

5-2003

The Salvation of the Kindertransport: a Ray of Hope for Nearly Ten Thousand Jewish Children

Cheryl Holder

Follow this and additional works at: http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/uhp_theses

Recommended Citation

Holder, Cheryl, "The Salvation of the Kindertransport: a Ray of Hope for Nearly Ten Thousand Jewish Children" (2003). *Honors Theses*. Paper 251.

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University Honors Program at OpenSIUC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of OpenSIUC. For more information, please contact opensiuc@lib.siu.edu.

Cheryl Holder

Professor Thomas Thibault

UHON 499, Section 701 (Honors Thesis)

9 May 2003

The Salvation of the Kindertransport:

A Ray of Hope for Nearly Ten Thousand Jewish Children

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of time, humanity has seen conflicts, uprisings and wars between cultures, religions and boundaries making the world a continual battlefield throughout its existence. At one time or another the entire world at some point has witnessed the brunt of these continual paths of destruction and horror.

And over time, these conflicts have originated for different reasons: acquiring wealth and additional land mass, hatred or greed against a culture, taking control over the weak, political and religious beliefs, protection of an existing culture or lifestyle, fear, revenge or retaliation, and bad judgment.

These wars are never initiated by the innocent of the world, especially the children, but are forced upon them in such brutal ways that it is hard to fathom that mankind at times can be so insanely cruel, unjust and incomprehensible to their very existence or plight. What cannot be excluded from reality is the harsh realization that children always end up somewhere in the midst of all the fighting and chaos and what makes it even more tragic is when it directly involves the murdering of the world's youth and future—the children.

The events of World War II were placed in the history books like no other war before as it killed more persons and affected more people than any other war in history (The World Book

Encyclopedia, page 380). This war was started by the hatred and greed of one egotistical man, who fueled his hatred in others, and gathered those around him to share in his evil plot against those whom he felt were inferior and in need of eradicating. Adolf Hitler used both the loyal, hard-working and proud people of Germany, along with his evil cohorts, and the prior events of World War I (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 10-11) to satisfy his appetite for and to ensure the success of his annihilation against the Jews, which offered no exclusion to even the Jewish children. It is estimated that figures run as high as 1.5 million children murdered in the Holocaust (Children and the Holocaust, page 1).

However, Jews were not the only targets of Hitler's aggression. Germany killed people who opposed their regime on ideology: mentally retarded or physically disabled people, homosexuals, gypsies and captured Russian soldiers (Holocaust: Part I, page 2) and anyone else whom Hitler considered to be inferior to the Aryan race (meaning: "ethnic type considered pure Germans by the Nazis" (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 11).

It is important to understand the significance of the events of World War I and how after this war was lost caused great hardships to be placed on Germany and its people. From 1914 to 1918, Germany led the losing battle against France, England, Russia and the United States. Part of the agreement that they were forced to comply with after their defeat was the payment of large sums of monies to the countries that had won the war as well as giving up some of their already acquired territories. These demands placed on Germany caused a food shortage and poverty among its people. Many people were out of work and were not able to buy food. This also caused banks and business to fail (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 10).

"Many Germans blamed Jews for Germany's defeat in World War I, some even claiming that German Jews had betrayed the nation during the war", even though many Jews had

remained loyal (Judaism and Nationalism, pages 1-5). Jews were also blamed for the fact that at the end of WWI a Communist group attempted a coup (or Bolshevik-type revolution) in the German state of Bavaria of which the majority of these revolutionists were Jewish. Because of this, some Germans associated the Jews with the Bolsheviks and regarded both groups as dangerous enemies of Germany (they did not like the communists)” (Holocaust: Part II, pages 5-6). “And if that wasn’t enough for the German people’s anger toward the Jews to fester, the fact that they had lived in Germany for so many centuries and had very respectable professions such as doctors, lawyers, bankers, scientists, teachers, and business owners and were very successful was the final blow to their egos (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 10).

“As the German people continued to struggle, Adolf Hitler had been busy organizing his National Socialist Party (Nazi) and came into power in 1933. At that time, he urged the people of Germany to not associate with or to patronize the Jewish community (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 10-11). Little did the Jewish people know that in 1933 their lives were about to be dramatically changed forever and their children’s childhoods were to come to an end. (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-2).

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF THE KINDERS

Lory Cahn from Breslau remembers the Father that spoiled her unmercifully as a child growing up in Germany (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-2).

Kurt Fuchel from Austria talks about his middleclass upbringing in Vienna where the family resided in a nice apartment complete with a maid. He was the only child and the center of the universe. Life just couldn’t get any better (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-2).

Eva Hayman from Celakovice, Czechoslovakia remembers a close relationship with her Father and a carefree childhood (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-2).

At this same time, Hitler was swaying the youth of Germany to join his Nazi youth groups to further the aggression and oppression of the Jewish people. By 1935, Hitler passed the Nuremberg Laws, which deprived the Jews, their rights as German citizens, and made their cultural and social lives come to a halt. To further their suffering, any property owned by “former” Jewish citizens had to be registered with the Nazis who would later claim it as their own (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 11-12). For the Jewish children life under Hitler became more and more isolated and threatened (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-3).

Lorraine Allard of Furth, Bavaria, Germany recalls being protected by her parents because of the dangers created by Hitler. She remembers being overprotected by her parents outside the home but very much loved on the inside. Some statements that she remembers her Father saying was that he was not young enough to start over in a new country and that he, his Father and on and on were all born in Germany and that this situation has got to change. This madman Hitler cannot possibly last (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-3).

Ursula Rosenfeld from Quakenbruck, Germany was almost eight years old when Hitler came to power. She remembers her Mother always having a birthday party for her every year inviting the local schoolchildren, but this year no one came to her party. It was a terrible blow she says and for the first time in her young life, she realized she was different (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-3).

Jack Hellman from Tann, Germany recalls as a young boy on his way to school when six or seven boys called him a “Jew bastard”, attacked him and threw him through a plate glass window. He was severely cut and had to go to the hospital for stitches, which he still bears the scar on his forehead to this day. This incident made him not want to go to school, as he felt constantly threatened (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-3).

This same fear made other Jewish parents very cautious about their children's safety for concern that they would be beaten up if someone suspected their Jewish heritage (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 12).

In March of 1938, as Hitler wanted to expand his power, German troops entered Austria and annexed the country to the right without firing a single shot (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-4).

Lore Segal of Austria relates her feelings when remembering the newly Nazi-occupied land. She says that the first thing that happens when a disaster strikes is that nothing changes. You think there will be some great drama but your routine is the same, you go to bed and you think this isn't so terrible but then the next morning, her parents took her out in the street. The streets were full of new uniforms. Young people wore red armbands with the swastika, and she didn't know what that meant. They were stretching out their arms in the Hitler salute. Flags were everywhere; these new red flags with the white circle and the black swastika. Her main sense of something wrong was the haste in which her parents got her back into the house (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-4).

Jewish children were even forced out of the German schools and made to attend only Jewish schools (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 12).

Kurt Fuchel says that all of a sudden he couldn't go to his "normal" school. He was being sent to a makeshift school at the end of a tramline. All alone at age seven he would ride the tram as far as it would take him where he would have to walk the rest of the way to the house that would serve as the school. Even at this tender age, he was keenly aware of all the bad things that Hitler was doing and eventually word got back to his parents that he should not be riding alone as he was publicly speaking against Hitler. His Father told him that it was not good to be

saying bad things about Hitler, so his Father would ride the tram with Kurt to make sure that he kept quiet about such sensitive issues (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-4).

In the weeks following the annexation of Austria, the Nazi authorities enacted the anti-Jewish laws that had taken Hitler five years to put into place in Germany.

Robert Sugar from Austria tells that anyone witnessing these events were very traumatic for them. Reality struck when he overheard his parents discussing that they had to leave Vienna and to give up their apartment. This was the only home he knew, and he was faced with having to give it up. His Mother knew something had to be done so she put a plan into action. The plan was that she would go to England and work as a servant (England permitted this because it would not interfere with the job market), and she would try and get her son and husband out of Vienna somehow (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-5).

Lore Segal sadly remembers that the only conversation she heard among the grown-ups was of how they had to get out of Vienna. She now finds it interesting when people ask her now why they (her family) didn't leave and when she thinks about what it meant to leave and how impossible it was to leave; she calmly explains the sequence of events that had to happen. First you had to have a sponsor to the country you were going to and you could not become a burden to the government. Second, you had to get a Visa from the State Department or government to be allowed in and third, you had to obtain an exit permit from the Nazis. All of these things had to come together and be ready in case the opportunity presented itself to be able to leave plus the fact that these papers had an expiration date and for most people these things usually didn't happen. The hardest thing to accomplish was to find a country to go to. Countries being considered by Jewish refugees were Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Shanghai, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Lore remembers going with her Father to the American Consulate

and where there were long lines. This was late summer of 1938, and she didn't reach the United States herself until May 1, 1951, a 13-year quota (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-5).

Soon after Austria was invaded, Hitler demanded the annexation of Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia, which was home to 3 million ethnic Germans. They would be allowed to secede and join the Reich. On October 1st with international agreement, German troops marched into Sudetenland adding one fifth of Czechoslovakia to the Reich and opening up the way to further dismemberment of the country (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-5).

Eva Hayman thinks back and tells from that point on they would wonder what would happen next. Her Father conducted business with people in France, and they would tell him to get out that it was only going to get worse. He was an optimist and had greater faith in mankind and would always say he would rather trust people and be disappointed than to go through life not trusting anybody (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-5).

Sadly enough, less than six months later, the German troops destroyed the Czech state and Nazis continued their persecution of the Jews (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-6).

“By 1938 life had changed for the Jewish people and for those remaining in Germany would forever be a part of the horror that transpired on the night of November 9. “Kristallnacht” or “Night of the Broken Glass”, was enacted by the Nazis would forever convince the Jewish people and the world of their impending doom and intentions. On this night Nazis vandalized and burned more than 1,000 Jewish synagogues and destroyed many businesses and homes in Germany and Austria.” One hundred Jews were killed (A Brief History of the Kindertransport, page 1).”and 30,000 Jewish males were arrested and later deported to concentration camps” (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 26-29).

Ursula Rosenfeld's school was across the street from a burning synagogue on the day after Kristallnacht was set into action. The schoolchildren went out into the street to watch the flames and she overheard a voice saying "Oh, there's a Jew, let's throw her into the fire as well." To this day she still doesn't know how she got home, but she made it only to find that her Mother was in shock as her Dad had been arrested. Sadly enough, Ursula had a dream the night before that this would happen. The evening before would be the last meal that she would have with her Father, and she remembers something telling her to take one good, last look at him to imprint that image of him on her mind. Her Father, while imprisoned, had protested to the Nazis about the fact that they were making Jewish prisoners take the shoelaces out of their shoes, and he scolded the Nazis by saying, "You can't treat these old people like this." So they made him an example, and they beat him to death in front of the others to instill terror in the prisoners. The Nazis offered his ashes to the family in exchange for money, which they purchased and buried them in the Jewish cemetery, but they never knew for sure if they were his ashes or not (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-6).

Hedy Epstein from Kippenheim, Germany remembers the loud knocking on the door in the middle of the night. She, along with her Mother and aunt, ran up to the attic hiding in an old wardrobe. It seemed to her like she had spent her whole life in that wardrobe as she had frequented it before as her Father had sternly told her to take refuge there if ever she heard noises in the night and to not ask questions of his instructions. She remembers whispering to her Mother that she wanted to get out of the wardrobe and Germany as well (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-6).

Lore Segal tells about the Nazis banging on the door shouting you're all under arrest! They were marched to an assembly point where there were thousands of other Jews. Some they

knew and some they did not. Some were crying and some were being beaten up. Everybody was petrified (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-6).

The next morning **Jack Hellman** rode his bike to school. He remembers never passing a Jewish business that had not been broken into. The merchandise was either on the street or had been looted completely (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-6).

Jewish people were scrambling to get out of the country as fast as possible and to try and join relatives in other countries. If they were successful in obtaining the necessary papers needed they were always subjected to having their baggage carefully inspected by the Nazis, who would fine them large sums of money for hiding their prized possessions in their luggage. Most times they left with hardly anything of value” (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 12-13).

And now, the world was finally made aware of what life was like for the Jews in Germany and Austria (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 28-29). Jewish political and religious leaders in Britain were appalled at how the Jewish people were treated and they quickly put a plan in action in just three short weeks (A Brief History of the Kindertransport, page 1). This plan was appropriately named “Kindertransport”, which means Children’s transport (Kindertransport, page 1)! They had devised a plan to try and safely transport by train Jewish children from this horror” (A Brief History of the Kindertransport, page 1).

The British government was the only government to agree to loosen its immigration laws by letting an unspecified number of children through the age of 17 into the country, as long as these children would not threaten British jobs or public funds. Interestingly enough the United States had been asked to help in this endeavor. However, a Congressional bill died in committee around the end of April 1939 with a major argument stating that accepting children without their parents was contrary to the laws of God . (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-7).

“Organizers of this mercy mission went to the Nazis asking permission for them to permit Jewish children to be taken out of the country on these transports. The Nazis agreed as long as the children took no valuables with them” (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 44) “and demanded that 50 pounds sterling (which at the time in 1939 was approximately \$250.00 and later in 2001 it was equivalent to about \$1,000.00) (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-7) be paid for each child transported. “This fee was paid primarily by the residents of the United Kingdom rather than by the government (British)” (A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust, page 3). And because German policy had been to force Jewish immigration in the beginning of their regime, the Nazis willingly let these children out of the country (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-9).

“When word had begun to spread of this transport, parents scrambled to register their children. Offices were set up in Berlin, Germany; Vienna, Austria; Prague, Czechoslovakia and other large cities. It was very hard for parents to let go of their children by sending them to a foreign country, but there was little time in which to prepare for the journey, forcing them to make difficult decisions” (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 44-45).

These transports started in December just three short weeks after the horrific events of Kristallnacht. Most went by train and a few went by plane. Some trains left during the day and many others left in the middle of the night (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10). “A child, depending on their size, could only carry what their strength could allow. Unnecessary items such as toys and books were left behind but became constant reminders of their painful decisions to send their child or children away. Most children packed a favorite photograph of their families, hidden safely among their clothes (Ten Thousand Children, pages 44-45). A child

was allowed one suitcase, one piece of hand luggage and 10 deutch marks (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-9).

Jewish escorts that had volunteered to travel on the transport accompanied the children. However, these volunteers were required to return to Germany after each group of Kinders had been safely taken to England (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 56-57), and if the escorts didn't return to Germany, the transports would be halted at once (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10)! Most of these volunteers would not survive the Holocaust" (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, pages 56-57).

The first transport left on December 1, 1938, (A Portrait of Relief and Despair: A Documentary Examines the Kindertransports, page 1) and continued to make runs from Germany, Poland, Austria and the Czech lands" (Harris and Oppenheimer, page 13) until war was declared on Germany on September 3, 1939, (The History Place, page 5) for a total of nine short months. During this time, nearly 10,000 Jewish children reportedly between the ages of 5 and 17 were taken safely to England where they lived with private foster families, in orphanages, in hostels (places of lodging) or working on farms (The Kindertransport Association, pages 1-2)

Lore Segal's Father told her that he and Mummy couldn't leave but she was going to leave. They told her she was going to England. Lore's Mother, Franzi Groszmann recalls that she knew she ought to send her daughter away, but couldn't bear the thought to allow it to happen. Her husband went on with the plans and secured his daughter's place on the transport. Franzi had to give in and to accept what he had done knowing that it was for the best, but it did not lessen the pain of impending separation (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-8).

Alexander Gordon of Hamburg, Germany sadly reveals that his Father had died when he was only three years old, and his Mother was forced to find work outside the home. However,

she ended up being deported, which left him an orphan. Someone suggested to him that he should get on the Kindertransport and he thought to himself, (Ok. I will do it. I will go to England) like it was just going to happen for him (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-8).

Ursula Rosenfeld feels that she and her sister attribute their survival to their Father's death as children were selected for the Transports who had problems or who had lost parents (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-8).

Eva Hayman remembers being told by her parents that she was leaving on the Kindertransport and soon after they had decided that her little sister would be joining her as well. She realized that a decision to send both children would be very hard to make. They had two weeks before they left and each parent tried to give all the guidance and instructions that normally would have taken a whole lifetime to give (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-8).

Lorraine Allard was told that this was the best thing that could happen when referring to her upcoming trip to England. She knows that she was lucky by having a chance to go (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-8).

Hedy Epstein tells that her parents encouraged her by playing the trip up. They told her she would be able to go back to school, ride the subway, live in London and learn another language. They kept telling her over and over that they would follow soon. She accused them of trying to get rid of her by sending her away, and now she realizes that she must have hurt them deeply. It wasn't until later that she would realize the truth of their sacrifice (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-8).

On the day of departure, parents were not allowed to say their goodbyes before their children boarded the transport. (Fox and Abraham-Podietz, page 56). The Nazis wanted to avoid

the German public witnessing outward displays of emotions from the Jewish parents saying goodbye to their children for possibly the last time (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

Lore Segal recalls that all her family and relatives had come to see her off. An aunt of hers had twins and was extremely mad at Lore's Father because he had been able to secure his daughter a place on the Transport, and the aunt wasn't even able to get her twins passage. Lore's Father took her aside and before she knew it she had promised to save her parents, her grandparents and her aunt's twins and a list of other people from the dooms of Hitler—all at the tender age of 10 (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

Alexander Gordon recalls of his loneliness at the train station, as he had no one there to send him off. He watched the parents and children saying goodbye to one another, and he realized that he didn't even have a shoulder to cry on. All he knew was that he was going to England, and whatever would happen would happen (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

Lory Cahn has never forgotten the emotional parting with her parents. Her Father would tell her every day before she left that it was a good thing that she was going to England. And on the day of departure her parents somehow were allowed to board the train and take her to her seat. The German trains had windows that when opened would allow a child to hang out of the window, and her Father encouraged her to do this. When the train began to roll out of the station he cried out for her to hold his hands. He became overtaken with emotion and begged his little girl not to go. She remembers her Father looking very pale and her Mother was also wracked with emotion. All she could think about was that she wanted the train to leave, as she did not want to remember her parents in this way. Her Father ended up pulling her out of the window

and off the train. She was very fortunate that she did not sustain any fatal injuries, only bleeding and hurt, but very emotionally devastated (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

However, she can still fondly remember that her Father was in seventh heaven as he had his little Pupela (his little girl) back (Harris and Oppenheimer, page 108).

Ursula Rosenfeld's Mother was always a strong woman but on this day of departure allowed emotions and agony to show on her face, and she sadly remembered the image of her Father that she implanted in her mind (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

Eva Hayman remembers standing by the window waving goodbye to everyone and trying to believe that one day they would be allowed to return as she watched the train station slowly disappear (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

Hedy Epstein had tears streaming down her face as the truth of why she had to leave descended upon her. She realized that her parents were sending her away not because they were trying to get rid of her, but because they loved her (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

From a parent's prospective of this heart-wrenching goodbye, which is rare, because most did not survive the Holocaust, is summed up by **Lore Segal's** Mother, Franzi Groszmann. She says, "All of a sudden the suitcase was gone, the child was gone, and the other children were gone", and so she turned around and walked back home and did not utter a single word (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

Looking back with still vivid memories **Norbert Wollheim** from Berlin, Germany, one of the volunteers and organizer on the Kindertransports, said that after seeing train after train depart the station with the Kinders he would later come to realize that these same trains 18

months later would be departing in the opposite direction for Hitler's slaughter houses (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-10).

But once on the train and enroute to their destination in Hook van Holland, **Lore Segal** fondly remembers singing all day with the other children on the train and eating the food that their Mothers had packed. When they got close to the border where the Nazi guards were waiting the older girls got quiet and this made the younger children nervous as the older ones knew of the possible dangers when confronted by the Nazis (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-11).

Ursula Rosenfeld stated that the Nazis made some of the Kinders open their suitcases and started yelling at them throwing their weight about (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-11).

Alexander Gordon said that the Nazis were looking for new things, as they didn't like the Jewish children to have anything new. They were enjoying making the children cry. All of a sudden, the train was moving and they were in Holland and feeling total jubilation (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-11).

They were cheering and saying, "We are free!" **Lore Segal** laughs and smiles when she remembers the howling, yelling, shouting and singing from so long ago. Even though she didn't fully understand what was happening and didn't know the words to the songs they were singing, she sang along with the words, La-la-la. She thought to herself, "This is the best party that I have ever been to and it was so much fun (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-11)!"

Ursula Rosenfeld relates the experience to that of a coat of iron or lead being removed from her shoulders—the feeling of freedom. She also remembers the kindness of the Dutch women serving refreshments in contrast with the Nazis (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-11).

Once the train arrived in Holland, the Kinders boarded a ship where they sailed through the English Channel (usually rough waters) to final destinations in England. Once on land, customs officials made sure that the luggage they had brought were in compliance. **Norbert Wollheim** remembers one of the officials discovering that a child had brought a very expensive violin with him. The Kinder escort told the official that the child simply liked to play and that he took lessons. The customs official was not pleased with this answer, so the escort took a gamble and asked the child to play something on the violin. The child immediately began to play “God Save the Queen” and completed all three stanzas and was finally allowed to keep his instrument (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-12).

Lorraine Allard recalls waiting and waiting for her sponsors to arrive and finally they came. They couldn’t speak German, and she couldn’t speak English. She remembers hugging them only to be told that was sissy. She didn’t know what that word meant but that word stuck with her (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-12).

Mariam and Percy Cohen (Kurt’s foster parents) met **Kurt Fuchel** off the boat and took him to his new home. Upon his arrival, he saw their little five-year-old boy at the top of the stairs. Mariam and the maid gave him a bath and dressed him in his new English clothes. Later he would find out that his traveling clothes had been burned. He had been in them a total of three days. After his bath, the family sat down to a chicken dinner. To quote Kurt who said, “That was a language I could understand.” Kurt remembers being sent to an older German man down the street to learn English. Kurt was unsure whether he was a Nazi or not but needless to say he was frightened of him and tried to learn English as fast as he possibly could. In just six short weeks, he wrote a letter in English to his parents and proudly stated, “I no longer speak German!” Since

that day he never spoke another word of German, and he was never able to relearn it (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-13).

Once **Robert Sugar** arrived in London, he was picked up by his Mother who had been working there as a maid so the separation for him was not as traumatic. He was not allowed to live with his Mother so arrangements had quickly been made for him to stay at a hostel with other refugee children. Even though it was clean and there was food on the table, it still smelled to him like an orphanage, which is what it later became (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-14).

Jack Hellman lived at Waddeson Manor, which was like a dream to him, something he had never seen before but only in pictures. He, along with 25 other boys, lived in the servant's quarters. Very soon after, the Jewish boys brought a soccer ball onto the field and attracted the attention of the local village boys who wanted to see what was going on. When it was time for dinner, the boys told the Jewish boys that they wanted to see them tomorrow. Jack was so elated that he ran to his housemother and said very excitedly; "Someone who is not Jewish wants to see me tomorrow" (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-14)!

For those children lacking a sponsor they were taken to temporary housing in summer camps. They were entertained and kept busy. It is estimated that approximately 300 Kinders arrived weekly (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-12).

Bertha Leverton from Munich, Germany remembers calling it "the cattle market" when they were told to put on their best clothing when potential sponsors came to visit. She likened the experience to that of being a monkey in the zoo. Most people wanted blue-eyed blondes aged three to seven, boys were acceptable too, but every week more and more children were being brought to these temporary centers (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-12).

Lore Segal recalls being asked if she would like to go to Liverpool. Even though she didn't really know English she knew enough that Liverpool was a place, she didn't care where, and she responded by saying "yes." They also asked her if she was Orthodox and she again answered "yes" and they wrote that down. The next time she wrote to her parents she asked them what Orthodox meant (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-12).

Bertha Leverton's little brother was chosen as a playmate to a child in Coventry so she jumped at the chance to be near her baby brother but didn't know that she was to become a maid. She refused to wear the maid's uniform and wore her own personal clothes, which were much nicer than those of her host family. She mentions that they took her to the neighbors so they could see her in her fine clothes. Needless to say the lady of the house took all of Bertha's clothes for herself (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-12).

Lore Segal reveals that she had a total of five foster families and plainly states that she wasn't nice to have around. She didn't love them and they didn't love her, but these families had allowed a child to disrupt their households by bringing her into the fold each time. She sums up her feelings about being a Kinder to likening herself and the others to a bird with a broken wing. When people see a bird that's hurt they immediately want to pick it up and dress the wounds and try to nurse it back to health. But all this kind treatment doesn't change the fact that the bird still wants to be free and tries to fly away (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-18).

For **Robert Sugar** when word came that his Mother had gone back to Vienna to get his Father, he decided right then that he would be as "tough as nails" and not let anything or anybody get to him. This attitude carried him through the next six to seven years of his life (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-18).

Kurt Fuchel had trouble belonging to this new family. He was worried that he would be sent away as he knew this had happened to other boys. He really did try to please them but had a hard time of controlling his anger. Only once did he let his anger show through when he got into an argument with his new little brother over breakfast one morning by throwing a butter knife at him. The knife scraped his face narrowly missing his eye, and Kurt was told to never do that again (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-18).

“Most of these children were well treated and grew to develop close ties with their British hosts. Very few were mistreated and/or abused and some were forced to work as unpaid help. The older children, once they reached the age of 18, joined the British or Australian armed forces to further the fight against the Nazis!” (The Kindertransport Association, pages 1-2).

Once the Kinders had settled in their surroundings didn't exclude their worries that would hover over them daily. **Eva Hayman** put a picture of her parents by her bedside so she could say goodnight to them when she lay down to sleep. The first three months before the war broke out allowed her to send and receive letters from home sharing her new experiences with her parents, so the separation to her didn't seem so bad at the time (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-14). The isolation came when the letters ceased (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-17).

Lorraine Allard was beseeched with getting her parents out, finding them jobs and coming up with the 100- pound guarantee. She would knock door-to-door explaining her situation and how she needed their help. Other times she was unable to get the words out and would just stand there sobbing uncontrollably. She did, however, find sponsors for her parents (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-16).

Jack Hellman was able to get a job for his Father and Mother as a Visa was already secured for them but contingent to finding work permits. This little boy went straight to Baron Rothschild's front door and demanded to see him and told him of his parents' situation. The Baron asked, "If his Father would work on a chicken farm?" and Jack immediately answered, "Yes, he will do anything!" So his parents were both granted work permits and allowed to come to England (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-16).

The family that chose **Bertha Leverton** ended up being the only ones she could rely on to find refuge for her baby sister, Inge. She showed them a picture of Inge, and they seemed to like her. The man of the house, referred to as Uncle Billy, asked what color her hair was. Knowing that he detested people having red hair, she calmly answered, "Just like mine." Her hair was brown. When Inge arrived off the train and Uncle Billy saw that her hair was red he was outraged but soon got over it and accepted her into the family (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-16).

Lore Segal was continually feeling a substantial amount of pressure about all the people that she was expected to save. From her own hand, she wrote a couple of letters to the Refugee Committee in London, and the Committee must have been moved to receive such letters from a child that they issued her parents work permits. They arrived in Liverpool on her 11th birthday (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-16).

Sadly enough **Lorraine Allard** says that everything was being done to get her parents out but now that war had broken out on September 1, 1939, as Germany invaded Poland, she felt like the world had come to an end as her world had been built around this reunion. She said that she cried for years (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-17).

Now the British people were subjected to danger themselves as Germany began to bomb London and the surrounding areas. Once again, the Kinders knew that danger was lurking at their back door (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-18). The onset of war had brought the Kindertransports as well as all immigration to an end. The only way of exchanging correspondence was now by 25-word postcards sent through the International Red Cross (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-17). Since cities were now subjected to the German bombings, the Jewish refugees along with British children sought protection in the surrounding countryside (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-18).

In contrast with their mercy mission regarding the Kinders, Britain, because of fear, began to gather up all Jewish refugees over the age of 16 and imprisoned them after Germany began to invade Western Europe. The government ended up returning 30,000 men and women. In one incident, 2,500 prisoners (twice the capacity of the ship) were crammed aboard the HMT Dunera, heading for Canada of which **Jack Hellman** was a passenger. Two days after they set sail, a German U-boat spotted them and fired a torpedo, which thankfully never exploded. The confusion caused the ship to change directions and they found themselves heading in a southerly direction. Two months later they arrived in Sydney, Australia (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-19).

In the spring of 1943, **Norbert Wollheim**, a Kinder escort, reports that Berlin was cleansed of the last Jews and he was being taken to a deportation center, along with his wife and child. He had no idea that the train now consisted of cattle cars heading to Auschwitz. Once there, women and children were ordered to the left and men to the right. It was the last time he would set eyes upon his wife and child as they later perished (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-20).

Lory Cahn and her family were transferred to Theresiennstadt, the Czech ghetto the Nazis used to fool the world. She sadly remembers the first time her name was called, she reported in and had her name crossed off the list and knew that she was targeted for a Nazi death camp and the unbearable emotions of having to say goodbye to her parents (who were in the same concentration camp with her) and then subjected to the cruelty of being told that she wasn't going. These events went on for two weeks straight, and she got to a point where she couldn't deal with it anymore and asked to be sent anyway. They asked her if she was sure and she replied, "Yes." She did this because every time she was subjected to the possibility of having to say goodbye tore a little piece from her Mother and Father and a much larger piece from her own heart as well as having to acknowledge that final goodbye. Her destination was Auschwitz (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-20).

Months later after the onset of the war, Britain learned of mass arrests and deportations of Central European Jews within the boundaries of Nazi-occupied land. This harsh treatment of refugees by the Nazis along with the Denora scandal helped soften public opinion in England against their imprisonment. England made a stipulation for the refugees being allowed back into the country that they would be expected to join up with the British Armed Forces (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-22).

After the war officially came to an end, **Lorraine Allard** clearly remembers thinking, "This is it!" What she meant was that she knew that finally she could reunite with her parents. She sat down and wrote separate letters to her Mother and Father, because she had an address for each one through the Red Cross. It took almost four months for these letters to come back and they were both stamped "Deported to Auschwitz." This is how she found out her parents had perished (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-24).

Ursula Rosenfeld and her sister went to the International Red Cross only to find that their Mother had been deported to Russia and later murdered. This was hard news to take, their Father had also been murdered early on, and now for their Mother there was no grave to grieve at, no one to say goodbye to and no funeral (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-24).

Eva Hayman was working when she received a phone call informing her that she had a telegram. At her request, it was read over the phone. The message said, "Your parents were gravely ill. There was no hope. Wait for further news." Looking back the news must not have sunk in, and she returned to her job of taking care of the children. When asked by one of the little boys why she was not smiling and laughing, she burst into tears and ran out in the lawn and lay down. This was such a shock to her, and the future that she had always tried to paint was gone (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-24).

Lory Cahn was almost 20 at the time of her liberation and weighed only 58 pounds and that was after eight concentration camps. She wonders how her life would be different if she had been allowed to remain on that train. She fully understands being a Mother why her Father pulled her off. While in the concentration camps, her main concern was to be strong and to make it to the end, regardless of what the end was (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-25).

For **Norbert Wollheim**, he was happy to be able to leave but realized that he was one of the last that had survived and that so many more before him had perished (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-25).

Hedy Epstein didn't go back to her hometown in Germany until August of 1947. She admits her hesitation served as a defense mechanism to the harsh truth that she would have to come to terms with later on (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-25).

“An alarming 80% of these Kinders never saw their parents again as they perished in the Holocaust!” (A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust, page 3) “(There were almost 6 million Jews (The Holocaust: A Tragic Legacy- Graphs, pages 1-3) “[including the 1.5 million children]” (Children and the Holocaust, page 1)” murdered in Germany and occupied countries from the onset of World War II” (Deaths of Jews in the Holocaust, pages 1-3).

For **Kurt Fuchel** who didn’t find out that his parents had survived until after the war was over, was granted a longer stay at the request of his host Father. Uncle Percy (Kurt’s host father) asked his parents to wait until Kurt finished school by giving the Cohen’s more time to prepare for saying goodbye to Kurt. The request was granted and when time was up, the Cohen’s took him to Paris to join his Jewish parents. Kurt didn’t want to go—he didn’t know them anymore. This meeting was hard for him and he couldn’t look them in the eyes. When they were closely approaching he was finally overcome with a very strong emotion and that is when he admits that he felt and fought the elation of love. When he went to say goodbye to the Cohen’s, his adoptive Father cried in front of him for the first time. His Jewish parents had said goodbye to a 7- year-old and hello to a 16- year- old. His Mother thought of him as that same 7-year-old boy and that arrangement didn’t work well. Kurt admits that he was very lucky as most of the Kinders lost their parents and here he had two sets of them. With tears in his eyes and his voice cracking he said, “What more could one ask for” (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-26).

Eva Hayman said that she ceased to be a child once she boarded that train in Prague. She says that it’s strange that it’s only six years out of her life but those six years have affected the rest of her life (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

Ursula Rosenfeld felt that she never really felt like she belonged as a child. She wanted roots, and it was only in the latter part of her life that she felt accepted (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

Inge (Bertha Leverton's sister) says that being a refugee is the most horrible feeling in that you lose a family, home and have no identity. Suddenly you're a nothing reliant on other people's help, good nature and understanding. She feels for refugees worldwide and helps whomever, whenever she can. She now lives in Israel (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

Lore Segal now realizes it was a "gift" when referring to her new life even if she didn't think so at the time (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

Lorraine Allard remembers looking at her 14-year-old grandson and thinking this is the age when I lost parents, home and country. A lot has been made up to her where she lost out. She truly feels blessed (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

Jack Hellman talks about his close-knit group of friends and the agreement they made if anything like this would ever happen again. They agreed that they would not send their children away like they had been but to stay and die together. As they got older, their perspectives changed, and they now agreed that they would take in each other's children—they would not send them to strangers (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

Hedy Epstein says that she does her share of remembering "but remembering also has to have a present and future perspective. You can't just stop at remembering." She goes on to explain that she had help in devoting her life to human rights and social justice issues. She can't think or pay back the people that helped her but she can help others now (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27).

To summarize the intensity of the Kinders' inner feelings and the pain they were forced to endure, when one hears the remarks that **Alexander Gordon** made could and should bring humanity to tears. He says that he finally came to a conclusion. In 1938, he escaped Germany on the Kindertransport, was later sent on a ship that was torpedoed but survived and then proceeded on to Australia and later was allowed to come back to England where he served in the Army. He was meant to survive not because of himself but because of future Jewish generations and so that Nazis wouldn't live to look at his children and grandchildren. There was a purpose to his life (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD, chapter 1-27)!

CONCLUSION

These children who are now adults are aged approximately between 65 to 75 years of age (The Kindertransport Children: Trauma, Adaptation and Trauma, page 3). These Kinders did suffer deep and lasting psychic wounds, which involved many thoughts and emotions. Some were agonized over more than others, but it did not erase the possibility of not having experienced them (Survival of the Loneliest, page 1). They felt guilt over having to leave, being separated from their siblings and parents and agonizing on how to save their loved ones back home while trying to adjust to their new surroundings. They also felt anger of the persecution initiated by the Nazis and some of the German people, felt the loss of identity, home, family, religion and their Jewish roots, all regardless of whether their parents or siblings survived or not" "These children were forced to accept a new culture, lifestyle, language and for some a new religion." (Into the Arms of Strangers DVD)!

Most of the Kinders today have come to the United States and Israel and some have remained in England to live as very few of them returned back to their homelands (Kindertransport History, page 4). They have however joined forces and formed the Kinder-

Transport Association. This is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization, headed by a membership-elected Board. They hold conventions usually every two years and feature prominent speakers and multiple workshops on different themes such as historical, psychological, generational and possibly anything else as suggested by other KTA members. This organization also helps to raise funds to help children in danger and need as in their own words, "we once were." They also participate with other related groups in joint activities (Kinder-Transport Association pamphlet).

Hopefully the horrors of World War II will never be repeated again as the survivors are still paying the price and no one should have to suffer like they were made to suffer. These survivors, the children, are now facing health problems and old age and the majority of them will never know the fate of their loved ones.

And out of the nearly 10,000 Kinders saved, there are approximately only 500 that have come forward to share their stories and to acknowledge that they were a part of history of being a Kinder (Henry Karplus' e-mail). Because there are no official papers with any documented names of these children that were saved, it allows the privacy of those that wish to remain anonymous to stay that way (Kurt Goldberger's e-mail). And even back in 1939, very few people knew about its existence in and outside of Germany. Of all the atrocities suffered by so many people worldwide because of the hatred started in one man's heart, this still was truly a miracle that happened for those nearly 10,000 children. May God Bless each and every one!

Works Cited

- Drucker, Olga Levy Kindertransport Henry Holt and Company New York, 1995.
- Fox, Annie L. & Eva Abraham-Podietz. Ten Thousand Children: Life Under Hitler. Behrman House, Inc. New Jersey, 1999. Pages 10-13, 26-28, 44-45, 56-57, 72, 167-178.
- Harris, Mark Jonathan & Deborah Oppenheimer. Into the Arms of Strangers. Bloomsbury Publishing. New York and London, 2001. Pages 13, 108, 131-132.
- Into the Arms of Strangers. DVD. Prod. Deborah Oppenheimer. Writ. And dir. Mark Jonathan Harris. Warner Brothers Pictures, 2001.
- Kinder-Transport Association. Pamphlet. 1996.
- Kindertransport History Writ. Ernest Goodman
- Ed. Leverton, Bertha Leverton and Shmuel Lowenshohn I Came Alone The Book Guild Ltd. Sussex England 2000.
- “World War II.” The World Book Encyclopedia.. Volume 21. Field Enterprises Educational Corporation: Chicago. 1972. Page 380.

Appendix

“A Brief History of the Kindertransport.” [Online]

Available at: <http://home.sprynet.com/~lclementa01/history.html>. Page 1.

“A Portrait of Relief and Despair: A Documentary Examines The Kindertransports.” Available at:

<http://ask.elibrary.com/printdoc.asp?querydocid=221359944@urn:bigchalk:US;Lib&dtype=0...html>. Page 1.

“A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust.” [Online] Available

at: <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/people/children.hmml>. Page 3.

“Children and the Holocaust.” [Online] Available at:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~baustin/children.html>. Page 1.

Goldberger, Kurt <margkurt@aol.com> “Kinder questions.” Private e-mail message to Cheryl Holder 24 April 2003

Fuchel, Kurt. The Kindertransport Association: “Response To Questions on the Holocaust Survivor Group Known as “Kindertransport””. [Online] Available at

<http://www.kindertransport.org/kinder2.htm> Pages 1-2.

“Holocaust.” [Online] Available at:

<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/refpages/RefArticle.aspx?refid=761559508>. Pages 2, 5-6.

“Holocaust: A Tragic Legacy – Graphs [Online] Available at:

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12663/fact.html>. Pages 1-3.

“Judaism and Nationalism” [Online] Available at

<http://www.thirdway.org/files/articles/jewnatio.html> Pages 1-5.

Karplus, Henry <karplus@ameritech.net> “Kinder questions.” Private e-mail message to Cheryl Holder 22 April 2003.

“Kindertransport” [Online] Available at

<http://www.youth.net/memories/hypermail/0574.html> Page 1.

Segal, Ruth <prsegal@aaahawk.com> “Kinder questions.” Private e-mail message to Cheryl Holder 01 May 2003.

“Survival of the Loneliest” [Online] Available at:

<http://ask.elibrary.com/printdoc.asp?querydocid=22545555@urn:bigchalk:US;Lib&dtype=0....html>. Page 1.

“The History Place-Holocaust Timeline” [Online] Available at
<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/timeline.html> Page 5.

“The Kindertransport Children: Trauma, Adaptation and Trauma” [Online] Available
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/cgjs/projects/kinder.htm> Page 3.

“The Kindertransport Association History.” [Online] Available at:
<http://www.kindertransport.org/history.html>. Pages 1-2.