

The Rescue Mission of Nicholas Winton and the New Life of the Rescued

Věra Zvěřinová

Bachelor Thesis
2011



Tomas Bata University in Zlín
Faculty of Humanities

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně

Fakulta humanitních studií

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

akademický rok: 2010/2011

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Věra ZVĚŘINOVÁ**

Osobní číslo: **H08411**

Studijní program: **B 7310 Filologie**

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro manažerskou praxi**

Téma práce: **Záchranná mise Nicholase Wintona a nový život
zachráněných**

Zásady pro vypracování:

Zjistěte jaký byl život Židů v Československu a ve Velké Británii ve 30. letech.

Zaměřte se na záchrannou misi Nicholase Wintona.

**Prozkoumejte, jak se vyvíjel nový život zachráněných československých Židů ve Velké
Británii.**

Rozsah bakalářské práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Bachrach, D. Susan. Tell them we remember the story of the Holocaust. Boston: Little, Brown, 1994.

Drucker, Levy Olga. Kindertransport. New York: H. Holt, 1992.

Emanuel, Muriel and Gissing Vera. Nicolas Winton and the Rescued Generation: Save One Life, Save the World. London: Vallentine Mitchell Publishers, 2001.

Gissing, Vera. Pearls Of Childhood. London: Robson Books, 1994.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Helena Janasová

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

1. února 2011

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

6. května 2011

Ve Zlíně dne 1. února 2011



prof. PhDr. Vlastimil Švec, CSc.
děkan



doc. Ing. Anežka Lengálová, Ph.D.
ředitelka ústavu

PROHLÁŠENÍ AUTORA BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Beru na vědomí, že

- odevzdáním bakalářské práce souhlasím se zveřejněním své práce podle zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby ¹⁾;
- beru na vědomí, že bakalářská práce bude uložena v elektronické podobě v univerzitním informačním systému dostupná k nahlédnutí;
- na moji bakalářskou práci se plně vztahuje zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, zejm. § 35 odst. 3 ²⁾;
- podle § 60 ³⁾ odst. 1 autorského zákona má UTB ve Zlíně právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla v rozsahu § 12 odst. 4 autorského zákona;
- podle § 60 ³⁾ odst. 2 a 3 mohu užít své dílo – bakalářskou práci - nebo poskytnout licenci k jejímu využití jen s předchozím písemným souhlasem Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně, která je oprávněna v takovém případě ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které byly Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně na vytvoření díla vynaloženy (až do jejich skutečné výše);
- pokud bylo k vypracování bakalářské práce využito softwaru poskytnutého Univerzitou Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně nebo jinými subjekty pouze ke studijním a výzkumným účelům (tj. k nekomerčnímu využití), nelze výsledky bakalářské práce využít ke komerčním účelům.

Prohlašuji, že

- elektronická a tištěná verze bakalářské práce jsou totožné;
- na bakalářské práci jsem pracoval samostatně a použitou literaturu jsem citoval. V případě publikace výsledků budu uveden jako spoluautor.

Ve Zlíně 4.5.2011...

Zvěřinová

¹⁾ zákon č. 111/1998 Sb. o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 47b Zveřejňování závěrečných prací;

(1) Vysoká škola nevydělečně zveřejňuje disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce, u kterých proběhla obhajoba, včetně posudků oponentů a výsledku obhajoby prostřednictvím databáze kvalifikačních prací, kterou spravuje. Způsob zveřejnění stanoví vnitřní předpis vysoké školy.

(2) *Disertační, diplomové, bakalářské a rigorózní práce odevzdané uchazečem k obhajobě musí být též nejméně pět pracovních dnů před konáním obhajoby zveřejněny k nahlázení veřejnosti v místě určeném vnitřním předpisem vysoké školy nebo není-li tak určeno, v místě pracoviště vysoké školy, kde se má konat obhajoba práce. Každý si může ze zveřejněné práce pořizovat na své náklady výpisy, opisy nebo rozmnoženiny.*

(3) *Platí, že odevzdáním práce autor souhlasí se zveřejněním své práce podle tohoto zákona, bez ohledu na výsledek obhajoby.*

2) *zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 35 odst. 3:*

(3) *Do práva autorského také nezasahuje škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení, užije-li nikoli za účelem přímého nebo nepřímého hospodářského nebo obchodního prospěchu k výuce nebo k vlastní potřebě dílo vytvořené žákem nebo studentem ke splnění školních nebo studijních povinností vyplývajících z jeho právního vztahu ke škole nebo školskému či vzdělávacího zařízení (školní dílo).*

3) *zákon č. 121/2000 Sb. o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon) ve znění pozdějších právních předpisů, § 60 Školní dílo:*

(1) *Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení mají za obvyklých podmínek právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití školního díla (§ 35 odst.*

3). *Odpirá-li autor takového díla udělit svolení bez vážného důvodu, mohou se tyto osoby domáhat nahrazení chybějícího projevu jeho vůle u soudu. Ustanovení § 35 odst. 3 zůstává nedotčeno.*

(2) *Není-li sjednáno jinak, může autor školního díla své dílo užít či poskytnout jinému licenci, není-li to v rozporu s oprávněnými zájmy školy nebo školského či vzdělávacího zařízení.*

(3) *Škola nebo školské či vzdělávací zařízení jsou oprávněny požadovat, aby jim autor školního díla z výdělku jim dosaženého v souvislosti s užitím díla či poskytnutím licence podle odstavce 2 přiměřeně přispěl na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložily, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše; přitom se přihlédne k výši výdělku dosaženého školou nebo školským či vzdělávacím zařízením z užití školního díla podle odstavce 1.*

ABSTRAKT

Cílem mé bakalářské práce je zdůraznit nepostradatelnost Nicholase Wintona a jeho týmu při záchraně československého židovstva.

V první části bakalářská práce popisuje postavení Židů v Československu a ve Velké Británii za účelem nastínit historický kontext, ve kterém byla záchranná mise provedena. Ve druhé části se zaměřuje na postup záchranné mise, která vedla ke Kindertransportům. V poslední části se analyzuje, jak se vyvíjel život československých Židů v UK. Tyto tři části mají za úkol přinést ucelený pohled na tuto záchrannou misi.

Klíčová slova: Bill Barazetti, Československo, Doreen Warriner, Martin Blake, Nicholas Winton, pomoc, Trevor Chadwick, Velká Británie, Židé.

ABSTRACT

The goal of my bachelor thesis is to show the importance of Nicholas Winton and his team in the salvage of Czechoslovakian Jews. In the first part it outlines the status of Jews in Czechoslovakia and Great Britain on purpose to adumbrate the historical context in which Winton's mission was performed. In the second part it describes the rescue mission that led to Kindertransports. In the final part, this thesis analyzes the development of life of Czechoslovakian Jews in UK. These three parts are intended to bring a comprehensive perspective on the rescue mission.

Keywords: Bill Barazetti, Czechoslovakia, Doreen Warriner, Martin Blake, Nicholas Winton, help, Trevor Chadwick, Great Britain, Jews.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank to all people who supported me during writing this thesis. A special thanks to my supervisor Mgr. Helena Janasová for her guidance, support and patience.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
1 STATUS OF JEWS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1930S.....	11
1.1 The First Republic	11
1.2 The Second Republic.....	12
2 STATUS OF JEWS IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1930S.....	14
3 COMPARISON.....	18
4 THE RESCUE MISSION	19
4.1 The Life of Nicholas Winton.....	19
4.2 Nicholas Winton in Prague.....	20
4.3 Nicholas Winton Back in London	24
4.4 The last phase of the Rescue Mission.....	26
4.5 Organizations.....	27
5 KINDERTRANSPORTS.....	29
6 BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE.....	34
6.1 Assimilation of Czechoslovakian Jews after their arrival in the UK.....	34
6.2 Rescued Czechoslovakians as adults	37
CONCLUSION	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	42

INTRODUCTION

When I was thinking about the theme of my Bachelor Thesis, I had certain criteria which my theme had to meet.

First, I wanted to research something which Czech Republic and Great Britain have in common. Another criterion was that I wanted to gain some useful information and to learn something more. And finally, I need to “feel close” to my work because if I do something with passion, the work will be always easier. I am interested in history, especially in the Second World War. For all these reasons I have chosen a historical theme.

I was studying at Grammar School when I first heard the name of Nicholas Winton. That time I was also reading Vera Gissing’s autobiography. Vera Gissing is one of the children saved by Nicholas Winton. I was greatly impressed by these stories.

The holocaust and all the horrors connected with it seem to me to be something from an unreal world. To accept the fact that this act of inhumanity was carried out in the modern, twentieth century is even harder for me.

At first sight, the twentieth century appears to be only about aggression, combat and terror. However, if one searches for more information, they soon realize that at that time also humanity, love, solidarity and decency had their place. In my Bachelor Thesis, I devote to the nobility of mind.

Following statistics are inspired by the rescue mission of Nicholas Winton.

9 million Jews lived in Europe before the outbreak of the war. 6 millions of them were murdered during the holocaust. That means the removal of two thirds of the total population. That is an awfully high number. It is like if somebody would exterminate 7 millions of Czechs.

During the Second World War 6 billion people lived in the world. If only 10 000 from them would have rescued 669 people like Nicholas Winton did, there would have been no victims of the Holocaust.

If 100 other countries had helped the refugees like Great Britain did, all Jews would have survived.

The USA, South America, Switzerland, Palestine, Great Britain, Shanghai - these are the countries where 320 000 Jews from Germany and Austria found shelter from the war.

If 19 other countries had been involved in the rescue mission of Jews, all Jews would have been saved.

However, the best statistics would be if there had been no mischief and rage. There would not have been any numbers of people who died of violent death.

1 STATUS OF JEWS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1930S

Before focusing on a rescue mission of Nicholas Winton, it is needed to outline the historical background of the rescue mission. This chapter describes the status of Jews in Czechoslovakia and its degradation by the rise of fascism in Germany. It presents statistics on how many Jews lived in relatively happy Czechoslovakia before the war. The main idea of this chapter lies in the fact that Jews could no longer remain in their homeland without jeopardizing their lives. The only possible way how to help these Jews was their transport to such countries which were not directly threatened by Germany.

1.1 The First Republic

Czechoslovakia came into existence in 1918. Due to the newly acquired autonomy. Czechoslovakia gained a lot of advantages as well as disadvantages. For the first time in its history independent Czechoslovakia was made to face and solve its difficulties without the help of Austria and Hungary. The most exigent issue was the ethnic question. Czechoslovakia temporarily succeeded in its reduction and thanks to this fact the country seemed to different nations to be a stable democracy. During this period there was an accumulation of social and cultural life. Czechoslovakia was a multicultural country where the Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians and Jews lived together.

The Jews gained the status of an ethnic group and they could claim their rights to the Jewish nationality at a census. In 1921 in Czechoslovakia there were approximately 375.000 people of Jewish faith - in the Czech lands around 125.000, in Slovakia 140.000 and in Carpathian Ruthenia 110.000 Jews. Less than 15% of the Czech Jews declared to have Jewish nationality, 50% Czechoslovakian and 35% German nationalities.¹

Czech Jewry found itself in a fragmented condition. Some Jews had left the church, or converted to another religion, others had refused religious orthodoxy to get integrated into the Czech society that was perceived as a space in which they culturally and historically belonged to (a Czech-Jewish movement), others had developed the idea of self-determination of the Jewish nation and its right to their own land - Zionists, while the rest

¹ Daniel Hůle and Jana Vobecká "Analýza: Židovské Obyvatelstvo v Čechách 1848-1939," demografie.info, http://www.demografie.info/?cz_detail_clanku&artclIID=369 (accessed March 20, 2011).

had identified themselves with the German upper middle class environment with little concern for the Czech environment as a whole.²

The Jews during the First Republic played an important role, they even participated in the government. In 1929 two Jewish members were elected to the National Assembly. The Jews were also involved in economy, science, culture, to name a few: the famous writers Franz Kafka and Karel Poláček, the poet Jiří Orten, the sculptor Otto Gutfreund, the poet, critic and translator Otokar Fischer and the actor Hugo Haas.³

1.2 The Second Republic

However, the situation for the Jews from across Europe began to worsen after Hitler had become the Chancellor of Germany in 1933. The radicalization of anti-Jewish views and the adoption of various discriminatory measures, which were supposed to exclude the Jews from the economic life, led to the aggravation of their situation in many areas across Europe. In 1935, the Reichstag adopted the Nuremberg racial laws which were based on a racial theory and defined who was and who was not Jewish. Total dramatic setback of the Jewish population in Germany and Austria led to the fact that during the period 1933-1938 an estimated number of tens of thousands of Jewish refugees from these countries found asylum in Czechoslovakia.

The year 1938 brought to the Jewish population a greater regression in their position. The Munich Agreement, to put it simply, curtailed the Czechoslovakian border areas inhabited by the Germans. As a result of these events there was the mass migration of population into inland and especially to Prague. This concerned the removal of the Jews, who were even more in danger because Nazi Germany did not recognize them as full citizens. In March 1939 the Third Reich soldiers entered Czechoslovakia and the final destruction of the Jewish population in Czechoslovakia slowly began. The position of the Jews deteriorated steadily, in the years of 1942 - 1945 mass transports to concentration camps were conducted. This was supposed to bring the final solution of the Jewish

² Daniel Hůle and Jana Vobecká “Analýza: Židovské Obyvatelstvo v Čechách 1848-1939,” demografie.info, http://www.demografie.info/?cz_detail_clanku&artclID=369 (accessed March 20, 2011).

Question. The Jews should have been, according to the top Nazi leaders, forever erased from the world map.

Fortunately this idea failed to be fully implemented praised to the efforts of many courageous people, organizations and democratically minded nations and governments. One of the few possibilities to save the Jewish population on a greater scale was their transport outside the territory controlled by Nazi Germany, for example to Great Britain, Sweden or USA.

The next chapter researchs this topic in more detail and focuses on the status of the Jewish population in the UK before the Second World War. This will bring a better understanding of how during the time of the highest crisis Great Britain managed to relatively kindly accept so many Jewish refugees.

³ Daniel Hůle and Jana Vobecká “Analýza: Židovské Obyvatelsko v Čechách 1848-1939,” demografie.info, http://www.demografie.info/?cz_detail_clanku&artclID=369 (accessed March 20, 2011).

2 STATUS OF JEWS IN GREAT BRITAIN IN 1930S

To get an insight of the situation in which Nicholas Winton rescued the children from Czechoslovakia and brought them to England, it is fundamental to frame the situation of Jews in England before the outbreak of World War II. In 20th century the common, widely accepted general public opinion was that the Jews outside Nazi Germany were considered equal citizens who received the same privileges and care from the state as other citizens. It is considerable to clarify the reality and correct this faulty impression.

The Jewish population was not equal to the common English. The problems of the Jewish population are defined in the three main issues.

The first problem was the British mandate in Palestine. In 1930s the mandate had to respond to the Arabic uprising which evolved after the rise of Nazism in Europe. The circumstances led to the Fifth Aliyah.⁴ The Fifth Aliyah meant the migration of nearly a quarter million of Jews, which initiated violence and the Arab uprising, during which the Arabs conquered a large part of Palestine. Therefore, the United Kingdom changed the politics towards Jewish immigration, and in 1939 the so-called White Paper introduced a quota for Jewish immigrants. Despite this limitation refugees came to Palestine during the illegal Aliyah, called Aliyah Bet.⁵

The application of quotas, of course, raised issues among Jewish immigrants, the British Government, and the public as well. Unfortunately, in hindsight, due to the outbreak of World War II, this solution proved to be very inappropriate and lethal for many Jews who wanted to flee but could not.

Another equally disturbing problem was the lack of British policy towards refugees. In 1930s Britain had no laws on refugees. The first immigration law was not enacted until 1905 and it restricted the entry to the country for some refugees. In the period between the Wars the British government deliberately did not form any political attitude towards refugees and left the problem of Hitler's Jewish victims in charge of private organizations.⁶

The government created the impression that it was helping Jews, but actually the government did not do much. Generally it was due to a worry that if Britain had allowed

⁴ Jewish immigration to Palestine

⁵ Golan Canaan "Golan Canaan's Aliyah," canaancommunications, <http://www.canaancommunications.us/Aliyah.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁶ Julie Pascalová "Britské Listy," blisty, <http://www.blisty.cz/files/isarc/0004/20000406h.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

the Jews to flee from Germany to Britain, it would have strengthened the British anti-Semitism, which was already surfacing in the British society. From 1933 some Jews were allowed to enter Britain, however, the government did not help them financially and the purpose was to help to improve British employment.⁷

If some Jews managed to get to Britain, their situation was far from being resolved and they had to face many problems and complications. Often these complications were meaningless and were only expressions of concern and fear of Jewish refugees.

Most Jews who arrived in Britain had no contacts, no access to any help. Applicants for entry to Britain had to obtain guarantees from Jewish organizations and had to promise that their stay in Britain would be temporary. The permission to settle in Britain was to have been given to only "famous people like Professor Einstein", who, eventually, emigrated to the United States of America.⁸

One of the possibilities quite often discussed was that the Jews could be sent to British colonies. The British government thought, however, that they would not be able to adjust to the life in the country. If the British government had gained acceptance of Jews for the life in colonies, thousands of people would have escaped Hitler's gas chambers.⁹

Neville Chamberlain wrote in a letter to his sister: "No doubt the Jews aren't a lovable people; I don't care about them myself; but that is not sufficient to explain the Pogrom."¹⁰ The British government was willing to let Jewish women enter the country and employ them as maids and nannies in wealthy families, but the British government did not respond to the requests of people with high qualifications and university teachers. It was not humanity, it was selfishness.¹¹

The fact that the British public was more open to Jewish immigration into Great Britain than the British government was alarming. And it was certainly true that the British public opinion which favored them was getting stronger as the people were learning about

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ "Neville Chamberlain." Quotes online,

<http://www.lexinformatica.org/index.php/term/,9da4ac975b545ca09a6c59695a9e6b6956b0aea3ad5e645fae6b536153ac6452a36057535a9fa554a253.xhtml> (accessed March 20, 2011).

¹¹ Julie Pascalová "Britské Listy," blisty, <http://www.blisty.cz/files/isarc/0004/20000406h.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

the horrors carried on the Jewish population in Europe. This attitude was also influenced by the involvement of Jewish refugees in military actions against Nazi Germany.

It was shocking even more that British government did not change its attitude and views, although it was commonly known of the existence of extermination camps. In 1943 a public campaign for opening the doors to refugees from Germany came into being just after the well-known publisher Victor Gollancz published his famous text called *Let My People Go*¹². Opinion polls showed that 78 % of British population supported the attitude to allow the Jews to enter Great Britain. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was snowed under with letters. During the debate in the Upper House in 1943, the Archbishop of Canterbury pleaded for the permission of emigration of Jews to Britain. Nonetheless, Lord Cranborne, who was representing the government, refused his speech and criticized him for his wanting to restrict the rescue to one particular population group. Although the British public responded sympathetically to the Jews, the government remained stubborn in their views.¹³

Nonetheless, the whole ruling class of Great Britain could not be put on the same par as there were supporters of the rights of Jews amongst them.

One of these exceptions was Winston Churchill, who already had a firm view in the affair of the French army captain Alfred Dreyfus. He supported Dreyfus and lost his prejudices, which led to Dreyfus' conviction despite anti-Semitism which prevailed in England and continental Europe at that time. From that moment when Churchill first demonstrated his bravery, he - when it came to his commitment to the rights of Jews, Zionism and the State of Israel - never wavered.¹⁴

Generally, the fact that the support from the ruling class of the Great Britain of the Jewish refugees was not at all big and striking is evident.

The last fact which is essential to be mentioned is the efforts to save the Jews from Europe, which had been transferred to the shoulders of private organizations supported by

¹² Victor Gollancz was calling in this text for help to Jews who lived in occupied Europe. Sue Young, "Victor Gollancz 1893 – 1967," Sue Young Histories, <http://sueyounghistories.com/archives/2009/03/20/victor-gollancz-1893-%E2%80%93-1967/> (accessed March 20, 2011)

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Martin Gilbert, *Churchill a Židé* (Praha: BB art, 2008)

public. Often, there was not enough money left for the rescue of Jews. People who were helping the Jews often had problems to feed themselves and take care of their families.

This point is highlighted due to the reasons often mentioned in connection with the Kindertransports. A lot of people are surprised that some of the siblings were placed into different families so they did not grow up together. One should appreciate the sacrifices of private organizations, ordinary people and many other unknown helpers who, despite all the difficulties, tried to rescue those whose situation seemed helpless. These people showed Britain's friendly face towards the Jews in 1930s and especially in last years before the war.

It could not be said that Great Britain had not done anything for the rescue of Jewish refugees and for the improvement of the overall status of the Jewish population, however, it could be certainly said that Great Britain could have done more.

3 COMPARISON

Comparing the position of the Jews in Czechoslovakia and Great Britain draws to a conclusion that this nation had a popularity problem in both countries. Since the early periods of history the Jews have been viewed as a nation that is to be blamed for all financial problems. There have been and even now there are still stereotypes about the Jews. For example: Every Jew is a rich man or woman who profits on parasiting on the country which, according to the country's citizens, they do not belong to. This stereotype was applied mainly during the collapse of the New York Stock Exchange, when Jews were attributed to have had the biggest guilt for the financial crisis. After the rise of fascism in Germany, the anti-Semitic activity grew stronger and permeated the whole Europe. The countries which were invaded and conquered by the Nazis were exposed to anti-Semitic mood the most. Therefore they were aggressive towards the Jewish nation. In the case of Czechoslovakia, Poland and France, where the Nazis in fact took power completely, they could not do anything else. Great Britain maintained a more human face to the Jews because of its distance from Nazi Germany. The position and also the life of the Jews in Britain were not, however, rosy at all. Even in Great Britain there was anti-Semitic mood and the Jews were not considered equal to the English. However, it is important to note that in the United Kingdom there was never built a concentration camp. Although the anti-Semitism was present in the UK and in reality anti-Semitism still figures there, a concentration camp that would lead to the Holocaust was never built there.

4 THE RESCUE MISSION

This chapter does not deal in great depth with the life of Sir Nicholas Winton. It rather points the key people and events, who brought Nicholas Winton to the very difficult task. The task was the rescue of Czechoslovakian Jewish children. Nicholas Winton founded, virtually overnight, an organization that until the year 1939 did not take a place in Czechoslovakia. The organization, which helped children in Czechoslovakia to save their lives.

Who all participated in the operation of this organization and truly, was Nicholas Winton the only person who was involved in the rescue mission? Evidence in this comprehensive chapter reveal answers to these questions.

4.1 The Life of Nicholas Winton

Nicholas Winton was born to a Jewish family with German roots in 1909. However, he never considered himself a Jew. He knew hardly anything about this faith. He was christened. When he was old enough to start school, his talent in mathematics was revealed. His family wanted him to work in the banking industry. Nicholas Winton did not raise objections to this decision. After school he started to work as a stockbroker. His work involved a lot of travelling. Luckily enough he enjoyed it. He visited most European countries, some countries in Africa, and he also lived in Germany for 2 years.

As a reason of this, Nicholas Winton was always interested in what was happening in Europe, especially in Germany. From the beginning of the establishment of NSDAP in Germany, Nicholas Winton felt evil coming from Hitler. He saw the rising aggression against the Jews in Germany. He was rather surprised that Great Britain did not regard Hitler as dangerous. After Hitler had become the German Chancellor, some German relatives from the Winton family fled to hide to their Hamstead home. All of these matters made him be interested in the world which he was living in. Possibly his background had the most important influence on him. Nicholas Winton was surrounded by people who were politically active or they were aware of political situation in Europe at that time.¹⁵

¹⁵ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 3-55.

Thanks to these people, Nicholas Winton was able to arrange Kindertransports from Czechoslovakia. It is difficult to think about these events without asking a question: “What would have happened if Nicholas Winton had not known his friends?”

4.2 Nicholas Winton in Prague

Nevertheless how was it possible that a young English stockbroker appeared in Czechoslovakia?

Nicholas Winton appeared in Prague in December 1938 rather randomly. Winton recollects: „Martin Blake rang me and simply said „ I have cancelled my holiday and I hope you’ll do the same. I am off to Prague. I have the most interesting assignment and I need your help. I am in a tearing rush and can’t go into details now, but my address will be Hotel Šroubek, Prague. Come as soon as you can. “¹⁶

When Martin Blake had called him, Nicholas Winton was sure that something serious was going to happen. He did not hesitate a minute, cancelled his planned holiday as well and went to Prague.¹⁷

Martin Blake worked as the Emissary for the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia which tried to help adult people (mainly politicians, intellectuals and artists) to get out of the country.¹⁸

Martin Blake gave the greatest incentive to Nicholas Winton. It would be hard to guess what would have happened if he had not called Nicholas Winton and had not asked him to come to Prague.

Martin Blake was summoned to Prague by Doreen Wariner, who is another key person in the rescue of hundreds of people. Doreen Wariner worked as the Head of British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia. She had been working in Prague since the Munich crisis. Thanks to her actions a lot of Czechoslovakian Jews and other people in

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66 -67.

danger were saved. She gave an incentive to Nicholas Winton to begin organizing the aid for children.¹⁹

However, the names of Martin Blake and Doreen Warriner were hardly mentioned by the media. Although, without their involvement the rescue mission would have never been realized.

When all of them, Martin Blake, Doreen Warriner and Nicholas Winton were in Prague, Nicholas Winton wanted to see the real situation the people found themselves in. They visited refugee camps. These camps were established for people who had fled from Sudetenland after the invasion of German soldiers in Sudetenland. People, who had run away from this territory, were mainly Jews, communists, artists, but also German refugees who at first had fled from Germany to Sudetenland. Most refugees escaped to Prague. They thought that in the Czech upcountry, especially in Prague, they would be safe. Hardly anyone considered Hitler to be a big danger at that time.

A characteristic feature of the pre-war Nazi policy was alternation of periods of repression and the normal condition, a continuous escalation and release of anti-Semitic pressure. A short period of intense anti-Semitic activity was subdued by longer periods of apparent stabilization. The prewar persecution of Jews was conducted in a different way to the Nazi extermination of Jews during the war.²⁰ Consequently, it was difficult to predict what would happen next.

Nevertheless, Nicholas Winton came to envisage that Czechoslovakia, after the withdrawal of Sudetenland, lost all its defenses.²¹

He became extremely anxious when he saw the daily life of refugees in camps. Refugees were affected by cold weather, lack of food and water. Their future was totally uncertain. They did not have any relatives who they could go to. The most threatened ones were children. Almost nobody wanted to ensure safety of vulnerable adults, not to speak of guarding of children. Doreen Warriner drew Nicholas Winton's attention to the fact that there was no organization to help children especially. What parents would have ever let

¹⁹ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66-72.

²⁰ Židovské muzeum v Praze, "Nejčastější Otázky o Holocaustu," jewishmuzeum, <http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/cz/czfaq.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

²¹ Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (London: MJF Books, 2000), 79.

their children go to an unknown land with a different language on their own? It was absolutely inconceivable. It was easier to find a job for grown-ups. What is more, they were old enough to emigrate. There existed several organizations or committees helping adults. In some cases, the Jews emigrated on their own without any help. They went to live with their distant families.²²

Notwithstanding, people, who were most affected by Sudetenland experience, started to realize that the occupation of Czechoslovakia was just the beginning of something more serious to come.

Nicholas Winton decided to help refugee children, most of which were of Jewish origin. This information and his name were quickly spread all around Prague. Mr Winton stayed in the Hotel Sroubek in Prague. From the early hours the hotel was full of parents who went there to beg for help for their children. Some parents had plenty of money; some could not afford even food. There was a mass of people everywhere.

Nicholas Winton obtained all useful information from Doreen Warriner. She also helped him immensely by showing him her regular working day. Mr Winton started to act quickly. To work in an area that nobody had had any experience with was very chaotic. Nicholas Winton comprehended that first he had to collect the most urgent cases.²³

In Prague were already subsisted five committees which were helping individual groups of refugees - Jewish, Catholic, Communist, Austrian and German, and politically exposed writers.²⁴

In order to gather information about the most urgent cases, Nicholas Winton needed to cooperate with these committees. However, each committee preferred its refugees to other people in trouble. They were hardly willing to devote any time to speak to him.²⁵

Mr Winton recalled: "I telephoned all five committees and said that one list had been submitted to me and that unless I received the others within 23 hours that would be the one I use."²⁶

²² Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66-72.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 68.

²⁵ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66-72.

This strategy worked and Nicholas Winton acquired a list of people who were in the greatest danger. The famous list of Winton children was made from these compiled data. This voluntary work included collecting information from other committees, as well as going around refugee camps and doing a lot of paper work. Nicholas Winton was walking on thin ice. He was known by refugees, which meant that the Nazi knew about him as well. In Czechoslovakia, there were a lot of German spies. He had to do his work in secret and could not believe almost anyone. Doreen Warriner warned Nicholas Winton that he should be more distrustful and should not speak to strangers about his activities in Czechoslovakia.²⁷

Nonetheless, Nicholas Winton had a big advantage. Although he was known, he did not have any official status. Therefore he had more “freedom” and opportunity to help children than Doreen Warriner, who was constantly watched by Nazi spies.

Luckily there were still some good people who truly wanted to help in the rescue of the Jews. One of them was Trevor Chadwick. Trevor Chadwick left his work as a teacher and went to Czechoslovakia to help. He met Nicholas Winton in Prague and 2 days later he flew back to Great Britain with two refugee boys. Trevor Chadwick also offered Mr Winton more help in the future if necessary.

It was January 1939 and Winton’s two-week holiday was finished. While staying in Czechoslovakia, he almost forgot that he had to go back to work. However, if he had left the country, no one would have continued in his work. In this pressing situation something had to be done. Fortunately Trevor Chadwick soon returned to Czechoslovakia. He daily worked with Nicholas Winton for almost 18 hours. Meanwhile, Doreen Warriner wrote a pleading letter to Nicholas Winton’s boss. All of them knew that they had to act quickly. There was hardly any time and so many people, who needed help.

Unfortunately, the British were not aware of the European explosive situation. Therefore it was no surprise that Geoffrey Hart, Nicholas Winton’s boss, replied in a negative way.²⁸

²⁶ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 68.

²⁷ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66-72.

²⁸ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66-72.

Geoffrey Hart wrote: “There is very little doing in the Kaffir market, but I would sooner you were taking a rest here rather than doing heroic work with thousands of poor devils who are suffering through no fault of their own.”²⁹

It was clear that Nicholas Winton had to go back to work in Great Britain, but he stayed for ten more 10 days because he needed to finish the most momentous work.³⁰

Although Mr Winton remained in Czechoslovakia only for three weeks, he arranged greater part of the rescue mission. Securing photographs and information of the most threatened children and adjusting some system through chaos required enough of patience and tenacity.

4.3 Nicholas Winton Back in London

Nicholas Winton returned to London with details of children who were at the biggest risk. He needed to approach to an organization which had some experience with helping refugees. It would have been easiest to organize Kindertransports from Czechoslovakia via an existing organization. He knew that the cooperation with British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia would not be feasible because it was already engaged in the rescue of hundreds of adults. He tried to contact The Movement which organized the Kindertransports from Germany and Austria. To his astonishment, this movement did not want to cooperate with him. Seemingly, it was a situation with no solution.

Nicholas Winton settled this problem by adding his private address below the headline of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the rescue mission could not start yet. Another vital part of the rescue operation was the communication with Home Office that issued all entry permits. Without any negotiations with Home Office children could ever enter Great Britain. What is more Home Office worked very slowly because they did not consider Hitler a big danger and they did not understand the haste which Nicholas Winton worked with. The other problem Nicholas Winton had to overcome was finance. He did not have any funds, guarantees. In contrast to

²⁹ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 71.

³⁰ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 66-72.

Kindertransports from Germany, which did not require any guarantees, Nicholas Winton was in a very difficult position.³¹

Vera Gissing wrote: “Before an entry permit was issued, he had to submit a separate application for each child, together with a medical certificate and proof that the youngster had a home to go to and a guarantor or foster-parent willing to keep and educate him up to the age of 17 years. Furthermore, a deposit of £50 had to be put up to cover the cost of eventual return to the child’s homeland.”³²

In 1920s the financial crisis influenced the whole world including Great Britain. Although in 1938 – 1939 it had been 10 years after the stock market crash (the New York Stock Exchange collapsed in October 1929), the financial situation of ordinary citizens was not very favorable. The annual income was less than £500, therefore £50 meant a lot of money at that time. Nonetheless, Nicholas Winton was not losing hope in getting Jewish children to a safe place.³³

The British Government restricted the influx of child refugees in April 1939.³⁴ These restrictions were applied to Czechoslovakian children as well. More than 10 000 children from Austria and Germany had already emigrated to Great Britain. Czechoslovakian children who did not have any guarantors nor money were completely lost. As soon as Nicholas Winton had all his documents prepared, he started to write to all British organizations pleading for help. Fortunately, Barbara Willis, who was working for the Christian refugee’s organization and therefore had some experience, gave Nicholas Winton a list of all British Committees which he could try to contact. At last the rescue mission could start then. Nicholas Winton wrote to all these organizations explaining to them the dangerous and highly explosive situation in Czechoslovakia. He stated that there were 500 children who pressingy needed to emigrate. Without any guarantors the fate of children was sealed. To appear more convincing, Nicholas Winton had a book containing the photos

³¹ Ibid

³² Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 75.

³³ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 75- 86.

³⁴ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 75.

of Czechoslovakian children with their details. That made the situation easier and more transparent.³⁵

The children chosen by foster-parents or organizations were written on another list. This one was given to Home Office. As it was mentioned above, Home Office processed everything very slowly. Trevor Chadwick, who stayed in Prague, or Bill Barazetti, who was secretary of Doreen Warriner, had to often forge some documents. Fortunately, the Czechs and also the Germans accepted these documents and did not recognize that they were false. As soon as the original ones were issued, they replaced the forged ones.³⁶

Nicholas Winton completed all the paper work, which was essential, in London. While in Prague there was Trevor Chadwick, Bill Barazetti and Doreen Warriner, whose task was to organize the Kindertransports. When everything had been arranged on the British side and all the permits had been processed, the final stage of this rescue mission could begin.

4.4 The last phase of the Rescue Mission

During their salvage mission work, the situation of Jews in Czechoslovakia became worse in the spring of 1939. German troops which were occupying “just” the Sudetenland territory now entered the whole Czechoslovakia, Prague in particular. The work had to be done quicker than ever before. Still in Czechoslovakia, there were a lot of Jewish children who were waiting to be saved. Nicholas Winton advertised invocations everywhere where English citizens could read or hear them. He contacted schools, churches and other institutions in the endeavour to find guards for all the Czechoslovakian children. By his considerable exertion, plenty of people responded at his appeals. Not only Jews and Jewish organization but as well many Christian families and institutions. General English public offered their homes, money or help.³⁷

Winton mainly focused on finding homes for children. It can be said that he did not care about the religion of the family where the children were to be placed. That was not so

³⁵ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 75- 86.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 73-86.

considerable, the most important thing was to release these Czechoslovakian Jewish children and give them a better chance of survival.³⁸

Before revealing further details of Kindertransport, it is significant to mention all the movements, organizations and some people who were so unselfish and provided the place to go for Czechoslovakian Jewish children.

4.5 Organizations

Not only individuals but also organizations and other institutions participated in giving “homes“ to Czechoslovakia children. Already a lot of German children refugees were taken to by Jewish families or institutions. Hence in the case of Czechoslovakia Jews there were not so many Jews included. Nevertheless, a lot of other people wanted to help. Christians, Methodist, middle class people. More than a half of Czechoslovakian Jews were placed in English family than taken in organizations. This subheading concentrates on the organizations and institutions which helped with accommodating Czechoslovakian children.

The oldest children who were over 14 years old were the most difficult group to be placed. Foster-parents preferred children aged 6 – 7. Organizations which were involved in the rescue mission adopted mostly older children.³⁹

The organizations which helped with settling the children in the Great Britain were Youth -Aliyah, Woodcraft Folk, B'nai B'rith Care Committee, Barbican Mission, Society of Friends, Scottish Christian Council, Catholic Committee, Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council, West London Synagogue, Jewish secondary school and many more.⁴⁰

These organizations had different aims. Some of them wanted children to preserve Jewish religion. These Zionist organizations were for example Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council, B'nai B'rith Care Committee, Youth- Aliyah. Youth-Aliyah provided farms, where children were taught to agricultural training and Jewish religion. Children were basically being prepared for agricultural life in Palestine which was the colony of

³⁸ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 73-86.

³⁹ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 86- 108.

Great Britain. Others organizations such as Barbican Mission and other Christian institutions converted children from Jewish religion to Christian religion.⁴¹

The Woodcraft Folk is an international organization with strong socialist learnings. The Woodcraft Folk contributed accommodation for more than 20 Czechoslovakia children. In the fact, the members of Woodcraft Folk who felt huge amount of solidarity with Czechoslovakia children offered more homes for children than they were actually filled. The beginning of the war shattered the rescue mission.⁴²

Dr Rabbi Solomon Schonfeld is without any doubts a great hero as well. Although he was born in Nitra, Slovakia, he lived in the Great Britain. He founded Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Council and by this way he saved lives many Jewish. Schonfeld's organization also helped many of Czechoslovakia Jewish children.

The Society of Friends (the Quakers) already had a long history of helping refugees. They helped in Germany and before the time of German occupation, some of them were sent to Czechoslovakia to help. Jean Hoare and Sir Samuel Hoare decided to act on their own. They came to Prague with RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) support and they took 46 children to safety.⁴³

There are another several people who helped children from Czechoslovakia territory. Unfortunately, there is not enough space to mention all of the helpers.

⁴⁰ "Extracts from the Winton Scrapbook," just-powell, <http://www.just-powell.co.uk/winton/scrapbook.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁴¹ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 86- 108.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid

5 KINDERTRANSPORTS

Tom Graumann as one of the saved Czechoslovakian Jewish children recollects:

“It was a train for children only; I was terribly excited about that. My mother told me I was going to Britain to learn English in order to be a business representative of my father's company for Britain. She also said I would be back in a few years' time. I was so excited that I failed to realize that it was my last time when I saw my mother and my granny, and that they must have cried when I was leaving. I said a quick good-bye to them; my mother gave me two pieces of suitcase and a bag with food for the journey.”⁴⁴

While Nicholas Winton was negotiating with the Home Office, foster parents and institutions in London, Prague needed somebody who would handle with parents, children, Nazi spies and Kindertransports. Although Winton did the key part of permitting the children to go to UK, there was still needed somebody who would organize the Kindertransports from Czechoslovakia and who would guard an easy departure of Kindertransports.

Hence in Prague, were Trevor Chadwick, Doreen Warriner and Bill Barazetti. After Nicholas Winton left to UK, Bill Barazetti represented the Children Section in Prague. He held this position until the beginning of March when Trevor Chadwick occurred in Prague. Mr Barazetti originally worked as Doreen Warriner secretary but as the refugee's situation deteriorated and Prague was full of Nazi spies, he got involved in the rescue mission of Czechoslovakian children as well.⁴⁵

His main job was to facilitate the way with government administration and to ensure that no Nazi spies had a free passage to England when groups of refugees and other enemies of the Germany began to leave.⁴⁶

Doreen Warriner was fully fledged with helping refugees so she was the head of upholding Czechoslovakia children. She sent instructions to which parents had to adhere to. Children could not have any valuable objects with them. They were supposed to have

⁴⁴ Lenka Koprivová and Michal Šmíd, “Pametnaroda,” pametnaroda.cz, <http://www.pametnaroda.cz/witness/clip/id/217> (accessed March 20, 2011)

⁴⁵ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 88-128.

⁴⁶ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 105.

one luggage, suitcase, water bowl and some food. Children were not allowed to bring any musical instruments.⁴⁷

Although sources say that these children smuggled lots of valuables in their sandwiches and in the heels of their shoes.⁴⁸

In addition, parents should be prepared to the fact that they wouldn't accompany their children on the train.

Children of various ages were selected for the Kindertransports. Often, their parents made them believe that they were going to learn more English and that this would be an adventurous journey for them. The smallest believed, the eldest frequently thought that their parents wanted to dump them. It is difficult to imagine how the parents and family of children had to suffer when they sent their children away.

Trevor Chadwick had already some practise with organizing a special plane for Czechoslovakia children before the German occupation. Then, he was the right person to arrange trains for departure of children. After German occupation of Czechoslovakia, it was no longer possible to dispose air transport. The other way to evacuate endangered children was via railroad. Firstly, children started to leave in small groups. Then with a greater number of children, individual trains were provided for them.

Nicholas Winton added: "This was not simple task and took a lot of organizing. At times, not only the Germans, but even the Czechs made demands and took advantage of the urgency and gravity of the situation."⁴⁹

Kindertransport is the name for the trains that took vulnerable Jewish children from Nazi threat to safety. Kindertransports had already some history in Germany⁵⁰ and they were widely known because they were supported by public funds. However, in the Czechoslovakia there was nothing similar to this. Nicholas Winton and his team had to organize all the Kindertransports and search for some money and funds necessary for making Kindertransports real.

⁴⁷ Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (London: MJF Books, 2000), 100.

⁴⁸ Ela Kaczmarek, "Nationalarchives," nationalarchives.gov.uk, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/podcasts/kindertransport.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ The first Kindertransport from Berlin departed on 1 December 1938.

Under the umbrella of the Refugee Children's Movement (The Movement) – a subsidiary group of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief – various voluntary organizations, such as the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Jewish Refugee Committee, the Inter-Aid Committee and many concerned individuals, Jewish and pulled together to organize Operation Kindertransport.⁵¹

Children who were selected for the Kindertransports had to appear at an agreed time and day at the Prague Wilson railway station. Children were warmly dressed in their best clothes.⁵²

There usually were secretaries and volunteers who registered all the children who came. Children were given a sign with number which they had to wear around their neck and have the number on their luggage as well. Trevor Chadwick was there also, he had to check that children entered the train without any problems. On the train, children were accompanied by leaders of the Kindertransports who acted with customs during the border crossing. After children arrival in the UK, these adults had to return. If they did not return, the implementation of further permits for the Kindertransport received from the German government would be definitely in a negative tone.⁵³

Nowadays, a lot of people are surprised how was possible that Germans have ever let these Jewish children to go away and they do not kill them. The truth is, that Germans welcomed Jewish leaving to Great Britain very positively.⁵⁴

The train traveled through Germany to Holland, where the children continued their journey onto a ferry that got them to the United Kingdom.

Children were relieved when they arrived in Netherlands. The journey through Germany and checking children by SS- men had to be dreadful. Nevertheless, in Netherlands people were friendly to them and gave them even some food. Some of the children were absolutely taken aback by the sea. For many of them, it was the first time when they have seen it.

⁵¹ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 64-65.

⁵² Ela Kaczmarska, "Nationalarchives," nationalarchives.gov.uk, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/podcasts/kindertransport.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁵³ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 88-128.

⁵⁴ It saved them expenses connected with the Jewish extermination in concentration camps.

Eva Hayman, sister of Vera Gissing, who experienced Kindertransport as well, reminisced:

“I have only a vague memory of getting on to the ferry in Holland, but I have a very vivid memory of waking up and seeing the sea for the first time, with the sunrise on it, and thinking how beautiful it was. It was only the English Channel, but it seemed a long, long way from home in 1939.”⁵⁵

The London Liverpool Street Station was for them the last stop. At London Station, Nicholas Winton, his mother or other helpers met the Kindertransports. They sorted the children out, registered them and assigned them to their guardians.

The effort of Nicholas Winton, his team and others helpers and volunteers resulted in setting out 8 Kindertransports.

In the first, 20 Czechoslovakian children left on a plane on 14th March 1939. The second Kindertransport with 36 children left on 19 April 1939. The third with 29 children departed on 29 April 1939. The fourth including 61 children drove away on 13 May. The fifth with 123 children take place on 2 June 1939. The largest Kindertransport with 241 children on the board and sixth in the sequence arrived in England on 1st July 1939.

Seventh with 76 children rode to UK on 20 July 1939. The last eight Kindertransport left on 2 August 1939 with 68 children. The calculation of the rescued children comprised transports from Vienna, which include 15 more children.⁵⁶

The largest Kindertransport with 250 Czechoslovakia children was planned to leave on 1 September 1939 from Prague. Due to the beginning of war, all borders were closed hence it was impossible to escape. No Kindertransport could be organized from that moment. Even though children were already present at the Wilson Prague Station, all these children were unfortunately deported to concentration camps, where nobody from them survived.⁵⁷

The war interrupted the rescue mission even though Nicholas Winton had records of another 6000 Czechoslovakia children who were in need of help. In the Czechoslovakia

⁵⁵ Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (London: MJF Books, 2000), 117.

⁵⁶ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 127.

⁵⁷ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 128.

lived over 15 000 Jewish children. Only a fraction of them survived the concentration camps and holocaust. From that reason, it can be said that Nicholas Winton and his team saved the major part of Jewish young population.

When Nazi gained control of Czechoslovakia Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti were urged to immediately leave the Czechoslovakia. If they ended in Nazi hands, it would mean a certain death for them. It is needed to denote that nobody from them wanted to leave Prague. They wanted to stay there until the end of rescuing all the people who demanded help. It is not exactly dated when Trevor Chadwick left Prague. From the documents it is seen that he was still present in Prague on 26 June 1939. Trevor Chadwick died in 1970's.

Bill Barazetti escaped after the last eight transport on 2 August 1939. He lived in Britain and worked for British Secret Service.⁵⁸

Barazetti was awarded the honour of Righteous Genile, by Yad Vashem⁵⁹ in Israel.⁶⁰

Bill Barazetti died in 2000 in Britain but he would never be forget for the hard and dangerous work what he did for the Czechoslovakian refugees.

Doreen Warriner left from Prague in April. Gestapo was already questioning some of her co-workers. It was clear that her turn would be in a while. Fortunately, she was persuaded to leave Prague. After 5 days of her departure, Gestapo came to arrest her.

Doreen Warriner publicized the book *Winter in Prague*, that is the collection of all the helping mission in which she was involved in Prague. She died in 1979.

Evidence in my thesis emphasized how the teamwork was really essential to achieve the result of bringing children to safety. Doreen Warriner who was in Prague far earlier than Nicholas Winton, Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti who stayed in Prague later than Nicholas Winton. All of them had to handle the danger that Gestapo could come for them any day. However, Nicholas Winton won the bureaucratic war with Home Office and Great Britain, which was one of the most important part in a rescue mission. All these four people have done their best to save children's lives.

⁵⁸ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 88-128.

⁵⁹ Yad Vashem is Israel's official memorial to the Jewish victims of Holocaust.

⁶⁰ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 107.

6 BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE

This chapter deals with the fate of children who were rescued. Czechoslovakian children who were saved by Nicholas Winton and his team are very often called as Winton's children. Firstly, it describes how the lives of the children developed immediately after their arrival in Great Britain. The second part of this chapter focuses on the lives of these children in adulthood.

This chapter does not try to mention the fate of all "Winton's" children. Hence the information about who saved them was made public in 1988, nowadays it is known "only" about 250 of Winton's children. Unfortunately, because of the fact that these children are 70- 80 years old, many of these children have already died. We would never know what happened to all of them. This chapter deals only with those who live in Great Britain in an attempt to analyze if they adapted to English culture and whether they became familiar with Great Britain.

6.1 Assimilation of Czechoslovakian Jews after their arrival in the UK

Satisfaction of children and their integration into English life, in particular, were based on place where children were sent. Children who lived with foster-parents have the advantage to be treated individually and thus they "know" that even though their parents were far away from them, still they had some shelter in Great Britain. In short, children who stayed with foster-parents had a greater sense of belonging than children who stayed in hostels, farms etc. The other advantage of living with foster families was, that children were directly exposed to the English language and way of life. This led to a quicker orientation in different culture and language.

Most children who arrived in Great Britain did not speak English. They had to learn very quickly to understand all the information. Those children who lived with foster-parents were exhibited to it in particular. Hardly anyone of the English could speak Czech. On the contrary, those children who were placed at farms, in hostels, etc. had the advantage / disadvantage in the way that everyone spoke Czech so they did not need to learn English so primarily. Therefore learning English was more difficult for them than for those children who were thrown "into English life" directly.

All of them, except very small children, had great difficulties with adapting to new surroundings. Life, how they knew it, had completely gone. Their parents were distant none of the old friends were with them, different language and style of life. The first year

was undoubtedly the worst for Czechoslovakian children. They had to countervail not only with the separation from their parents, but also with complete change of their background and habits. Fundamentally, their carefree childhood ended and each of them had to grapple with this situation as quickly as possible.

Vera Gissing noted in a book *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation*: „Some children found it exceedingly hard to adapt to their new life in England, to the families who were complete strangers, to the foreign language, food and customs, and the natural reserve of British. They were consumed by homesickness, yearning for their parents and friends, hating the isolation and separation from everything that was familiar. A show of physical affection was often absent and sorely missed; to many, hugs and kisses would have made the world of difference, particularly to the little ones. In most cases, relationships with foster families were warm and affectionate, but without emotion. We were used to loving homes, where there was no emotional restraint. It was impossible for us to understand that our foster-parents were doing their best not to replace our real parents and in any way alienate us from our former environment.“⁶¹

Czechoslovakian children were spread throughout all British Isles. From London and Oxford to Scotland. Whether the child lived with the foster-parents or they were accommodated in hostels, each one had to meet compulsory school attendance. Age when children decided about their future life was 16. In 16 years, children had to make clear priorities, if they wanted to continue in studying or go to work and begin to live independently. The decision which led to further study had to join the person who was responsible for the child. Studies were very expensive for the guardians of the middle class. Most Czechoslovakian children started work or left for the army in their 16. The end of the war found the children at different ages.

Some of the children were already 16 years old and they were looking forward to go at home, someone like Vera Loewy was 15 years and was worried whether she would be able to finish the final tests at her school. Some children, especially younger ones even forgot to speak Czech and they were afraid to be reunited with their parents.⁶²

⁶¹ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 142-43.

⁶² Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 129-171.

The children spent in Great Britain 6 long years for waiting to see the end of the war. After the first year of the biggest shock, most of them accustomed to live in the UK, although of course they missed their parents. However, 6 years is a long time and so most children got familiar with the reality in which they were located.

The end of the war and the recognition about the existence of concentration camps in which the Holocaust took place was shocking. The most shocking and devastating was the fact that parents and families of those children were murdered and that the children would never see them again.

Children were faced with difficult decision - to return to their homeland Czechoslovakia, or remain in the UK which they took as their second homeland. The children's attitude towards the decision of returning can be divided into 2 ways. The younger children who already forgot their native tongue within 6 years of staying in UK chose not to return. They took their foster-parents as their real family. Great Britain was a mother land for them. Elder Czechoslovakian children, especially those who attended Czech School in Wales were very patriotic. Czechoslovakia was perceived as their home, where their roots were and where they wanted return to.⁶³

Thus during July and August 1945 several groups of young refugees were repatriated in planes or trains bound for Prague.⁶⁴

After arriving back in Czechoslovakia, children quickly conceived that life, which used to live in Czechoslovakia would never be the same. Parents and families of many children were murdered. Their property or houses where they formerly lived before, were either destroyed or were inhabited or occupied by someone else who did not intend to return it. In Czechoslovakia still leaked anti-Semitic mood in the sense that fellow Czechoslovaks were angry at the children for the reason that children did not remain in Czechoslovakia and that they survived. Many of these children could not cope with the facts. Czechoslovakia used to be a home for them and then children saw that they are rejected by their friends and other Czechoslovakian citizens. Many of them decided to return to the UK and to live the life they already knew for 6 years. There was nothing left from their previous life in the Czechoslovakia for them.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 163.

Some children were lucky and found some of their living family members. These found a part of their home where they could return. Therefore, they chose to remain in Czechoslovakia and to try to continue in life which they knew before German occupation. Other children in the course of the war or even after war emigrated to other countries such as Israel, Palestine, Canada or the United States. In short, they went to live to the countries where they had some roots, relatives or they just wanted to start a new life which would enable them to draw a thick line under the past. As had been written, the following chapter is concerned only with those children who remained living in the UK.

It can be said that although some children found it hard to assimilate into the life in Great Britain, in some way they got used to it. When children ascertained that hardly anyone was waiting for them in Czechoslovakia, many of them, especially those who were not afraid of their past, made a choice to stay in the UK and to live life which they knew.

6.2 Rescued Czechoslovakians as adults

It is hard to imagine what one would do if he lost his parents, family and even friends. What a shock it must have been for Winton's children to observe that even compatriots from their homeland condemned them. Winton's children were faced with very severe obstacles. However, the joy of life won. The thing that unites all Winton's children is that they try to live their lives as best as they can. A lot of Winton's children are involved in charity activities, such as Sue Person. " She fostered 15 babies and adopted one. Since retiring she has continued her voluntary work with the Samaritans, the Children's Information Service, the Sheffield Family Service Unit and Home Start."⁶⁵

They have chosen jobs which are connected with helping people. Teachers, doctors, politicians, engineers, architects, writers, film directors, biologists, reporters grew up from Winton's children. Every Winton's child is a successful human being. They did not lose their love for people and the world, and they try to do as much good as possible not only for themselves but also for their families and other people.

Most Winton's children live in Great Britain, the rest is scattered all around the world. Accurate information about the number of children who live in the UK does not exist.

⁶⁵ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 149.

Therefore, I will mention just a few of them. In the UK, for example, those who remained were: Sue Person, Hana Kleiner, John Fieldsend, Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, Lord Alfred Dubs, Vera Gissing, Renata Lax, Karel Reisz and many others.

Vera Gissing is an acclaimed writer who is particularly known for her biography *Pearls of Childhood*, which describes her life. Especially, it describes the time when she lived in Czechoslovakia with her parents, but also how she got to Kindertansport, which took her and her sister to England. In this book also her life in Great Britain is recorded. After having read this book I must say that it shows us in a very unique way the attitudes, beliefs and feelings of a child, who is a direct witness or rather a participant in Kindertransport, the extermination from home and the subsequent life in Great Britain. In this book the reader sees what Vera Gissing thought and what she endured. Vera Gissing, in collaboration with Muriel Emanuel wrote a book called *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation*. This book was a very valuable resource for my writing. She also acts as a translator. She is in touch with other children and Mr. Winton as well. It is necessary to note that she is the driving power in finding and making contacts with other Winton's children.

Lady Milena Grenfell- Baines is involved in many activities. She promotes Czech music, art and culture in the UK.⁶⁶ She organizes charity events, thanks to which sick children may undergo heart surgeries at top hospitals in the Czech Republic but also in England. She also made the Czech thermos bottle famous in Great Britain. For that reason she is often called “a Thermos Bottle Lady”.⁶⁷

In 1999, Lady Grenfell- Baines received Jan Masaryk's Gratias Agit award for her many years of endeavor to promote the bonds between the Czech Republic and The United Kingdom.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ “Lady Milena Grenfell- Baines founded the Friends of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society (in Preston) and has been raising funds and performing many other duties ever since. In 1990 the Liverpool Philharmonic was privileged to open Prague's annual music festival- the first festival after 1989 Velvet Revolution and the first time a foreign orchestra gave the opening concert for the Prague Spring.”

Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 159- 160.

⁶⁷ Milena Štráfěldová “Radio.cz,” [www.radio.cz](http://www.radio.cz/cz/rubrika/krajane/ceskou-remosku-ve-velke-britanii-proslavila-lady-milena-grenfell-baines), <http://www.radio.cz/cz/rubrika/krajane/ceskou-remosku-ve-velke-britanii-proslavila-lady-milena-grenfell-baines> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁶⁸ Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, n.d.), 160.

Lord Alf Dubs is a politician. He has held many posts for example: the Labour Working Peer, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office, the MP for Battersea South and later Battersea, the Director of the Refugee Council.⁶⁹ It is admirable how much work one person can achieve.

“Alf has served on an Area Health Authority and more recently on a Mental Health Trust. He has been a local Councillor, Chair of the Fabian Society, Chair of Liberty, a Trustee of Action Aid, a Trustee of the Immigration Advisory Service and of a number of other voluntary organizations.”⁷⁰

The examples of these three rescued children is enough to make everyone comprehend how much Winton’s children have contributed to the society. Europe, due to World War II and the Holocaust, lost part of its culture, identity and humanity.

Vera Gissing, one of the children saved by Mr Winton, said: “He rescued the greater part of the Jewish children of my generation in Czechoslovakia. Very few of us met our parents again: they perished in concentration camps. Had we not been spirited away, we would have been murdered alongside them.”⁷¹

If there had been more people like Nicholas Winton, Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti, more children would have been saved. For sure, that these children would have certainly been very successful in their lives as well. It is very sad that a chance to live had been denied to them.

⁶⁹ “Fabians.org,” www.fabians.org.uk, <http://www.fabians.org.uk/executive-committee-mainmenu-64/executive-committee/alf-dubs> (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Louis Bülow, “Auschwitz.dk,” www.auschwitz.dk, <http://www.auschwitz.dk/Winton.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Sir Nicholas Winton, Doreen Warriner, Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti – these are the people, who saved more than 669 Czechoslovakian children, mostly of Jewish origin. The story of Winton's deed is well known in the Czech Republic due to the attention given to the films directed by a Slovak - Matěj Mináč, as well as the media coverage of the topic. Various information about his life, marriage and “his” rescued children has been presented to us. He is depicted as a brave, great man and a hero, who he definitely is. However, it is necessary to realize that if it had not been for the rest of his team, he would have never succeeded in rescuing all those children who were brought to Great Britain.

The purpose of my thesis was to introduce all the difficulties the Czechoslovakian children rescue mission involved, mainly due to the fact it was managed by private companies and individuals only. To be able to fulfill this uneasy, ambitious goal people, who helped the children, needed to cooperate closely.

This process appears to be like an organic structure, similar to the functioning of a human body. Nicholas Winton stands for the “brain” of the operation, Doreen Warriner is the “heart” and Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti are the arms of this imaginary body since it was their task to obtain the permission for the train transport from Gestapo. They also set up the transports from Prague.

These four people played a major role in saving Czechoslovakian children. Doreen Warriner said to Winton directly that those children had no-one to take care of them. She also helped him to work through the multiple documents and application forms which needed to be filled properly to finish the emigration of the children successfully. Thus, it was Winton's goal to learn how to use and work with these materials and he had to decide whether to help the children or not.

He decided to help, to take the step and try to save these children, which is undoubtedly an admirable and heroic deed. He worked from London, where he did all the necessary paperwork. Mr Winton had to overcome many obstructions and to make work of many authorities and institutions faster. He controlled the whole operation from England, while Trevor Chadwick, Doreen Warriner and Bill Barazetti operated in Czechoslovakia. The atmosphere in Czechoslovakia was very tense; Gestapo could have come to arrest them any minute. If Nazis had caught them, it could have meant certain death for them. Nevertheless they did not get frightened and they kept sending trains from Prague to the UK even under the threat of death.

The interrelation of these people and in particular their collaboration worked well. Nicholas Winton and his team saved the biggest part of the Czech Jewry. This thesis claims that, for sure, Nicholas Winton is the hero; essentially he activated the whole operation. However, the media and the public should not attribute the glory only to him.

In the rescue mission of Czechoslovakian children 4 key people and many other unknown helpers were involved. Without their help the mission would not have come into being. Dorren Warriner, Bill Barazetti and Trevor Chawick are the names which should never be forgotten and should be connected with the rescue mission of Czechoslovakian children forever.

Nowadays, thanks to Nicholas Winton and his team over 5, 000 people are alive.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Drucker, Olga Levy. *Kindertransport*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1992.

Emanuel, Muriel, and Vera Gissing. *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation*. London: VALLENTINE MITCHELL, 2002.

Gilbert, Martin. *Churchill a Židé* Praha: BB art, 2008.

Gissing, Vera. *Pearls of Childhood*. London: Robson Books, 1994.

Harris, Mark Jonathan, and Deborah Oppenheimer. *Into the Arms of Strangers : Stories of the Kindertransport*. Bloomsbury: MJF Books, 2000.

Morgan, Kenneth O. and Kolektiv. *Dějiny Británie*. Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1999.

Websites

Bülow, Louis. "Auschwitz.dk." www.auschwitz.dk.

<http://www.auschwitz.dk/Winton.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

"Extracts from the Winton Scrapbook." just-powell.

<http://www.just-powell.co.uk/winton/scrapbook.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

"Fabians.org." www.fabians.org.uk.

<http://www.fabians.org.uk/executive-committee-mainmenu-64/executive-committee/alf-dubs> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Golan Canaan "Golan Canaan's Aliyah," [canaancommunications](http://www.canaancommunications.us),

<http://www.canaancommunications.us/Aliyah.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Hůle, Daniel, and Jana Vobecká "Analýza: Židovské Obyvatelstvo v Čechách 1848-1939," [demografie.info](http://www.demografie.info).

http://www.demografie.info/?cz_detail_clanku&artclID=369 (accessed March 20, 2011).

Kaczmarek, Ela. "Nationalarchives." [nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk).

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/podcasts/kindertransport.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Kopřivová, Lenka, and Michal Šmíd. "Pametnaroda." [pametnaroda.cz](http://www.pametnaroda.cz).

<http://www.pametnaroda.cz/witness/clip/id/217> (accessed March 20, 2011).

"Neville Chamberlain." Quotes online,

<http://www.lexinformatica.org/index.php/term/,9da4ac975b545ca09a6c59695a9e6b6956b0aea3ad5e645fae6b536153ac6452a36057535a9fa554a253.xhtml> (accessed March 20, 2011)

Pascalová, Julie. "Britské Listy." blisty.

<http://www.blisty.cz/files/isarc/0004/20000406h.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Schoenberg, Shira. "*The Virtual Jewish History Tour England*." Jewish virtual library.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/England.html> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Sue Young, "Victor Gollancz 1893 – 1967," Sue Young Histories,

<http://sueyounghistories.com/archives/2009/03/20/victor-gollancz-1893-%E2%80%93-1967/> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Štráfěldová, Milena. "Radio.cz." [www.radio.cz.](http://www.radio.cz/),

<http://www.radio.cz/cz/rubrika/krajane/ceskou-remosku-ve-velke-britanii-proslavila-lady-milena-grenfell-baines> (accessed March 20, 2011).

Vobecná, Jana. "*Analýza: Židovské Obyvatelstvo v Čechách 1848 – 1939*." Demografie.

http://www.demografie.info/?cz_detail_clanku&artclID=369 (accessed March 20, 2011).

Židovské muzeum v Praze. "Nejčastější Otázky o Holocaustu." jewishmuzeum.

<http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/cz/czfaq.htm> (accessed March 20, 2011).

