestapo spy and alarmed Warriner who promptly warned Winton, but he decided to risk the offer and the bet ultimately paid off, as the children arrived safely, accompanied by the woman. He never heard from her again afterwards.⁶⁴

With time, Winton started assembling his first trainload of refugees. A notable difference between the children's route to Britain and the Polish corridor, used by political emigres, was the necessity to deal with two transit countries – Germany (which wouldn't pose too many issues as Jewish emigration was still officially encouraged, and the children weren't on the Gestapo's wanted list) and the Netherlands. The Dutch were hosting approximately 25'000 Jewish refugees, mostly from Germany and Austria,⁶⁵ but were opposed to continued immigration, blaming the highly urbanised, concentrated population as unsuitable for further refugee absorption.⁶⁶ They'd require pre-approved visa from Britain to make sure that the transports would merely change to a ferry at the *Hoek van Holland*. Luckily, the procedure for their obtainment became drastically simplified from January 1939 onwards. The original procedure entailed mailing a list of visa applicants to London and a subsequent trip to the British legation to have individual passports stamped, after the lists were mailed back. Now, the lists were merely brought to the legation, verification was conducted by telephone and a batch of 'purple cards' in lieu of passport stamps would be sent by air mail on the same day. A train with 300 people now took only a third of the time to be readied, provided guarantors were found and deposits deducted.⁶⁷ The limiting factor was now the amount of available foster families. Money for the deposits was always in sufficient supply and the BCRC usually had no trouble covering travel expenses either (though on some occasions, Winton did pay

⁶² Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 73–74.

⁶³ The often-repeated legend that Nicholas Winton "founded" the BCRC as a non-existent organisation to arrange guarantors and foster homes, for the children, using fake documents in the process, probably originates here. However, the BCRC existed in this iteration for several months prior to Winton's arrival in Prague, as described above.

⁶⁴ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 76.

⁶⁵ 'The Netherlands', accessed 27 June 2024, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-netherlands>.

⁶⁶ Bartrop, *The Evian Conference of 1938 and the Jewish Refugee Crisis*, 58–59.

⁶⁷ Warriner, 'Winter in Prague', 222.

portions of the fares from his own pocket).⁶⁸ To attract the attention of possible foster parents, Winton's section tirelessly published newspaper adverts, wrote columns for sympathetic outlets to illustrate the refugees' plight to the public, and responded to inquiries – which often downplayed the necessity to get Jewish children to a safe country. “What's the big rush? Nothing bad will happen in Europe. Hitler will be satisfied with what he already had, and no harm will come to these children of yours.” was the response of one woman. To make illustrative appeal on the children's behalf, Winton printed out their photo portraits and arranged them in the style of postcards. Every child had been photographed if the parents didn't provide pictures on their own, Winton had the child photographed during his erstwhile stay in Prague when the family visited him at the hotel for a consultation. These “postcards” were then sent to interested households and if they chose a child (or several), news was relayed to Chadwick in Prague who informed the parents and checked whether they agreed on the child's recipient.⁶⁹ When one of the fosters was indecisive as to what child they'd want to take in, the decision would be made by Chadwick on the ground.⁷⁰

The first *kindertransport* train was now scheduled to leave Prague on the 12th of March. Tragically, a couple days earlier, Emil Hácha, president of the Second republic, decided to dismiss the Slovak PM Jozef Tiso and sent the army to take control of Slovakia in light of a planned secession by Tiso's cabinet. Tiso appealed to Hitler, who'd already set a deadline for the Second republic's destruction and asked Tiso to aid him in proclaiming independence himself. Afterwards, he could supposedly count on German support. Clashes were ongoing and on the 12th of March, Slovakia declared independence. The unstable situation made Chadwick reconsider sending the train. Sending a telegram to London, he settled on the following day for departure. This exploratory train only transported 20 children (maintaining a similar size to the flights which the group had experience with), but Chadwick was risk-averse, nonetheless. When the following day turned out to be calm, he allowed the train to depart. Winton received a simple telegram from Chadwick and Warriner the following day, which simply read: “Congratulations.” On the 14th of March, Nicholas Winton and his mother successfully picked up the twenty little passengers and passed them on to their new guardians on the train platform. The commotion only lasted for a while, but the morale boost for the whole team was everlasting. The experiment had now proven that a westbound route was feasible and other, bigger trains could run it within the next few months. It seemed as if the whole list of children Chadwick and Winton completed back in January, could now realistically be expected to reach Britain – totalling roughly 800 children.⁷¹

Relief work after the German occupation

The joyful occasion was overshadowed by events that unfolded on the day of the first train's arrival, underscored when Doreen Warriner sent the following letter two days later: “Dear Nicky, I do congratulate you most sincerely in this great achievement, and know what an effort it must have been. I am so glad the sword never rested in your hand. I am going to ask Chadwick to organise the [next group of] children. There are a great number of things I

⁶⁸ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 81.

⁶⁹ Abel Smith, 79–81.

⁷⁰ William Chadwick, *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees 1938-39* (Troubadour Publishing Ltd, 2010), 75.

⁷¹ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 84–86.

want to write about, but the chief thing is to congratulate you and I must wait till times are quieter; today is a bad time ...”⁷²

Hitler commenced his plan to annex the rump state and she'd been aware of this intention for the past few months. Enlisting the help of a friendly Jewish bartender in Hotel Alcron, she was sure to get the latest gossip before heading to her room. At the end of January, the bartender insinuated that German officers had discussed something pertaining to Bohemia, that'd be scheduled for the middle of March.⁷³ After the Slovak ploy, she advised her higher-ups at the BCRC via telegram that an emergency plan should be prepared for the worst. Not only was she not taken seriously, but she received a similar response at the British legation, with only Stopford understanding the gravity of the situation to a greater extent. On his own behalf, he later contacted the foreign office to get preferential express treatment for Warriner's list.⁷⁴ She also secured a promise from the passport control officer, who was another great source of information for her and seemed strangely aware of the impending doom (unbeknownst to Warriner, he was an MI6 agent⁷⁵), that he'd be prepared to approve all visa collectively without instructions to do so. After speaking to William Gillies, telegrams were immediately sent to all refugee camps (some would take up to 7 hours to reach by car) that the remaining political refugees were to get ready. 500 were put on the next train to Poland no matter their guarantor & visa status and smuggled through the German army checkpoints in Ostrava with closed curtains. The rest of the remaining high-ranking Sudeten German politicians had to escape to Poland illegally when it became clear that the prebooked KLM planes would be unable to land in Prague and received their visa at the British consulate in Katowice retroactively. The first few days of the occupation were manageable, as the Czech civil service was left to its own device by the Wehrmacht (and in the lawlessness, Czech officials of the newly established Protectorate were able to deliver the emigration permits – a new document that was to be included in the migratory workflow – at an unusually high rate). Later during the first week, the Gestapo arrived and started terrorizing the remaining refugees – mostly wives of the Sudeten antifascists who missed the last train, as well as Warriner herself. Her office was seized, and so were some of the passports of the refugees still in the country. All other documents were destroyed, owing to a lack of any significant primary administrative sources from Prague from that time. When she tried to organise a transport without ensuring proper security guarantees on the German side, the train was jumped by the Gestapo a few minutes before it was supposed to leave, dragging out some of the women, who were never heard from again.

Stopford opened negotiations with Prague's Gestapo *Kriminalrat* Karl Bömelburg and after a lengthy visit to the rest of the women, where Bömelburg tried to convince them to return to the Sudetenland (they refused in unison, stating that they wanted to see their husbands again), exist permits were finally granted. Bömelburg hinted to Stopford that the Gestapo had a leading trail of evidence on Warriner's role in illegal emigration, producing a card that she sent to the British consul in Katowice, and suggested she leave the country as well. Warriner took the advice, leaving Beatrice Wellington – a Canadian with no formal connection to any of the organisations involved in refugee transports – in charge of the operation's remains. Boarding the train with the rest of the antifascist women, she arrived

⁷² Abel Smith, 86.

⁷³ Warriner, 'Winter in Prague', 221.

⁷⁴ Warriner, 225.

⁷⁵ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 86.

safely in Poland on the 23rd of April, ending her half-year tenure as the BCRC's representative in Prague.⁷⁶

Interestingly, as political emigration was drawing to a relatively successful conclusion, the contrary was true for Jews – with a lot of work laying ahead for the still active Children's section of the BCRC. Chadwick was still in Prague and went to see *Kriminalrat* Bömelburg as soon as he could, ostensibly barging into his office and demanding an audience. The budding relationship between the Gestapo's equivalent of a superintendent and one of the most important on-site associates of the BCRC now that Warriner had left, was seemingly unnoticed by Winton. At Hotel Alcron, amidst the Wehrmacht officers that'd been quartered there since the occupation, Chadwick continued in his quest to expand the list of children who could be signed up for emigration to Britain, interviewing the families and reporting them to Winton, who forwarded the lists to newspapers – at one point having over 6000 names on them, up from the original 700-800. The second train left on April 18th, carrying an unusual group of adult attendants with the children for the first time – Sudeten Germans who'd be illegally evacuated that way by Warriner as one of her last acts prior to escaping herself. The refugees all arrived successfully at Liverpool Street station after a minor scare by inspecting Nazi soldiers who took the little emergency money (10 shillings) that'd been given to the children. While this successful arrival bolstered morale once again, the pace had to be raised yet again if a more significant number of children was to be evacuated in the coming months. Bömelburg complained to Chadwick that adults on the train left the Protectorate illegally (since they'd have needed another kind of permit, different from the one given to the children). Stopford was questioned by the Gestapo and asked about “forged passports used by the Jews” but knew nothing to that effect. In fact, Winton and Chadwick had reportedly turned to forgery of British visa to get emigration permits sooner from German officials, with both men agreeing that the third train, which left on the 29th of April, was filled with children that possessed solely forged documents – though there was never any hard evidence of this bar Winton's and Chadwick's own claims of it. The fourth train arrived on the 13th of May, already attracting attention from Hollanders, who'd by now gotten used to trains full of children crossing the border to catch a ferry at the *Hoek*. The locals spontaneously started handing out refreshments to the young passengers, bringing some relief to an otherwise perilous journey (German soldiers checking the trains delighted in scaring the children).⁷⁷

The fifth train saw the unfortunate evacuation of Trevor Chadwick himself among 123 Jewish children – the largest group taking a single train up to that point. Why Chadwick had to flee Prague and quit the organisation altogether is a mystery – accentuated by theories that his close relationship with Bömelburg may have caused it. His own and only words on the matter go as follows:

“... in the evenings there were other fish to fry which did not have anything to do with the children. It became obvious to me as summer developed that certain of my movements were at least suspect, and that [Bömelburg] and his boys might turn sour.”⁷⁸

Exactly what kind of “fish” he “fried” is unknown. It is certainly feasible, considering his extensive contact with Bömelburg, that he may have been engaged in clandestine

⁷⁶ Warriner, ‘Winter in Prague’, 226–40.

⁷⁷ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 89–99.

⁷⁸ Chadwick, *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees 1938-39*, 83.

intelligence activity. Note that an MI6 agent – Harold Gibson, the passport control officer, was constantly interacting with BCRC associates, giving this theory further credibility – at least in the sense of his Trevor Chadwick’s son William. Regardless, Winton was now missing his key right-hand man on site and immediately petitioned the BCRC for a replacement so that more trains could depart. Following an arrest and detainment by the Gestapo which brutally questioned her, Beatrice Wellington and the last souls from the Sudetenland women’s group also finally departed the country in July⁷⁹, further weakening the BCRC in Prague. Nevertheless, the transports grew bigger and bolder, raising the number of children who were proven to have left on board of one of Winton’s trains to 669. Famously, the last and biggest transport, set to leave on the 1st of September, was prohibited from leaving by the Germans as war had now once again broken out in Europe due to Hitler’s invasion of Poland. The fates of the children, scheduled to emigrate on this train, are unaccounted for, but considering the very low survival rate for Czechoslovak Jewish youngsters, they likely lead to one of Hitler’s concentration camps (with the notable exception of a select few who got out on their own accord), which Winton would still find tough to speak of until his death.⁸⁰

The final roster: Winton’s children in Scotland

The scrapbook, authored by someone who’d worked with Winton at his office in London, provides a nice insight into the complex administrative body that made Winton’s *kindertransports* possible. As was mentioned above, most of the original documents, held in Doreen Warriner’s office in Prague, were destroyed after the occupation so they wouldn’t fall into Nazi hands. Little exists in terms of systemic records and characterisations of the children, which were so instrumental in finding them new homes across the United Kingdom. However, lists detailing the fates of most children who were on Winton’s *kindertransports*, kept in the scrapbook as a follow-up, are generally reliable and provide accurate information and a stable starting point to isolate individuals that this work is concerned with.

All guarantor and place of stay entries were analysed. Individuals whose place of stay, either based on the entry alone or other collateral information, indicates at *any point during the war or before it* that emplacement in Scotland occurred, are added on our shortlist. Obviously, accuracy of the information for our purposes is slightly limited – notably, it is unknown at what point in time the list was created. This is important not only due to some of the foster parents moving around Great Britain (and possibly to Scotland), but also because of the ‘Blitz’ – German bombing of Great Britain which led to organised internal displacement for children, which almost always followed the general northern direction, pushing some of the children whose original foster home was in the south of England (e.g. Kent) to Scotland. Some entries have clearly been written after the ‘Blitz’ commenced and the children were moved, other entries indicate what is most likely the original place of stay, accurate per the time of the child’s handover at Liverpool Street station. Where possible, these issues are remedied by examining individual live stories for traces of emplacement in Scotland.

Last Name	First Name	Date of birth
BEERMAN	Thomas	25.02.1934
BIENENFELD (PICK)	Elizabeth	22.06.1930

⁷⁹ Warriner, ‘Winter in Prague’, 240.

⁸⁰ Abel Smith, *The British Oskar Schindler The Life and Work of Nicholas Winton*, 104.

BOBASCH (DIAMOND)	Eva Marianne	24.05.1926
FREUDENBERG (GOODMAN)	Margit	29.01.1922
HOCHBERG ⁸¹ (GRAUMANN) ⁸²	Thomas	28.01.1931
HOFFMANN (GOITEIN)	Eva Lieselotte	22.02.1926
KONIEC ⁸³ (DOUGLAS)	Dorothea	25.09.1924
KONIEC ⁸⁴ (KAY)	Herbert	16.12.1928
PEISER	Hans	11.05.1925
PERSCHAK	Gerta	16.04.1924
SCHMIEDL	Oswald	07.03.1925
SCHRECKER	Tommy	07.01.1932
WEIL	Liselotte	18.02.1923
ZIMMERMANN	Lore	25.08.1930 ⁸⁵

The scrapbook list includes a column that indicates whether reciprocal contact was successful with the refugee after his/her emplacement in a foster family or care institution (usually through letters). 8 cases were successful, while 6 were not. Among the unsuccessful cases are Liselotte Weil and Hans Perschak, who seem to have no available records whatsoever, bar an entry in Winton's documents. They are joined by Gerta Perschak, who kept some reciprocal contact with Winton, but is also untraceable. Assuming no systemic errors in overcoming the issue maiden/changed names were made (and the presence of individuals who underwent a surname change and yet were successfully traced would suggest that is probably not the case), we must assume either the adoption of a completely new identity, detached from the wartime trauma, or early death that took place before larger efforts to document the *kindertransports* were made in the 1980s. Another case of heavily limited information are Oswald Schmiedl and Elizabeth Pick (née Bienenfeld). Schmiedl only has a death certificate and property ownership records to his name, while Pick-Bienenfeld is only mentioned in a spring 1996 issue of the U.S.-based Kindertransport Association's *Kinderlink* section. This doesn't mean that the untraceable trio or Schmiedl & Pick would lose their role in the statistic – given that the absence of records within Jewish archival material could be a statement of its own regarding adherence to Judaism, while the lack of public mentions would indicate a lack of notability, possibly tied to educational achievements and later life. All other individuals on the list have sufficient sources of data on their lives or direct accounts of life stories – whether told personally and recorded as a historical memory statement or through, f.e. an obituary.

Another weakness of this list is the general absence of air transports (resulting in a lower total number compared to the amount of people who are believed to have been saved by Winton's transports). Records of these seem to have been lost to time, bar exceptions where

⁸¹ The original documents misspell the name as HOCHBER.

⁸² Thomas Graumann never adopted the name "Hochberg" after his step-father, whom his mother married when he was 5 years old, but is brought up under this name in all relevant documents concerning the transport.

⁸³ The original documents misspell the names as KONEIC.

⁸⁴ The original documents misspell the names as KONEIC.

⁸⁵ As a result of crude corrections, made with a pen on the original document, the digitised version of the list includes an erroneous month in Zimmermann's date of birth. The database on German property seizures and citizenship revocation has records on a girl with the same year and day of birth, born in Ruhla, Thuringia – which coincides with Harvey Kaplan's claims that the girl in Ayrshire was a daughter of German communists from the same state, as well as with the AJR's entry that is traceable to Zimmermann through several factors. August is therefore the correct month of her birth.

the whole flight or a significant part of it was centred around a specific organisation (and where records are thus accessible in the organisation's own archives), as is f.e. the case of the first ever flight, of which all evacuees were entrusted to the Barbican Mission to the Jews. However, this is not a significant loss of data due to the low volume share on the total number of Winton's *kindertransportees* (the flights had a very small capacity – usually up to 20 people) and the fact that these early emplacements were tied to organisations that'd already cooperated with the BCRC earlier, usually through Warriner, and these generally resided around London. It would, simply put, take Winton some time to extend his foster search outreach to Scotland.

Scotland and kindertransports

Portrayal in contemporary media & literature

Portrayal of the Scottish *kindertransports* has its first and foremost roots in a small book, published under the auspices of the 1990-founded Scottish Association of Reunion of Kinder (SAROK). Its founder, the Kassel-born, Dorrieth Sim (née Oppenheim), was intrigued by the prospect of reuniting *kindertransportees* from around Britain after she heard Bertha Leverton, another *kindertransportee*, talk of trying to find people who had similar experiences to herself on *Woman's Hour*. After getting in touch with her, she helped find the former refugees around Scotland, where she lived through most of her life, including now in her retirement. After Leverton published a collection of memories by people who attended the reunion under the name *I came alone: The stories of the Kindertransports*, Dorrieth Sim followed suit, and had 30 stories of her Scottish ex-refugee peers compiled into a book with a fellow *kindertransportee* and former archivist at Glasgow's Jewish Archives – Rosa Sacherin. SAROK disbanded after 17 years of existence. Its presence was, for the most part local, and practically limited to those who remained or at least returned to Scotland in later age. An undertaking like this could never grasp the full wealth of Scottish *kindertransportees*, given the relatively high trans-migratory tendencies that the whole group (irrespective of whether they were based in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK for the moment).

One of the most prominent historical researchers, pertaining to the topic of *kindertransports* and Scotland, is Frances Williams. Her academical interest in the matter is especially focused on the phenomenon of post-war migration that *kindertransportees* in Scotland usually underwent, delving into questions as to what role Scotland played in their tendency to leave the country and whether there were any common traits among these individuals. She was particularly intrigued by the connection that the Scotland-based ex-refugees maintained to their foster home country, encountering a broad range of people who still spoke Scots, and proudly displayed their adherence to the country through “brand”, almost tourist-like aspects of Scottish life and culture (showing, f.e. fondness for whiskey and tartans). At the same time, she notes the relative comfortability of the refugees in describing themselves as “British” – a term, she finds, has less prerequisite burden on social and cultural norms to adhere to, giving these people a safe identity to retreat to, much in the way an Englishman or Welshman defending his presence and relationship with Scotland probably would. On the other hand, Williams diminishes the importance of popular notions pertaining to the Christianisation of the Jewish children – pointing to a captivating role that the Zionist

movement played among the young emigres, with many later deciding to make *Aliyah* and move to Israel. Analysing the general patterns

Continually, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities and the Scottish Jewish Heritage Centre maintain some activity on the topic of *kindertransports*, which usually includes interviews with surviving refugees who speak of their experience. This is also the main focus of “Gathering the Voices” – a project that publishes recordings of testimonies, made by refugees who were bound for Scotland after their initial migration.

What is notably absent from popular discourse, is the analysis of Winton’s refugees in Scotland as a coherent group – and this is despite the fact that Williams, by her own admission sees Winton as something of maverick, when examined as part of the broader structure concerning Jewish foster aid, afforded to other *kindertransports*, where she deliberately groups him in scope with local organisations (even though Winton’s children were emplaced all over the UK and were generally not tied to a specific organisation). The perceived “chaos”, or rather a seeming lack of patterns in these emplacements poses a big question and affords it to return some uniqueness to Winton’s conduct, which had in recent years come under the trend of broader, contextual analysis, but never with sufficient consideration to ask whether there it had a noticeably different effect compared to other *kindertransports*.

Places and institutions of interest

Scotland possessed a solid, entrenched Jewish community – notably centred around Glasgow, where the majority lived after greater migratory inflows during the 19th and early 20th century. Some notable places played a more prominent role in the stories of *kindertransportees*, including those who were brought to Britain by Winton. For ease of navigation and understanding when they’re referred to later, I shall list some of them here beforehand:

- **The Scottish Christian Council for Refugees**

This institution was an umbrella organisation with headquarters in Edinburgh. Focused entirely on providing aid and foster homes to Jews and “non-Aryan Christians”, the council was notably composed, among others, of the Church of Scotland, the Catholic Church in Scotland⁸⁶, the Free Church of Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland, the United Original Secession Church, and finally the Scottish Quakers. No children ever resided at the address ‘28 Stafford Street’ – which was a purely administrative building. The council was one of Winton’s most stable partners by virtue of forming a singular pipeline for child redistribution, providing new homes for altogether half the children Winton would end up sending north to Scotland.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Frances Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees: The Scottish Experience* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 88, http://whel-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/openurl/44WHELP_NLW/44WHELP_NLW_services_page?u.ignore_date_coverage=true&rft.mms_id=99826472002419.

⁸⁷ ‘The Scottish Christian Council for Refugees’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk/map/records/the-scottish-christian-council-for-refugees>.

- **Garnethill**

The prominent Jewish quarter of Glasgow hosted the biggest concentration of Jews in Scotland. Children who ended up in Glasgow-based families would often maintain some contact with this specific local synagogue (although up to 17 different synagogues existed throughout the war) by means of religious observance (if permitted to do so), or through the administrative guarantor role of someone close to it. Certain children of Glasgow would also be evacuated west from here after the war started, mingling with Winton's group, as Glasgow was a large city and considered potentially threatened by German bombing. Garnethill also featured a high-capacity hostel for boys, housing up to 175 children throughout the war, and a tiny women's hostel Today for up to 15 women. The borough continues to host the Jewish archives, a Jewish cemetery, a 19th century synagogue, and public primary school that was usually attended by both local and refugee Jewish children.⁸⁸

- **Ayrshire**

The county was home to two institutions of accommodation that were widely utilised after the 'Blitz' evacuations took place. The Birkenward hostel in Skelmorlie was reportedly a full-fledged Jewish Boarding School (up to a certain degree of education – high school was attended outside at Greenock)⁸⁹ and had a reputation for being rather strict. The southern coastal portion of the country was also popular as an evacuation destination – specifically the town of Ayr, where many refugees would find a new home directly in foster families.⁹⁰

Comparison to peer groups

The AJR survey dataset

Between the years 2007 and 2009, the Association of Jewish Refugees created a survey, handed out to surviving *kindertransportees* - or their families in case they were deceased. This benchmark document, useful in observing cohort trends and forming simple statistics about various aspects of the *kindertransportee's* life during and after the war. It is heavily utilised in Williams' work and as such, will be very important if testimonial trends present any contradiction to her general conclusions. The survey encompasses 1410 sanitised, anonymised responses. Cross-referencing birth dates and care institutions reveals that three individuals from our Scottish shortlist also filled out the AJR survey – Herbert Kay (Koniec), Thomas Beerman and Lore Zimmermann. The lack of responses from the rest of the Scottish shortlist is not of great concern – since the AJR survey data is meant to be used as a control group and the life experiences the shortlisted individuals can be, in cases where any

⁸⁸ 'Scottish Jewish Archives Centre & Scottish Holocaust-Era Study Centre', accessed 28 June 2024, <https://www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk/map/records/scottish-jewish-archives-centre-scottish-holocaust-era-study-centre>.

⁸⁹ 'Birkenward Hostel', accessed 28 June 2024, <https://www.ukholocaustmap.org.uk/map/records/birkenward-hostel>.

⁹⁰ Ayrshire Post, 'Ayrshire Played Vital Role in Saving Jewish Refugees Fleeing Nazi Horrors', Daily Record, 28 July 2017, <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/ayrshires-vital-role-saving-jewish-10888629>.

information at all exists, extracted from elsewhere – usually their own testimonies, obituaries, or archival sources from their estate.

The main two control groups, derived from this dataset are:

1. All *Kindertransport* refugees who were emplaced in Scotland for an extended period of time, amounting to several months (as indicated by foster home/family home/hostel location, evacuation destination, or other relation – 80).
2. All children from Winton’s transports (as indicated by name of known rescuer – 66).

Peer comparisons will be conducted against these two groups.

Religious & cultural adherence

Williams notes that a clear difference is observable when the ratio of Jewish and non-Jewish foster care is examined between England and Scotland. 57% of the children in England were sent specifically to non-Jewish homes in England (against the wishes of the Chief Rabbi’s Religious Emergency Council, which protested the emplacement within non-Jewish households), but only 25% shared the same fate in Scotland. Myths about the origins and cultural practices, or even absurd traits of physical appearance – and resulting in disbelief when some foster parents found out that what they had at home was indeed a Jewish child and did not possess horns or a tail, were still widespread at this point.⁹¹ This would later also lead to Woburn House publishing a simple booklet in 1941, explaining in simple terms (to a public that was still largely swayed by antisemitism) some of the popular misconceptions or outright lies about Jews (and the role they played in society).⁹²

The relative interconnectedness among Jewish families in Scotland (particularly of those situated in Glasgow or Edinburgh) helped maintain a relatively serviceable system of Jewish education among the *kindertransportees* – at least for a time (when mandatory evacuations were ordered after the ‘Blitz’ started, the education network irrecoverably broke down). This was, in no small part also caused by the relative open-mindedness of Scottish non-Jewish foster parents (dominated largely by Presbyterians, who had a long-existing tradition of reciprocal synergy with major Jewish centres in Scotland). The Scottish Area Council for Jewish Education had boards in every major Jewish centre and actively sought to bring the refugees under its wing, if possible. A significant issue was the dominance of this educative outreach by orthodox communities, which made a significant part of the children feel alienated.⁹³ 32% of the children in Scotland originated from liberal congregations⁹⁴ (which were popular throughout Germany), and although the Albert Drive Reform Synagogue existed for almost 9 years when war broke out, Frances Williams couldn’t interview a single refugee who attended it, suggesting an absolute dominance by Glasgow’s orthodox community and its connected institutions.⁹⁵

Conversion attempts by Christians were, of course, also a factor in Scotland. However, a mass faith exodus didn’t actually occur (despite the widespread misconception). Some 4%

⁹¹ Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees*, 91.

⁹² *The Jews: Some Plain Facts* (Woburn Press, 1945).

⁹³ Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees*, 100.

⁹⁴ ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://ajr.org.uk/kindertransport-survey/>.

⁹⁵ Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees*, 101.

of *kindertransportees* in Scotland converted to various branches of Christianity,⁹⁶ but as is noted by Williams, that's far below the rate at which German Jews would convert throughout the whole 19th century, up to 1933.⁹⁷ Rvrd. David McDougall – a key figure in the establishment of the SCC, was adamant that conversion would happen gradually, because of local, communal integration – effectively taking a route of slow assimilation.

Williams' interviews of the children often also brought up perspectives of children who reacted more fondly to non-Jewish families, experiencing genuine, loving homes as opposed to the sometimes very strict orthodox households. Paradoxically, non-Jewish care sometimes meant greater exposure and opportunities for the refugee children to learn about their cultural and religious background & traditions. To quote one of Williams' experiences with interviewees:

“Hans' non-Jewish family sent him to the Salisbury Road synagogue, Edinburgh, every weekend. During this period, he attended Jewish education classes until he was Bar Mitzvah'd. Before Scotland, Hans had never been to a synagogue and his family did not adhere to any Jewish traditions.”⁹⁸

Interestingly, Jewish foster homes were available only for a handful of Winton's refugees across Britain. Only a third was able to freely observe their religious rituals, while more than 56% of the general *kindertransportee* population could do the same.⁹⁹ An assessment of Winton's Scottish subgroup, affected by a large proportion of children placed into foster care through the Scottish Christian Council, is as follows:

Beerman, despite his upbringing in a Jewish foster family in Glasgow, abandoned any sort of confession whatsoever.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, Margit Goodman, who grew up in an orthodox community continued to observe customs and took great consolation in visiting the synagogue.¹⁰¹ Diamond has no direct evidence pertaining to her status – and the lack of obituaries other than in a medical publication suggests that religious retention may have been vague. It is impossible to determine whether Bienenfeld continued to adhere to Jewish faith either – she lived in the Minneapolis suburb Edina, which doesn't sport a prominent Jewish community, and used to be considered one of the most antisemitic places in the U.S.¹⁰² Graumann was curious case - born into a family of non-practicing Jews (his biological father tried to distance himself from his Jewish heritage so much that he'd ultimately commit suicide after he was outed as a Jew in a report during the Nazi terror), with a mother who sent the young Tom to study the Bible at a local protestant church, before eventually converting herself. Graumann thus never really had a connection with Judaism and considered the Presbyterian family traditions of his foster family in Scotland natural.¹⁰³ Kay & Douglas were

⁹⁶ 'Kindertransport Survey – AJR'.

⁹⁷ Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees*, 88.

⁹⁸ Williams, 93.

⁹⁹ 'Kindertransport Survey – AJR'.

¹⁰⁰ 'Kindertransport Survey – AJR'.

¹⁰¹ 'Collections Search - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum', accessed 28 June 2024, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn565865>.

¹⁰² 'History of the Jewish Community in Minneapolis and St. Louis Park · Shir Tikvah: A Progressive Reform Community · Religions in Minnesota', accessed 28 June 2024, <https://religionsmn.carleton.edu/exhibits/show/shirtikvah/shirtikhvah-historyinminneapolis>.

¹⁰³ 'Tom Graumann (Hochberg) (1931 - 2020)', accessed 28 June 2024, <https://www.pametnaroda.cz/en/graumann-hochberg-tom-20071012-0>.

separated siblings and neither of them was able to maintain (despite their evacuation to Ayrshire) any contact with Jewish communities¹⁰⁴ (Kay only attended a Jewish school after he was forced to by newly introduced antisemitic Slovak laws.¹⁰⁵ In his late age, he considered himself an irreligious humanist. A non-Jewish course seems to have been the choice of his sister as well.). Schmiedl was buried in a Jewish cemetery – likely therefore adhering to Judaism in his late life.¹⁰⁶ Schrecker grew up in a Catholic foster family but turned to being an agnostic. His family (including his father, whom he reunited with) had no religious connections.¹⁰⁷ Lore Zimmermann was from a family of communists who weren't Jewish – there was therefore no religious adherence to preserve.

70% of the Scottish *kindertransportees* continued to adhere to the Jewish faith after their time in Scottish foster care,¹⁰⁸ making general fears of mass conversions unfounded, but when compared against Winton's Scottish group, there seems to be a disproportion at first sight. To a great degree, the relative indifference to Jewish customs and religion seems to stem from the religious disinterest of the children's parents – and to a certain degree, this concurs with the heavy bias of Winton's refugees in favour of Czech nationals, having only a 51% Jewish faith adherence rates that were likely pre-caused by their parents' indifference.¹⁰⁹ After all, the above documented cases are a staggering example of religious preservation throughout the foster upbringing, with the only possible deviations that we know of being Kay and Douglas. In turn, this proves that – at least within the Scottish theatre – Winton did not by any significant margin prevent the continuity of existing Jewish tradition – even if the environment wasn't ideal to foster reemerging religious beliefs.

In the end, many children regarded themselves either as a merger of several cultures or perceived their lives as structurally delimited eras of their life, during which they adopted a specific behavioural set. The tendency to refer to oneself as “British” in the end (even in many cases where an Israeli citizenship was acquired and *Aliyah* was made) ultimately creates a big-tent identity, under which many varying different experiences fit – from orthodox groupings to more liberal ones, from a life in the Scottish countryside, to the busy centre of London.

Education & career achievements

Winton's *kindertransportees* in Scotland tend to stand out not only in their achieved education, but especially in their post-study performance, often attaining very notable positions and working themselves up to possess top-tier medical, scientific and commercial expertise, rising above the regular outlook in certain cases.

While educational principles varied in between of different institutions in Scotland, there was one notable overreach – the general push for manual labour and skills in professions that were expected to become useful either for settlement in South America and other

¹⁰⁴ 'Kindertransport Survey – AJR'.

¹⁰⁵ 'Herbert Kay - The History of a Child War Refugee', accessed 28 June 2024, <http://www.maybole.org/community/citizens/profiles/herbertkay.htm>.

¹⁰⁶ 'Obituary of Schmiedl Oswald | Feldman Mortuary', accessed 28 June 2024, <https://feldmanmortuary.com/tribute/details/1700/Schmiedl-Oswald/obituary.html>.

¹⁰⁷ 'Tom Schrecker (1932)', accessed 17 April 2024, <https://www.memoryofnations.eu/cs/schrecker-tom-1932>.

¹⁰⁸ 'Kindertransport Survey – AJR'.

¹⁰⁹ 'Kindertransport Survey – AJR'.

agricultural countries that demanded this specific work skillset, or for making *Aliyah* and building up the state of Israel. Although Zionist schooling institutions would put great emphasis on the latter, some form of manual labour imprinting occurred in almost every bigger institution – particularly after the evacuations started. The Whittingehame Farm School was a famous example, and so were many of the schools in Ayrshire. In addition to this predetermined focus for many people, other limitations in terms of obtainable education level existed. The refugees were in Britain on the promise of moving away once a suitable place was found – perhaps somewhere in the colonies. British institutions would therefore not aid them in getting “on the job” training for certain professions even if they so desired. There’s also the perspective of women, who were barred and shrugged off with scepticism from jobs that were dominated by men altogether.

Be they from Czechoslovakia, Austria or Germany, there was a strong demographic of children who’d attended grammar schools (up to 16%¹¹⁰) or were in other ways expected and wanted to complete a higher education. Opportunities for that were extremely limited – as virtually all the children arrived not knowing a word of English and had to learn it first (this is certainly the case for our narrow selection). *Hachschara* camps in Scotland were also meant to give the *kindertransportees* a sufficient degree of mental resilience, which was expected to be necessary once in Palestine, given the hard conditions and options of self-sustenance over there.¹¹¹ The labour (e.g. tending to the livestock in the hard Scottish winter) was generally disliked.

45% of Winton’s refugees across Britain went on to attain university-level education (though in some cases, this would only become a reality many years after the war). All refugees in Scotland would have a 32% share of university graduates. Across Britain, this would amount to 37%.¹¹²

Winton’s children in Scotland generally outperformed are in line with statistics for the rest of Winton’s transports and above the three statistics above. Berman¹¹³, Diamond¹¹⁴, Goodman (her story is especially interesting in this regard, as she is a prime example of women who were denied training in medical/social care – in which she isn’t an isolated incident)¹¹⁵, Kay¹¹⁶, Schrecker¹¹⁷ and Zimmermann¹¹⁸ all attained a university degree. Assuming the unidentifiable individuals did not achieve higher education, this would make for an outlier statistic. What is of great interest here though, is the level of expertise and international recognition in their field that a portion of these people exhibit. Berman was a top tier limnologist¹¹⁹, Kay was a renowned doctor who constructed a health centre in

¹¹⁰ Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees*, 147.

¹¹¹ Williams, 152.

¹¹² ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

¹¹³ ‘TOMÁŠ BERMAN’, accessed 28 June 2024, <http://wintonfilm.com/osudy-main-menu/osobnostia/a-m/tom%C3%A1%C5%A1-berman.html>.

¹¹⁴ Mario Marrone, ‘Eva Marianne Diamond (Née Bobasch)’, *BMJ* 338 (27 April 2009): b1588, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.b1588>.

¹¹⁵ John Goodman, ‘Margit Goodman Obituary’, *The Guardian*, 14 September 2017, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/14/margit-goodman-obituary>.

¹¹⁶ ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

¹¹⁷ ‘Tom Schrecker (1932)’.

¹¹⁸ ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

¹¹⁹ ‘Professor Tom Berman’, *The Herald*, 29 April 2013, <https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/13102211.professor-tom-berman/>.

Middlesbrough¹²⁰, as was Diamond, who worked at Shenley – which was one of the top psychiatric institutions. Schrecker’s successful buildup of a publisher house is another great example – and so is his continued sponsorship of the Czech Philharmonic.¹²¹

To answer some of our introductory questions: Britain, as a whole, certainly outperformed the opportunities for *kindertransportees* at home in general (assuming they’d be allowed to live *sans discrimination* – effectively without suffering the events post-1933). Scottish schooling expectations were worse on average, but higher in the case of Winton’s group across the board, and further cemented by the greater proportional amount of people whom we could refer to as “extraordinarily successful”. But there’s one more factor to consider – some of the aforementioned individuals studied at university later in their life *and often in another country*, bringing us to the next common factor.

Transmigratory tendencies

Only 13% of the total population of Scotland-emplaced *kindertransportees* remained in Scotland, with a large portion moving at first to Israel, and after acquainting themselves with local conditions, usually choosing to continue onward (mostly to the United States). Still, the biggest group (37%) resided in England (at the time of the AJR’s survey conduct at least)¹²². Remigration back to the original home country was very rare (visits, however, were not – but they were often lined with the shocking realisation that continental Jewish communities were practically destroyed in most countries).

Children from Winton’s transports had a slightly different residential structure 15 years ago, with 48% living in England and about 21% in Israel and the United States respectively.¹²³ Looking onward to our group, we’ll see that almost everyone also moved out of country – Berman (Israel¹²⁴), Bienenfeld (USA¹²⁵), Diamond (England¹²⁶), Goodman (England¹²⁷), Graumann (USA¹²⁸), Goitein (USA¹²⁹), Kay (England¹³⁰), Schmiedl (USA¹³¹), Schrecker (USA/Czechia¹³²), and Zimmermann (England¹³³). Dorothea Douglas is the only one to have (after a period of living in England) returned to Scotland.¹³⁴

Clearly, they favoured the U.S., and at least from Frances William – this too would have an explanation:

¹²⁰ ‘Herbert Kay - PMC’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2335273/>.

¹²¹ ‘Tom Schrecker (1932)’.

¹²² ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

¹²³ ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

¹²⁴ ‘Tom Berman - Winning Writers’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://winningwriters.com/people/tom-berman>.

¹²⁵ ‘Kinderlink Newsletter - Queen’s University Archives’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://db-archives.library.queensu.ca/index.php/kinderlink-newsletter>.

¹²⁶ Marrone, ‘Eva Marianne Diamond (Née Bobasch)’.

¹²⁷ Goodman, ‘Margit Goodman Obituary’.

¹²⁸ ‘Tom Graumann (Hochberg) (1931 - 2020)’.

¹²⁹ ‘- Lasting Memories - Ernest E Goitein’s Memorial’, accessed 28 June 2024, <https://obituaries.rwcpulse.com/obituaries/memorials/ernest-e-goitein?o=6990>.

¹³⁰ ‘Herbert Kay - The History of a Child War Refugee’.

¹³¹ ‘Obituary of Schmiedl Oswald | Feldman Mortuary’.

¹³² ‘Tom Schrecker (1932)’.

¹³³ ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

¹³⁴ ‘Kindertransport Survey – AJR’.

“The mass exodus of Kindertransportees from Scotland must not be assumed to represent a common desire to leave Scotland. Instead, Kindertransportees very much echo the Scottish diaspora narrative, whereby they were responsive to the push/pull dichotomy of Scotland. This pushed many Kindertransportees out of Scotland in order to seek financial security and economic betterment.”¹³⁵

While this is a universal explanation, used by Williams - we can actually deduce other lines of comparison as well when it comes to the character of our individual’s educative preferences. All three medical professionals remained in Britain, while permanent migration to the U.S. is not associated with a higher education (though Berman f.e. did his PhD. at Rutgers & later MIT), and rather with people who’d stay in the job market (f.e. Schmiedl, who worked as a bellman at a hotel in Denver).

This also disproves the notion that Winton’s *kindertransportees* played a key role in establishing the community of Czech expatriates in Scotland – there weren’t really enough people around for that and interaction was also semi-secluded, as will be shown in the next segment of this analysis.

Marriage and settlement

The trend to marry fellow *kindertransportees* is noted by Williams (amounting some 40% of all *kindertransportees* marrying another *kindertransportee*, with another 30% marrying another holocaust survivor) but is strangely not really present among Winton’s children in general, but marriages to Jews are still prevalent. Among Winton’s Scottish group, marriage to a Jew is generally the norm, though there are exceptions (notably Graumann¹³⁶, who married a fellow Christian American missionary in the Philippines).

Williams notes a phenomenon that is very common among all groups of *kindertransportees* – the tendency not to engage in Jewish communities and settling down in towns that usually have little Jewish presence at all. The same goes for ethnicities from their native country – they’d often sooner forget the language than be presented with and choosing the opportunity to interact with “fellow countrymen” on a too regular basis. This doesn’t mean they’d necessarily isolate themselves from the work, but their close circles are not defined on religious or ethnic grounds.¹³⁷ Their families tend to be bigger – which is observable both as a general trend in fertility¹³⁸ and on specific examples of our group in Scotland (e.g. Tom Berman’s large kibbutz family, Margaret Goodman’s sizeable family) – but isolated examples of the contrary, like Tom Schrecker, exist as well.

Conclusion

The erstwhile assumption that an explanation for the international outreach trend would necessarily be found in geographic terms, seems to be inaccurate. Considering the data which this work tries to condense, there is no real direct correlation between any specific practices, used in Scotland, that would so deeply impact the whole group of

¹³⁵ *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives*, Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012).

¹³⁶ ‘Tom Graumann (Hochberg) (1931 - 2020)’.

¹³⁷ Williams, *The Forgotten Kindertransportees*, 201.

¹³⁸ Williams, 175.

kindertransportees to a similar level. Scotland was very varied – at least from the perspective of an unaccompanied child migrant in 1938/39 and included many possible life trajectories, depending on where the child was placed. Opportunities to further one’s own education were apparently plentiful to this little group – in some cases (like the Koniec/Kay/Douglas siblings, who were born in Slovakia) probably surpassing the degree of education they’d receive at home. Irregularity prevailed – for the general *kindertransport* population and the Scottish Winton group as well. In a way, regular Scottish schooling couldn’t really be considered for peer comparison, given the lack of a clear-defining standard for “Scottish schooling”, which just happened to be of similarly varying quality – and *in that sense* being a peer to the refugee’s education. Obviously though, this wasn’t the discerning, driving factor that would differentiate our group from the other *kindertransportees*. That seems to be obscured and at the same time caused by the incredible compatibility that the children had with their foster parents – and if they didn’t, they wouldn’t, seemingly by miracle, last too long with them, eventually coming into a family that would take grow into them. Opportunities for religious development were plentiful, and scarcely differed from the general trend – but this also proves the group’s unique composition – a relatively liberal combination of people from secular families. Alas the lack of data on origin (and the young age at which the children emigrated causing them to mostly forget how their old life looked) doesn’t allow for a comment on the children’s material conditions, when compared against their home country.

Winton’s method of emplacing the children seems to be random but has apparently produced very positive results for individual’s future self-development. In that sense, Frances Williams’ general conclusion that Scotland wasn’t all that different for *kindertransportees* should be taken at caution. The differences seem to lie in groups and specifically outside of the existing hierarchy of councils and committees that had tried to implement a (usually religion-based) methodology in assigning the children to foster parents. Nicholas Winton has, in recent years, often come under fire by authors who rightfully tried to indicate the large role other people played in the process of getting hundreds (and even thousands in the context of whole Europe) of children to safety. This often led to Winton’s equalisation with other groups, but the fact remains he was a unique phenomenon that – as an unconventional foster home finder – doesn’t really have an equivalent in the form of a similar *individual* (as opposed to a rigid organisational structure). He may not have been shuffling children into a train (in a literal sense – as popular perception usually reckons), but he was absolutely instrumental in getting the children *out* of these trains and *into* an environment that’d allow them to grow – at least in the context of this Scottish group. Therefore, further research to confirm potential disparities in key aspects of personal development in a *kindertransportee*, might prove fruitful, particularly if such an analysis led to the discovery of someone else who had such profound individual investment in the matter and possessed such a strong monopoly on the key aspect of entrusting the children to other people. Since an equivalent of that sort is unlikely to be found in the BCRC (where Winton and his London ‘office’ are pretty much the only ones), I’d suggest pointing the magnifier at Viennese *kindertransports*, or venturing into the many personal stories of evacuations from Germany proper.

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