

WINNER OF THE INTERNATIONAL EMMY AWARD 2002

Nicholas



Winton.

THE POWER OF GOOD

“Save one life, save the world.”

The story of courage and determination of one man who saved 669 children from certain death.

A film by Matej Mináč

Narrated by Joe Schlesinger

Produced by Matej Mináč and Patrik Pašš



DOCUMENTARY FILM STUDY GUIDE

“...there is a difference between passive goodness and active goodness which is, in my opinion, the giving of one’s time and energy in the alleviation of pain and suffering. It entails going out, finding and helping those in suffering and danger and not merely leading an exemplary life, in the purely passive way of doing no wrong.”

[Nicholas Winton, in a letter written in 1939]

In the fall of 1938, Nicholas Winton took a pleasure trip to Prague, Czechoslovakia. He saw that Czech children in the Sudetenland were stateless. He understood that these refugee children would soon be doomed by Hitler. Although Winton was only 28 years old, he knew he had to take action. He devised a rescue operation to save these children.

This inspiring documentary tells how an ordinary man took extraordinary action. This DVD of the film includes 70 minutes of extra interview footage and additional short films detailing further information on the rescue operation, the private life of Sir Winton, his opinions, and the lives of some of the children he saved. It also includes a teachers' guide with additional archival material and thought-provoking questions for class discussion.

Color/64 Minutes/Not Rated

In 2003 Mr. Winton was knighted by Queen Elisabeth II and on October 2007 the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 583 recognizing the remarkable example of Sir Nicholas Winton: “The House of Representatives commends Sir Nicholas Winton and those British and Czechoslovakian citizens who worked with him, for their remarkable persistence and selfless courage in saving the lives of 669 Czechoslovak mostly Jewish children in the months before the outbreak of World War II, and urges men and women everywhere to recognize in Winton’s remarkable humanitarian effort the difference that one devoted principled individual can make in changing and improving the lives of others.”



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Nicholas Winton.

THE POWER OF GOOD

DOCUMENTARY FILM AND STUDY GUIDE

A film by Matej Mináč

Narrated by Joe Schlesinger

Produced by Matej Mináč and Patrik Pašš

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INTRODUCTION

“There is nothing that can’t be done if it’s fundamentally reasonable”.

[Nicholas Winton]

This documentary film tells the story of one of the greatest humanitarians of our time. Nicholas Winton, together with his team (his mother, a secretary, and other concerned individuals) managed to save 669 endangered children, most of them Jewish, from almost certain death at the hands of the Nazis and Nazi collaborators. Convinced that the war was imminent, Winton organized eight rescue missions in 1939 that took children from Prague, the capital of the former Czechoslovakia and the city soon to be occupied by the Nazis, to Great Britain. There they were placed with families, stayed in hostels, placed on farms, or even were placed in boarding schools (very few went to boarding schools). The final train, carrying 250 children, was scheduled to leave September 1, 1939, but never did. Hitler’s troops invaded Poland that same day and

the borders were closed. Two days later, Britain and France declared war on Germany. None of the children who were to have been on that final train were ever seen again.



For almost 50 years, Winton told no one about his rescue efforts. In late 1987, Winton’s wife, Grete, discovered papers in their attic related to his prewar activities. It was only then that the remarkable story emerged about the rescue operation that saved 669 lives. The Wintons

shared their story with Dr. Elisabeth Maxwell, a Holocaust scholar and the wife of the British newspaper magnate, the late Robert Maxwell. In February 1988, Dr. Maxwell published Winton’s story in the *Sunday Mirror*, which was featured that same night on the BBC program, *That’s Life*. As a result, Winton was reunited with many of the “children” he saved.



Vera Gissing, a rescued child, has written her memoirs in *Pearls of Childhood* (Robson Books Ltd., 1988). She tells the story of her rescue and growing up in Britain, her adopted land. Gissing extensively researched and later collaborated with Winton and author Muriel Emanuel on the book *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (Valentine Mitchell, 2002). Both books are excellent sources of information.

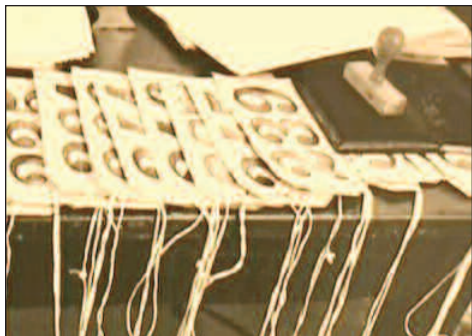
Upon reading Vera Gissing's memoirs in 1997, Czech filmmaker Matej Mináč shot a feature film, *All My Loved Ones*, in which Winton appeared at the end. This small exposure of Winton was so effective that it encouraged Mináč to make a documentary film of Winton's life – *Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good*, which won the **International Emmy Award in 2002**. Mináč and executive producer Martina Štolbová visited many film archives and museums throughout the world and, with the help of Gissing, uncovered new and unique material on the rescue.

This guide includes several types of information about the documentary. In addition to a summary of the story there is a timeline to link Hitler's rise to power with Winton's rescue activities. A study guide for use after watching the film (appropriate for middle school and high school students) is included, as is the series of questions related to the film and the larger issues it raises.



The study guide also includes many primary source documents. First, there are letters written by Nicholas Winton and government officials that express the sense of urgency Winton had faced, along with the bureaucracy and lack of interest that existed within the United States government for such an effort. With regard to the British government,

the House office was a bit slow, but allowed the children in eventually. They took in 10,000 German children as well as those 669 children that Winton saved, and ended up being a great help to Winton. Secondly, there are pages from Winton's scrapbook, which include photos of the rescued children and some of the letters Winton received from grateful parents. These documents are easily interpreted and will give students an indication of the challenge Winton faced. Finally, there are several new additions that look at Nicholas Winton's actions in retrospect.



Most of the 15,000 Jewish children who remained in Czechoslovakia after 1939 perished in the camps. From the 669 children that Winton and his team saved, there are more than 5,000 of their descendents living around the world today.

Winton's story is a great inspiration for all generations. It shows that whenever there is a will, there is a way to help. As

Joe Schlesinger, narrator of *Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good* mentions, one of the most intriguing questions of the whole story is: what inspired Winton to act as he did? What is outstanding about Winton is that he had the foresight, the drive, compassion and organizing ability; and he could never resist a challenge! There are many others who did risk their lives. As he insists, Winton was not one of them! Why did he take on the enormous, life-saving task of organizing the exodus of children in danger, while most people stood by and did nothing? Instead, Winton could have offered to help in some small way, and then just left. This “mystery” might be answered by an excerpt from one of his letters, dated May 1939:

“But there is a difference between passive goodness and active goodness, which is, in my opinion, the giving of one’s time and energy in the alleviation of pain and suffering. It entails going out, finding and helping those in suffering and danger, and not merely in leading an exemplary life, in a purely passive way of doing no wrong.”

— Nicholas Winton

THE STORY



In December 1938, Nicholas Winton, a 29-year-old London stockbroker, was due to leave for a skiing holiday in Switzerland, when he received a phone call from his friend Martin Blake asking him to cancel his holiday and immediately come to Prague: “I have a most interesting assignment and I need your help. Don’t bother bringing your skis.” When Winton arrived, he was asked to help in the camps, in which thousands of refugees were living in appalling conditions.

In October 1938, after the ill-fated Munich Agreement between Germany and the Western European powers, the Nazis annexed a large part of western Czechoslovakia, the Sudetenland. Winton was convinced that the German occupation of the rest of the country would soon follow. To him and many others, the outbreak of war seemed inevitable. The news of Kristallnacht, the bloody pogrom (violent attack) against German and Austrian Jews on the nights of November 9 and 10, 1938, had reached Prague. Winton decided to take steps.

MUNICH AGREEMENT

The Munich Conference was held September 29 - 30, 1938, following Hitler’s demand to annex the *Sudetenland*, a region in Czechoslovakia populated largely by ethnic Germans. The resulting crisis led Britain and France, who had adapted a policy of appeasement, to pressure Czechoslovakia to accede¹ to Hitler’s demands. No Czech representative was present at the conference, and the agreement led to the destruction of the Czech state. Following the conference, Winston Churchill warned: “Do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning.”

¹ *accede* – become party to an agreement

“I found out that the children of refugees and other groups of people who were enemies of Hitler weren’t being looked after. I decided to try to get permits to Britain for them. I found out that the conditions which were laid down for bringing in a child were chiefly that you had a family that was willing and able to look after the child, and £50, which was quite a large sum of money in those days, that was to deposit at the Home Office. The situation was heartbreaking. Many of the refugees hadn’t the price of a meal. Some of the mothers tried desperately to get money to buy food for themselves and their children. The parents desperately wanted at least to get their children to safety when they couldn’t manage to get visas for the whole family. I began to realize what suffering there is when armies start to march.”

In terms of his mission, Winton was not thinking in small numbers, but of thousands of children. He was ready to start a mass evacuation.

“Everybody in Prague said, ‘Look, there is no organization in Prague to deal with refugee children, nobody will let the children go on their own, but if you want to have a go, have a go.’ And I think there is nothing that can’t be done if it is fundamentally reasonable.”

OPERATION KINDERTRANSPORT

On December 2, 1938, Jewish and Christian agencies began rescuing German and Austrian Jewish children on *Kindertransport* (children’s transports). The “Refugee Children’s Movement,” a group under the auspices of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief, urged concerned Christians and Jews to support “Operation *Kindertransport*.” An extensive fund-raising effort was organized and the British public responded generously, raising half a million British pounds in six months. A large portion of this money was used to care for the children who were rescued. Between December 1938 and May 1940, almost 10,000 children (infants to teenagers) were rescued and given shelter at farms, hostels, camps, and in private homes in Britain. However, this effort did not include the children of Czechoslovakia; and this is why the work of Nicholas Winton was so vital.

Independently of Operation *Kindertransport* (see side bar), Nicholas Winton set up his own rescue operation, and appointed Trevor Chadwick and Bill Barazetti to look after the Prague end after his departure to England. At first, Winton’s office was a dining room table at his hotel in Wenceslas Square in Prague. Anxious parents, who gradually came to understand the danger they and their children were in, came to Winton and placed the future of their children into his hands. Soon, an office was set up on Vorsilka Street, under the charge of Chadwick. Thousands of parents heard about this unique endeavor and hundreds of

them lined up in front of the new office, drawing the attention of the *Gestapo*. Winton's office distributed questionnaires and registered the children. Many further requests for help came from Slovakia, a region east of Prague.

Winton contacted the governments of nations he thought could take in the children. Only Sweden and his own government said yes. Great Britain promised to accept children under the age of 18 as long as he found homes and guarantors who could deposit £50 for each child to pay for their return home.



Because he wanted to save the lives of as many of the endangered children as possible, Winton returned to London and planned the transport of children to Great Britain. He worked at his regular job on the Stock Exchange by day, and then devoted late afternoons and evenings to his rescue efforts, often working far into the night. He made up an organization, calling it "The British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, Children's Section." The committee consisted of himself, his mother, his secretary and a few volunteers.



Winton had to find funds to use for repatriation costs, and a foster home for each child. He also had to raise money to pay for the transports when the children's parents could not cover the costs. He advertised in British newspapers, on radio, in churches and synagogues. He printed groups of children's photographs and sent them all over Britain. He felt certain that seeing the children's photos would convince potential sponsors

and foster families to offer assistance. Finding sponsors was only one of the endless problems in obtaining the necessary documents from German and British authorities.

“Officials at the Home Office worked very slowly with the entry visas. We went to them urgently asking for permits, only to be told languidly, ‘Why rush, old boy? Nothing will happen in Europe.’ This was a few months before the war broke out. So we forged the Home Office entry permits.”²

On March 14, 1939, Winton had his first success: the first transport of children left Prague for Britain by airplane. Winton managed to organize seven more transports that departed from Prague’s Wilson Railway Station. The groups then crossed the English Channel by boat and finally ended their journey at London’s Liverpool Street Station, where British foster parents were waiting to collect their charges. Winton, who organized their rescue, was set on matching the right child to the right foster parents.



The last trainload of the young refugees left on August 2, 1939, bringing the total of rescued children to 669. It is impossible to imagine the emotions of parents sending their children to safety, knowing they may never be reunited, and impossible to imagine the fears of the children leaving the lives they knew and their loved ones for the unknown.



September 1, 1939 was to be the biggest transport of children, but on that day, Hitler invaded Poland and all borders controlled by Germany were closed. This put an end to Winton’s rescue efforts. Winton has said many times that the vision that haunts him most to this day is the picture of hundreds of children waiting eagerly at Wilson Station in Prague for that last aborted transport.

“Within hours of the announcement, the train disappeared. None of the 250 children aboard was seen again. We had 250 families waiting at Liverpool Street that day in vain. If the train had been a day earlier, it would have come through. Not a single one of those children was heard of again, which is an awful feeling.”

² Although some of the children left Prague with forged documents, Barazzetti would meet the group in Holland with the necessary legal documents before they entered England.



The significance of Winton's mission is verified by the fate of that last trainload of children. Moreover, most of the parents and siblings of the children Winton saved perished in the Holocaust.

After the war, Nicholas Winton didn't tell anyone, not even his wife Grete about his wartime rescue efforts. In 1988, half a century later, Grete found a scrapbook from 1939 in

their attic, with all the children's photos, a complete list of names, a few letters from parents of the children to Winton and other documents. She finally learned the whole story. Today the scrapbook and other papers are held at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, in Israel.

Grete shared the story with Dr. Elisabeth Maxwell, a Holocaust historian and the wife of the late newspaper magnate³ Robert Maxwell. Robert Maxwell arranged for his newspaper to publish articles on Winton's amazing deeds. Winton's extraordinary story led to his appearance on Esther Rantzen's BBC television program, *That's Life*. In the studio, emotions ran high as Winton's "children" introduced themselves and expressed their gratitude to him for saving their lives. Due to the program being shown nationwide, many of the rescued children also wrote to him and thanked him. Letters came from all over the world, and new faces still appear at his door, introducing themselves by names that match those on his list from 1939.

The rescued children, though many are now grandparents, still call themselves "Winton children." Among those saved are the late British film director Karel Reisz (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Isadora*, and *Sweet Dreams*), Canadian journalist and news correspondent for CBC, Joe Schlesinger (originally from Slovakia), Lord Alfred Dubs (a former Minister in the Blair Cabinet), Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines (a patron of the arts whose father, Rudolf Fleischmann, saved Thomas Mann from the Nazis), Dagmar Símová (a cousin of the former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright), Tom Schrecker, (a *Reader's Digest* manager), Hugo Marom (a famous aviation consultant), and one of the founders of the Israeli Air Force, and Vera Gissing, author of *Pearls of Childhood*, and joint biographer of *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation*.

³ *magnate* – a powerful or influential man in business or industry



Winton has received many acknowledgements for his humanitarian pre-war deeds. He received a letter of thanks from the late Ezer Weizman, a former president of the State of Israel. He was also granted Honorary Citizenship of Prague. In 1993, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II awarded him the MBE (Member of

the British Empire), and on October 28, 1998, Václav Havel, then president of the Czech Republic, awarded him the Order of T.G. Masaryk at Hradcany Castle for his heroic achievement. December 31, 2002, Winton received a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his services to humanity. On April 14, 2006, Winton received the "Courage to Care" Award from the Anti-Defamation League in Washington, DC. Vera Gissing, a Winton "child" accepted the award in his honor. Uta Klein, also a Winton "child", and Matej Mináč, the film's producer, were also present. On July 3, 2006 Winton received a letter from US President George W. Bush thanking him for his "...courage and compassion in the face of such cruelty and injustice." Winton's story is also the subject of two films by Czech filmmaker Matej Mináč: *All My Loved Ones* and the award-winning *Nicholas Winton - The Power of Good*.



Today, Sir Nicholas Winton, age 97, resides at his home in Maidenhead, Great Britain. He still wears a ring given to him by some of the children he saved in 1939. It is inscribed with a line from the Talmud, the book of Jewish law. It reads:

"Save one life, save the world."

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

This timeline is intended as a guide to the study of this era and a context for the work of Nicholas Winton. (*References to Winton in italics below.*)

1909: *Nicholas Winton is born in London – his paternal grandparents and his parents were of German Jewish decent. Winton's parents and he and his siblings (one brother and one sister) converted to Christianity.*

August 1914-November 1918: First World War (WWI)

1918: Czechoslovakia is established after the fall of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire following the First World War. The country is made up of two groups of Slav people, the Czechs, the Slovaks, and the Moravians.

1920: The Treaty of Versailles, which declares Germany responsible for World War I and its consequences, is signed. The treaty deals harshly with a defeated Germany, and includes territorial, military, financial, and general territorial provisions, including the demilitarization and 15-year occupation of the Rhineland (area between France and Germany), limitations on German armed forces and reparations of £6,600 million.

1921: Adolf Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist German Workers Party (Nazis).

1923: The Beer Hall Putsch (Hitler's attempt to overthrow regional government in Munich) is unsuccessful, and Hitler is imprisoned for nine months.

1925: *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*, Hitler's book, is published.

1931-1939: *Nicholas Winton works for international banking company in London.*

1933: Japan attacks China. The Nazi party gains majority in the German *Reichstag* and Hitler is named Chancellor. The *Reichstag* building burns in a "mysterious" fire and all other political parties are abolished. Hitler denounces the Treaty of Versailles. There are public book burnings in Germany. Anti-Jewish laws are passed in Germany, such as: no Kosher butchering, no Jewish civil servants, no Jewish lawyers, and quotas for Jews in universities.

Any Germans holding non-Nazi political meetings are subject to arrest and imprisonment in concentration camps. (The first camp is Oranienburg, outside of Berlin.) Dachau built as a concentration-work camp. (Specific death camps are not yet built, but the elderly and those who were very young, disabled, or sick have difficulty surviving harsh conditions of camps.)

Although Winton's family originally thought the German people were too intelligent to trust Hitler, they become more and more afraid of Hitler's growing power.

1934: Von Hindenburg, president of the German Weimer Republic, dies. The Nazi-controlled *Reichstag* combines the offices of president and chancellor. Hitler becomes both, taking the title of *Führer*. In June, on the “Night of the Long Knives”, leaders of the S.A. (Stormtroopers), including S.A. head Ernst Röhm, and other political opponents of Hitler, are arrested and executed. Seventy-seven men are reportedly executed on charges of treason, though historians tend to think the number is higher. Hitler then receives an oath of allegiance from all those who serve in the army.

1935: The Nuremberg Laws are passed in Germany, and Jews are declared non-citizens; civil rights are abolished, Jews cannot employ non-Jews, marriage or sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews is prohibited, and licenses for Jewish doctors, dentists and lawyers are revoked. Hitler violates the Treaty of Versailles by creating the *Luftwaffe* (the German Air Forces), and introducing conscription¹ in order to build a large German army.

In Germany, Nicholas Winton realizes that his family would be considered Jewish and treated as such. The Wintons begin taking in relatives who leave Germany to escape Hitler.

1936: Italy invades Ethiopia. The Spanish Civil War begins. German re-militarizes the *Rhineland* and Hitler re-arms Germany. During the Olympic Games in Berlin, Hitler refuses to place the gold medal around African-American Jesse Owens' neck.

1936-1938: *On business trips to Germany, Winton watches in horror as the Nazi party gains power and builds a propaganda machine. He witnesses the arrest and beating of Jews, and other ruthless behavior of Nazis.*

¹ **conscription** – to enroll into service by compulsion as a military recruit

1937: Hitler aids Franco's efforts in Spain by "loaning" him the use of the German Air Force to bomb Loyalist strongholds such as Guernica. The Japanese seize Peking (now Beijing). Franklin Roosevelt gives his "Quarantine Speech," which calls for the separation of the United States from an "epidemic of world lawlessness." The Buchenwald concentration camp is built near Weimar, Germany.

March 13, 1938: Germany "annexes" Austria. Nearly a million cheering Austrians line the streets of Vienna to welcome Hitler.

September 1938: The Munich Conference is attended by the heads of state of Great Britain (Neville Chamberlain), France (Edouard Daladier), Italy (Benito Mussolini) and Hitler. Britain and France agree to Germany's annexing the Sudeten Region of Czechoslovakia in order to "buy peace in our time."

October 1938: Approximately 17,000 "stateless" Jews are deported from Germany to Poland.

November 1938: *Kristallnacht*, the "night of the broken glass," occurs when Josef Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Propaganda, orders "spontaneous" demonstrations against Jews all over Germany. The order comes in response to the death of a German soldier in Paris, killed by a young Jewish student after hearing his parents had been deported. Thirty thousand Jews are placed in concentration camps for what was termed "protective custody." Nearly 200 synagogues are destroyed. Jewish cemeteries are desecrated. Jewish businesses and homes are smashed. The United States withdraws its Ambassador to Germany in protest. Bank accounts of Jews are frozen. Jewish children are forbidden to attend public schools, and Jews are given limited number of hours a week to buy food.

British immigration laws allow more Jewish people to immigrate — no other country takes these measures. The "Refugee Children's Movement", a subsidiary group of "Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief", is formed. This group began "Operation Kindertransport" in order to get children from Germany and Austria out of danger.

December 1938: Parks, theaters, and museums are closed to Jews, and radios and telephones are confiscated.

Nicholas Winton, 29 years old and planning a ski trip to Switzerland, is asked by his friend Martin Blake to come instead to Prague and witness the plight of Jews in Czechoslovakia. Winton travels to Prague and observes the work of the “British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia.” He focuses his attention on refugee children from the Sudetenland, and also on the resident Czech Jewish children.

Winton returns to London with hundreds of pictures and details about children whose parents hope to save them from the German advances. Winton invents an organization, calling it the “Children’s Section” of the existing “British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia,” and uses his own address as that of this new agency. Winton returns to his bank job by day, but, in the evenings, writes to the press and to every organization he can think of for help. He asks for money to bring refugee children, mostly Jewish, from Czechoslovakia to England. This £50 guarantee (approximately \$3,000 today) per child was for transport from England to Czechoslovakia (for each child’s eventual return trip home), and looks for foster parents to take in these children. He prints cards with faces of the children and information about them so that adopting parents could choose a child to foster. Winton uses his invented agency to persuade the Home Office to let the children come to England.

March 1939: Germany invades and occupies the remainder of Czechoslovakia. The Spanish Civil War ends with Franco in power.

On March 14, 1939, the first group of Winton’s children arrives in London. On the next day, March 15, 1939, Hitler invades Czechoslovakia and parents begin to line up at the British Committee for Refugee Children in Prague in an effort to get their children to safety.

August 1939: The Soviets and the Germans sign a secret non-aggression pact (called a pact of “mutual cynicism”). Poland and England sign the Mutual Assistance Treaty. The British Fleet mobilizes and civilian evacuations begin in London.

March – September 1939: *Winton arranges for 669 children to be rescued from Czechoslovakia, now under German occupation. Eight transports (one airplane and seven trains) of children arrive in England. A ninth transport is scheduled to leave Prague on September 1, 1939, but Germany invades Poland and the train in Prague never leaves the station. None of the 250 children on board survive the Holocaust.*

Once the war starts and no more children can be rescued, Winton joins the R.A.F. (Royal Air Force) to help defend his country.

September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland. France and Great Britain declare war on Germany. The U.S. proclaims neutrality but will sell arms to non-aggressors on a “cash and carry” basis.

October – November 1939: Nazis begin euthanasia on the sick and disabled in Germany, and an assassination attempt on Hitler fails.

February 1940: The *Gestapo* begins to take Jews into “protective custody” and deports them to concentration (work) camps.

April 1940: The Nazis begin to expand Auschwitz, a concentration and POW camp. Germany invades Norway and Denmark.

May – June 1940: Germany invades France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland. Norway, Belgium, Holland, France, Luxembourg and Yugoslavia surrender to Germany. Italy enters the war on the side of the Axis powers and invades Greece.

July 1940: The Battle of Britain begins. There are massive German air raids known as “*Blitzkrieg*” (known in Britain as “the Blitz”), that continue throughout the war.

September 1940: The United States begins military draft (conscription). The Tripartite (Axis) Pact is signed by Germany, Italy and Japan.

November 1940: The Warsaw ghetto is sealed by a brick wall.

March 1941: The U.S. Congress approves the Lend-Lease Act, which gives the president power to sell, transfer, lend or lease war materials to nations whose defense is considered vital to the defense of the U.S. in World War II.

April 1941: Germany invades Greece and Yugoslavia.

June 1941: Germany declares war on the Soviet Union.

July 1941: Hermann Goering orders Reinhard Heydrich to organize “The Final Solution” (the death of European Jews).

September 1941: All German Jews are required to wear the yellow Star of David.

October 1941: Mobile killing units begin murdering Eastern European Jews.

December 7, 1941: The Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor. The United States declares war on Japan. Germany declares war on the United States.

January 1942: The Wannsee Conference of German Leaders from manufacturing, railroads and the military is held to detail plans for carrying out “The Final Solution.”

June 1942: Six death camps (like Treblinka) are built in Poland. Concentration camps are converted to death camps.

April 1943: Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto revolt and are annihilated by the Germans one month later.

August–October 1943: Prisoners at the Treblinka, Bialystock and Sobibor death camps revolt. Most are killed.

June 6, 1944 (“D-Day”): Allied Forces invade Europe.

April 21, 1945: Soviet troops reach Berlin.

April 30, 1945: Hitler commits suicide.

May 7, 1945: The unconditional surrender of all German forces occurs.

May 8, 1945: “VE (Victory in Europe) Day”.

August 7, 1945: The U.S. drops an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.

August 9, 1945: A second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

August 14, 1945: Japanese surrender, “VJ (Victory over Japan) Day”.

October 1946: A few Nazi war criminals are convicted at the Nuremberg Trials. The vast majority remains unpunished to this day.

DOCUMENTATION

One of the most astonishing details of Nicholas Winton's story is that, even after the war subsided, he remained silent about his life-saving operation. Nearly fifty years later, Winton's wife, Grete, found an old leather suitcase in the attic of their home. The briefcase contained Winton's scrapbook from 1939, filled with documents, urgent telegrams, pleading letters from desperate parents, and photographs of children caught in a lottery of life and death. Only then, in 1988, did she learn of her husband's incredible deed; only then did Winton, with his wife's encouragement, begin to share his story.

Thanks to his effort to preserve these unique materials, we can still trace the progression of Winton's rescue operation, from the letters and press releases in which he asked, and then begged for support, to responses that illuminate both the willingness and disinterest of those to whom he pleaded for help. Here, we present a few extracts from Winton's scrapbook.

10/1

Dear Miss Layton,

There are at the moment about 700 children who should leave Czechoslovakia soon. This number includes children from the age of 2 - 14, who come under the following headings :

1. German and Austrians emigrants.	approx.
2. Sudeten Germans	220
3. Jewish /German, Austrian and Sudetengermans	100
4. Mothers with children under 2 years	400
	40

Almost all parents of these children have no money with which to either feed or clothe them. The very bare necessities of life are lacking. The money the various committees are able to pay out in many cases does not even cover the childrens 'existence expenses'. In such cases mothers are forced on to the streets and this, when it occurs, is generally with mothers who have very young children.

The children cannot go to school. In those exceptional cases where money is available, the children, being either Jewish or anti-Nazi cannot, of course, go to Nazi schools. All German schools are Nazi. They can't go to Czech schools, because they cant speak Czech. Apart, therefore, from their physical deprivations, their education has ceased.

The morale of these families has to a certain extent been maintained, by the fact that they have been given to believe that at least the kids would be able to leave the country. The mere fact of asking them to fill in forms and send photos, has shown them that something is being done. If something is not done soon, the people will completely despair and sink slowly and then more quickly into complete degradation. These children, very many of whom I have been amongst and talked to, are of the very best quality, some very talented, and it would be a tragedy if they should be left to starve physically and intellectually.

All this is not even taking into consideration the fear under which most of the families live, of being expelled from the country and either having again to live in NOMANSLAND or having their parents sent to concentration camps in Germany and being left orphans.

Everything ~~ixxing~~ possible is being done by the children Committees here in Prague. Information, pictures, doctors certificates and the permission of the parents for the children to emigrate has in nearly every case been obtained. It is now up to London to use this information.

Well, after a hard days work and having had dinner at the Club I thought I would go for a little walk. On the main street I got into a crowd of young Czech youths who were walking along shouting. I did not know what it was about, but any excitement was good enough for me, so I walked along with them. Not being able to understand the lingo I could naturally not join in the shouting, but at least I helped to swell their ranks. After a little while a great number of police arrived and dispersed the procession. When at last I found myself standing next another unoffensive looking man I asked him what it had all been about. He told me that it was an anti Jewish procession and the shouting was anti Jewish slogans. I suppose, therefore that I must confess to having taken part in an anti Jewish demonstration.

-----oOo-----

12.1.

first

The party of children today left Prague. This was fixed up by the Barbican Mission to the Jews in London and transport was arranged by us. Being the first lot of kids to leave Czechoslovakia it aroused much attention and cinema men and journalists were much in evidence. I myself was photographed in X different positions, holding leading and helping the children. From the K.L.M. office in Prague the entire company was taken out in several buses to the airport. Here for over 1 1/2 hours there was a mixture of complete chaos, high excitement and passionate adieus. Every child seemed to have about 10 relations judging by the number of people there. They all wished to be near the children up to the very last moment and the scenes as the children finally left were heartrending. One thing that did not trouble the general crowd, but worried us considerably, was that although everything else was prepared we had no permission from the Nationalbank for the plane to fly. Because of some foreign exchange regulation the officials are not allowed to let the plane go without this document. We were just imagining what kind of scene there would be, if after all we would have to tell everyone that the kids could not go, when it arrived. Finally after much trouble, posing as a journalist, I was actually able to accompany the children onto the field and into the plane. This of course the parents were not allowed to do, but the final adieus, being made at a distance of some 50 yards, were all the more pathetic. I did not see one of the kids crying. They were far too excited.

Letter from Doreen Warriner to Mr. Hart dated 11.1.39.

Mr. Winton is, as you know, working with the refugees organisation here, and has taken over the organisation of the child emigration. This is now at a very critical point, and if he leaves at the moment I am afraid the whole thing would come to a standstill; could he not possibly remain another two weeks? I am relying on him to organise the chaos which exists here, and then to bring the documents to London. I am very short-handed and have no one else who can take over the work he is doing. It really is essential if the plans are to go through.

You must excuse my request, but I would not make it if it really did not seem very important for the work to be carried over this difficult point. I am extremely grateful to you for letting Mr. Winton come, his energy is absolutely invaluable and he has drawn all the different organisations together in a most amazing way and brought order into the chaos, and got plans for child emigration to Sweden on a big scale, so I hope you will not mind my asking if he can remain till he can hand it over.

Jan, 20th 39.

Dear Miss Layton,

Could I suggest that you put the organisation of the children refugees from Czechoslovakia in the hands of Winton? He is ideal for the job. He has enormous energy, businessmen methods, knows the situation perfectly here.

He has prepared the case sheets for several hundred of children, collected all the offers, and all that he needs now is authority to go ahead. It is an opportunity for the committee to get the services of a really first class organiser.

I've been trying for three months to get these children away. Save the children has disclaimed responsibility, so has Inter Aid, and our own committee is overburdened with more urgent things. I would be glad if I could delegate this part of the work, and I am sure you would. It would quite well be taken out of the Committee's scope, and Winton will get things through, if you will give him status as secretary of a children's section.

Our main difficulty is that we do not know how to get permits through the H.C.

We now have complete case sheets for 760 cases with photographs, and complete data.

II

I have offers at home of about 20, and four unconditional guarantees . My mother, and the Kingham Homes who are giving these guarantees keep writing to ask when they are coming . But no permits come through. That they can be got is proved by the London Mission, which has got 25 permits . All that is needed is some energetic person who would be the connecting link . They would have to find out in the first place :

1. what guarantees H.O. requests
2. what relation there would be between the collective guarantee based on the £ 5000 and the individual homes .

You will find great numbers ready to take a child for a year or two, who yet could not take the unconditional guarantee .

Yours sincerely

Mrs W

Recent Report of a Witness in Czechoslovakia.

It is not perhaps generally realised by people how little has yet been done for the Children Refugees in Czechoslovakia. I have just returned from a ~~an~~ three weeks stay in Prague which I undertook especially to find out what was going on in this direction. Up to the present in all only about 25 children have left the country. About 700 children are living under appalling conditions and should be evacuated immediately. A further 1400 are in a bad, but not quite such desperate position, although, of course, there is no future for them whatsoever, so long as they are in Czechoslovakia.

For three months now some of these children have been living in damp, overcrowded and insanitary camps, under conditions which made it quite impossible for the parents to give them proper attention. Some of those living outside the camps are in an even worse plight. The parents being destitute and depending on charity for their living, have hardly enough money for food. In some instances mothers are forced on to the streets in a desperate effort to get money with which to feed their children. The state of affairs is not remaining static. It is getting worse. Those who had a little money left are now finding their resources gone, and many of those, who were being looked after by friends or relations are being turned out. When jobs are scarce, three months' hospitality is a very big sacrifice.

In one of the camps four children have died and when I left one fresh case of scarlet fever had just been reported.

Apart, however, from these physical discomforts and privations, there are two other factors, that must be taken into consideration. Firstly only a very few of them can go to school. Mostly they are unable to speak Czech, and it is very hard for the Jews in German schools. Secondly, the atmosphere with which many of them, in the camps at any rate, are surrounded, will, if allowed to continue, turn these grand children into guttersnips. At the moment there is still time to prevent this. But imagine a room in which 40 to 50 men, women and children all sleep together. A room in which they all eat and live together and where they have all nothing more to do than to sit and think. Naturally there are quarrels and sometimes fights. There is frayd and the suspense and anxiety under which they have to live is demoralising. I have seen, talked to and played with them and I can say that they are a grand lot, coming in the main from parents whose only crime has been their outspoken defence of democracy.

Will people please help to rescue these children ?

All particulars as to how you can help can be obtained from the British Committee for Refugees from Czecho-Slovakia, Childrens Section,

Mr. Nicholas G. WINTON, 20, Willow Rd. N.W.3.

Desperate Plight of Stateless Refugees in Prague

"ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT RESOURCES"
REPORTS OBSERVER

Friends Start Training Centre: How P.P.U. Members Can Help

EMERGENCY measures to deal with the sudden increase in the number of refugees which followed the German occupation of the Sudetenland are now being supplemented by long-term plans to enable fugitives to train for a fresh start in another land.

Last week we gave a directory of organizations to whom readers wishing to aid the refugees should offer their help; this week we draw attention to the desperate need of stateless refugees in Prague; to a new training centre started near Ripon; and to some more ways of helping refugees from Germany and Czechoslovakia.

AN appeal was made in *Peace News* by the Peace Army for help in feeding a number of unregistered and stateless people in Prague who have no claim on the Czech Government or on any of the large funds.

Mrs. Benjamin, of the Peace Pledge Union, who has been doing relief work in Czechoslovakia almost continuously since the crisis, writes that these people (230-250 of them, including children) are now in her care and that after the next two weeks she will be absolutely without resources for them. She declares that their position is daily becoming worse, politically and financially, and adds:

"The Sudeten Germans are at last leaving in fair numbers and the camps are being broken up, so that gifts to them are no longer so important, added to which there are greater difficulties in getting to camps now than when David Spreckley and I first came out.

"I may say that the *News Chronicle* and the P.P.U. were able to rise to a sudden emergency, and some 250 people, a large number of them quite without means, still get their daily midday meal and some supper."

Money, however, is needed desperately. The Peace Army Czech Fund Treasurer, Miss Swaisland, 80 Waverley Court, London, S.W.2, will thankfully receive small and large sums to meet this need.

A more constructive method of help would be for someone, preferably well known, to apply to the executive committees of the large funds to see whether the people in need can be included in their scope. Anyone willing to do this should write to Miss W. M. Antill, 39 Aldermay Road, Bromley, Kent.

New Training Centre

In connexion with the agricultural training of refugees from Greater Germany carried out by the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends, a new centre will start very shortly at Fountains Hall Estate, near Ripon, through the kindness of Mr. Claire Vyner, of Studley Royal, Ripon, who has provided the accommodation.

The camp consists of a wooden, centrally heated building, with dormitories, single and double rooms, dining room, common room, and warden's house, also of wood. There are plenty of baths and good washing accommodation, and a good kitchen and wash house.

There are 30 acres of land which were covered with forest. The trees have been cut down, and the land is awaiting clearance. There are also 3 acres of garden land; and it is hoped to interest the farmers in the neighbourhood, and to make arrangements with them to teach the boys to milk, &c.

The unit that will start work there consists of an English warden, an Austrian forester, one or two older men interested in agriculture, sixteen youths and two women to "mother" the camp and organize the domestic side.

This venture should provide a splendid opportunity for the refugees to learn to pioneer in a colony. The buildings were used once for Mr. Claire Vyner's experiment in training men and boys from the depressed areas to spin and weave. The Smaerland Tweed Mills in Northumberland are the result of that experiment. It is hoped that a settlement in one of the colonies will be a fitting finish to the training scheme.

A Job for Groups

David Spreckley, who has been engaged in helping refugees on behalf of the Peace Pledge Union, writes:

With the regulations as they are now, the two classes of refugee who can be most easily assisted are (a) children and (b) those under 35 who are allowed into this country as trainees.

The Friends' Germany Emergency Committee, Bloomsbury House, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1, want to hear of any employers who would take on a refugee as an apprentice or trainee. Such trades as carpentry, tailoring, and engineering are the best from the point of view of ultimate emigration to the colonies and elsewhere. So here is a job for groups:—

1. Visit all local employers to find such vacancies.
2. Search local papers and notices for advertisers wanting skilled craftsmen in any trade. Refugees are sometimes allowed in to meet such special demands.
3. Offer hospitality where a vacancy for a refugee has been found. (The Committee is prepared to undertake the ultimate responsibility for such cases; they will pay emigration expenses and all maintenance which cannot be provided by local support).
4. Organize a training centre where a group of refugees could learn a trade. If any group feels capable of doing this, the Committee is ready to provide the financial support. It would entail finding some room where the training could take place, finding hospitality or cheap board and lodging for about a dozen trainees, engaging a suitable craftsman as teacher, &c.

Will any groups who feel they can help in any of these ways please get in touch either with the Technical Training Department of the Germany Emergency Committee or with me at PPU headquarters?

The Children's Section of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, 20 Willow Road, London, N.W.3, are also in need of help.

There are some 2,000 refugee children now in Czechoslovakia whose position grows steadily worse. Even though their parents are eventually to be emigrated under the new Loan Scheme, it is essential that the children be got out straight away. If they remain much longer where they are, without education or proper food or housing, they will never be fitted to become useful citizens.

Guarantors are wanted for these children, even more than hospitality. Maintenance, education, and training has to be guaranteed up to the age of 18.

Mr. N. Winton, of the Children's Section, has the papers, photographs, &c., of over 500 cases. Will any person or group please apply to him if they would like to "take on" a child?

Nominal guarantors: I am constantly getting offers of hospitality from groups and individuals who are not, however, in a position to furnish a banker's reference with which to back up a guarantee. On the other hand, there must be many of our members who, although not able to support a refugee, have the necessary bank balance to sign a guarantee for a refugee.

I appeal to these people to send me their names as "nominal guarantors." Of course they will be taking some risk—they will just have to trust me. I will not send them any guarantee form to sign until I'm sure that the hospitality and emigration expenses of the particular refugee have been provided for.

REPORT ON THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEE CHILDREN IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA .

It is not possible at the moment to give exact figures of the number of children in Czecho-Slovakia who must be evacuated. This is due to the fact that many middle-class families, when they were forced to leave their homes, first of all went to friends. At that time they thought that provision would be made for them within a very short time. Now, however, that four months have elapsed, these friends are unable to offer hospitality any longer, with the result that continually more and more families are officially registering themselves as refugees. A conservative estimate of the number of children who can leave Czecho-Slovakia at once is 2,000. These are roughly 85% Jewish and 15% Christian. They are very largely from the middle-class and professional people, most of the fathers having been before shop-keepers, journalists, doctors, solicitors, and so on. About 25% are of working-class families.

The position of all these refugees is desperate, for the following reasons :

1. To a great extent the parents were politically active in that part of Czecho-Slovakia which has been taken over by Germany, and therefore stand under the daily fear and often threat of being returned to Germany.
2. The refugees leaving the occupied areas were not able to do so in any orderly manner: that is to say, to a very large extent they had to leave their homes with only a few hours notice, and therefore could only take with them those things which they were able to carry. Unlike, therefore, a great number of German and Austrian refugees, these people have the added disadvantage of being without any of their former possessions, that is to say, clothing and home.
3. Many of them believed in the original idea of the Munich Agreement, which was to the effect that there would be a plebiscite in many districts. They made their plans accordingly. Only at the very last moment were they told that such a plebiscite would not take place, and in many instances of this kind whole families had to leave their homes at night, and walk over the frontier with nothing more than what they had on, any possessions which they were carrying with them being confiscated.
4. *German and Austrian*
Semite *Jews*
5. On arrival in the present Czecho-Slovakia, those families who had no friends were herded together and put into camps, in which the conditions are so generally known that their misery and the moral degradation under which they live in them need not be further stressed here.

whom to write, and that if one Committee were written to they naturally only considered their own children.

Others, who, through business connections or family ties, had friends, were able to call upon these people for help. This help was at the time forthcoming, but in the majority of cases now the people are being forced to leave these temporary homes, as their friends can no more afford to look after them. The position, therefore, both as regards political pressure from Germany and with regard to the hospitality question, is getting steadily worse.

A very strong case can be made for bringing the children out at once, irrespective of the fate of their parents. The reasons are as follows:

1. Those children who have no fathers are a great handicap at the moment to their mothers in leaving the country. Many of the mothers are fitted and could easily apply for and obtain domestic posts, but naturally cannot do so as long as their children are still there. This, as can quite easily be seen, is a vicious circle. The mother waits the whole time for the child to be taken away, and the child would be completely stranded if the mother went first.
2. Practically without exception, all parents who were interviewed placed their wish that their children should immediately leave the country before their wish to leave themselves. This is because they see the conditions under which their children are forced to live, and realise what would become of them if these conditions were not altered immediately.
3. If the parents are to be emigrated under the new Loan Scheme, then it is all the more important that their children should precede them and adapt themselves to their new language, so leaving their parents free to make arrangements for their future existence.
4. As none of the children are able to carry on with any education at all, it seems to me essential, if they are again to take a place in social life, that these children should go to a country where their education can be continued at once, as if they are forced much longer to remain where they are, it may well be that they will be quite unfitted ever again to become useful citizens.

I have recently returned from 3 weeks in Prague, during which time I co-ordinated all the Childrens' Committees under one head. Mr. Barazetti, who is Miss Warriner's secretary, is now also the responsible official for all children in Czecho-Slovakia, who wish to come to England. This obviates a very great difficulty, which existed before, in that nobody knew to whom to write, and that if one Committee were written to they naturally only considered their own children.

I have brought back with me about 500 case papers with photographs of these children, covering all the Czecho-Slovakian Committees, and am in continual touch with Mr. Barazetti in Prague, so that no over-lapping can occur in the event of children being sent from Czecho-Slovakia to other countries. This list can be consulted by any persons interested. The task of bringing children over on individual guarantees is a very slow and wearisome one. In such a way, it will never be possible even to bring out all the very worst cases. Many people have come to me and would be willing to take children if they could see them first. This could easily be done if a grant were given to the Children's Section of the British Committee for Refugees from Czecho-Slovakia, so that a block of children could be brought over.

It may not be generally known that although Munich is now 4 months back, only 25 children - other than those who have been able to leave with their families - have been brought out of Czecho-Slovakia. These were brought out under conditions which are not even acceptable to a large section of the British public, in so far that an undertaking had to be given, if they were Jewish, that they should be baptised.

I have received a very large number of short-term offers of hospitality, both for individual cases and for blocks ranging from 5 to 25, from various institutions. These very valuable offers can only be made use of if there is a General Fund which can guarantee for the bringing over of a large number, as stated above.

It seems to me, although quite appreciating that there never can be sufficient money for these purposes, that with the large sums which have been at the disposal of the various Emigration Committees for so long, it would not be too much to ask for at least £20,000 to be placed at the disposal of the children refugees in Czecho-Slovakia.

Many people who contributed to the Lord Mayor's Fund are under the impression that this was being used for emigration purposes, and many are astounded that the children were not helped under this heading. It is not generally appreciated that nearly all this money was spent in Czecho-Slovakia itself. The same is true of the Save-the-Children Fund. The argument, therefore, that the Baldwin Fund need not help the children, because the Lord Mayor's Fund has already done so, is not correct.

Nicholas Winton.

MAKING READERS' LETTERS . . . about the two refugee children

A selection of Readers' letters is published on this page every week. Letters must be concise and interesting. Address them to the Editor, PICTURE POST, Hulton Press Ltd., 43 Shoe Lane, London, E.C.4.

INTO the offices of PICTURE POST there came, a few weeks ago, a letter to which two small photographs were pinned—the portraits of a smiling boy and of a little girl of five. The letter explained that these were the photographs of two Czech children whose parents could no longer keep them in their own country. They wanted them to be brought up in such peace and security as their world still offers. They thought that a kind-hearted British family might be willing to take charge of them.

The letter was investigated. What it said was found to be true, and it was printed among other Readers' Letters in the issue of PICTURE POST which came out on Wednesday, June 21.

In next morning's post were eleven letters from men and women who were willing to take one or both of the refugees into their own homes, and

bring them up as their own children. In Friday morning's post there were fifteen more such letters. On Saturday there were six. There were more on the following Monday and Tuesday. Others have been coming in ever since.

Many thousands of letters have come into these offices since PICTURE POST began nine months ago, but none more touching than these offers of help to children quite unknown to the writers—children who were bound to be a serious expense and might become a permanent responsibility.

It is something if one person offers to help another over a difficult moment. It is something if one person offers his friendship to another. The writers of these letters offered nothing less than to act as fathers and mothers to a little girl and a little boy, who came from another country, whose parents they had never seen,

and whose very name they did not know.

These offers are now being examined by an independent committee. From among them one will be accepted. Others will—if they wish it, but not otherwise—be put in touch with other refugee children who are being placed in the care of parents quite as much as these two. Meanwhile, it seems to us that the response recorded in the case of these two children is worth setting out in their own words, as a record of what one human being is willing to undertake in behalf of another. In our readers' letters from wherever names and addresses are given, as the ought to be, to guarantee the good faith of the writers. These letters are too personal, and the information they give is sometimes confidential. Anything by which the writer could possibly be identified has therefore been left out.

From Lowestoft

I have just seen your appeal for the two dear Czech refugees, brother 89, sister 5, in your excellent book, of which I am a regular reader. I have a little girl 5 next week, and a son 13. I am awfully fond of kids, and can't bear to think of these two. I have two spare beds and no one to look up at night in this house, and I would bring them up to my care if they have not already got a good home. My age is 38 and my hubby's age is 42.

From Westmorland

I would gladly give a home to the little girl; my husband and I feel sure we could make her happy. We have no children of our own, unfortunately, and the little girl would give us much pleasure. We are not wealthy people and could only give her the life of a working-class child. My husband is an engineer, we are young and live in a small but modern house amongst lovely country and delightful children to live in. We would do everything in our power to give the child a good education, and I think she would be able to have everything that would make a little girl happy, including a wealth of affection from both of us. Perhaps the parents of the children don't want them separated, which is only natural, and sincerely hope someone will be kind enough to take them both. However, if this is not so, and the little girl can come to us, we would be delighted to have her. If not, could you please tell me if it's possible to take another little refugee, and how to go about it.

From Motts.

Having read in the Post of a home wanted for the two refugee children I would willingly take the little girl, as I have no children of my own. I would have the two, but have not the convenience for two children, and would love her as my own.

From Hereford

Receiving the two Czech children, I should only be too pleased to take care for both of them. My wife is passionately fond of children, and they would both be assured of a good home, and everything done to make them happy and contented. We have a 4-year-old son, age 11 years, and it has always been his greatest wish to have a brother, as he is so lonely playing by himself.

For myself I am in steady employment and can well afford to take the children. We have a big house and can easily accommodate the children.

From Manchester

Re the two Czech children whose photographs appeared in your yesterday's issue of PICTURE POST. I may say that their mother and I are deeply interested in them. It is not the fact that their photo-

graphs are so appealing as much as the fact that they are children, and we really love children of all kinds—we have none of our own, unfortunately.

My husband has a fairly good position, and we could, if we were allowed, offer a good home and a normal upbringing to the two unfortunate little ones. We are anxious to remove to the outskirts of the town. We will have a large garden where the children can play, and enjoy the fresh air at all times.

My husband is 33 years of age; I am 30 years. We are fond of the general things in life—such as good food, good friends, and all the things that go towards making a happy home. We think we know how to bring up children, and for many years our relatives' children staying with us for weeks at a time, and we feel that we would like to have the two Czech children, and everything in our power to make the two little ones happy.

If at any time should have a child of our own, I can promise you without question that the two Czech children would still hold the same place in our hearts and home as would our own.

From the Rhonda

I am employed by the G.W. Railway. We are a married couple, been married five years, but have no children, although we are very fond of them. I have a very comfortable home, and we would be prepared to look after the young girl, as some weeks I am working late and the young girl would be company for my wife. I have a house of my own, and there is only myself and wife. The school is only around the corner from where we live. I can meet them on Paddington Station, only for them to let me know what date, so that I can apply for a day's leave to come up. On this condition we take care of the little girl only, as we only have one spare bedroom furnished.

My age is 28 years and my wife is 24 years, so you see we are only a young couple, and this home would be like her own home, and if parents are willing are quite prepared to adopt the little girl.

From Motherwell

With regards to the photograph of the two Czech refugee children, my husband and I would love to have the little girl. Although we have no family of our own, we are both very fond of children. We are comfortably off and would be able to give the little girl a good home and a good education.

If we wouldn't manage to have the little boy as well, but we could arrange to have them kept in touch with each other, and to have holidays together, and of course, if ever the little girl's parents were in a position to have her with them again, we would always be ready to sell and to have her re-UNITED to them again.

I have a sister who lives in Ealing, London, who would interview her, if necessary. Do please help me to have the

little girl, and I can assure you we would give her all the love and care we would have given our own child, had he lived.

From Stockport

We have for some time past felt led of God to take care of another child or children, and it may be your request on page 61 of current issue of PICTURE POST is the answer. I am in charge of an important branch of a firm's engineering work, and have a fairly good salary and a permanent post, as far as I am concerned. We would like to show God some practical appreciation of our deep gratitude for blessings received in this way by putting a certain percentage of our earnings into caring for a child less fortunate than our own dear lad, aged six.

I have no banking account, as we consider it should just be possible to get the money earned—but I am quite sure we could give these two dear kiddies a very happy home, and am very confident in God supplying all needs that may arise, should I not be able to carry out—which is highly improbable. I think we are passionately fond of kiddies and it has been a keen battle to restrain ourselves from branching out too soon. I have no knowledge of the language of these kiddies, but a fair knowledge of Russian, German and some Spanish.

Should you so desire it, I will forward addresses for references, but I should obviously like to meet somebody connected with the kiddies. It may be these two will be catered for by the time you have decided on the case, and perhaps you know of some other youngsters who needs a home. Our preference is a child of five or six years, preferably a girl, and if possible an orphan—but we will consider these two kiddies or any other you may put forward. We are quite prepared to adopt.

From Hull

My wife and I would be glad to offer a home to the two Czech children. We are aged 33 and can speak a little German (if that is any advantage). We have no children of our own.

I am a professional man, and my wife is teacher in a girls' school, which the little girl could attend. You will see, therefore, we are in a position to give them a good home.

From Dublin

My husband and myself would be very happy to look after those two children. We are middle-class people; my husband is a permanent clerk on the L.M.S.R. We have no family of our own, as God did not spare our boy to us, and we are both very fond of children, and we could make them very comfortable and happy. We live in a six-roomed apartment in a little seaside town with plenty of country all round. I am sure the children could be very happy here. Our husband would be inspector for some time. We are Roman Catholics and could send a

reference from our parish priest. I assure you you will get many replies to your appeal, but hope to be the lucky people who will take care of the children.

From Glasgow

Regarding your query for someone to look after two children (Czechs) I would like further particulars and if the children are available for adoption (legally). We are an established firm in a firm's engineering work, our own, and are Glasgow business people, not in a big way, but comfortably off a things up, with a fair degree of education and understanding. Would you be so kind as to let me know further about the two children, who appealed to me very much from their picture.

From Rugby

I hope I am not too late, but I have just noticed your appeal for a home in which two children, a little girl and a little boy—I should be most happy to look after these two children, and am very confident in God supplying all needs that may arise, should I not be able to carry out—which is highly improbable. I think we are passionately fond of kiddies and it has been a keen battle to restrain ourselves from branching out too soon. I have no knowledge of the language of these kiddies, but a fair knowledge of Russian, German and some Spanish.

Should you so desire it, I will forward addresses for references, but I should obviously like to meet somebody connected with the kiddies. It may be these two will be catered for by the time you have decided on the case, and perhaps you know of some other youngsters who needs a home. Our preference is a child of five or six years, preferably a girl, and if possible an orphan—but we will consider these two kiddies or any other you may put forward. We are quite prepared to adopt.

My wife and I would be glad to offer a home to the two Czech children. We are aged 33 and can speak a little German (if that is any advantage). We have no children of our own.

I am a professional man, and my wife is teacher in a girls' school, which the little girl could attend. You will see, therefore, we are in a position to give them a good home.

My husband and myself would be very happy to look after those two children. We are middle-class people; my husband is a permanent clerk on the L.M.S.R. We have no family of our own, as God did not spare our boy to us, and we are both very fond of children, and we could make them very comfortable and happy. We live in a six-roomed apartment in a little seaside town with plenty of country all round. I am sure the children could be very happy here. Our husband would be inspector for some time. We are Roman Catholics and could send a

reference from our parish priest. I assure you you will get many replies to your appeal, but hope to be the lucky people who will take care of the children.

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reference from our parish priest. I assure you you will get many replies to your appeal, but hope to be the lucky people who will take care of the children.

There is, of course, another point of view about refugees. It is stated in the two letters which follow—

Continued on page 1

BRITISH COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES FROM CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

5, MECKLENBURGH SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.1

Patron of Committee : The Lord Mayor of London

Honorary Presidents :

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury
The Marquis of Reading, K.C.
The Earl of Lytton, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.J., G.C.I.E.
Sir Walter Layton, C.H., C.B.E., M.A.
Sir John Hope Simpson, K.B.E., C.I.E.
Sir Harry Twyford, K.B.E. (the late Lord Mayor)
The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster
The Moderator of the Free Churches

The Chief Rabbi
Viscount Cranbourne, M.P.
Lord Ebbisham, G.B.E.
The Right Hon. L. S. Amery, M.P.
Joseph Halloworth, Esq.
Harold Butler, Esq.
The Moderator of the Church of Scotland
Professor Seton Watson

Chairman :

Ewart G. Culpin, Esq., F.R.I.B.A., J.P.

Deputy Chairman :

Mrs. Mary Ormerod

Hon. Secretary :

Miss Margaret Layton

Hon. Treasurer :

Colonel G. R. Crossfield, C.B.E.,
D.S.O., T.D.

Telephone Museum 1971
Telegrams

BRITISH COMMITTEE for REFUGEES from CZECHOSLOVAKIA CHILDREN'S SECTION

BLOOMSBURY HOUSE,

Room 217,

BLOOMSBURY STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Telephone : MUSEum 2900 Ext. 217

BRITISH COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA. CHILDREN'S SECTION

55. A new committee has been set up to deal with children brought over without their parents from Czechoslovakia, i.e. from the area annexed in March, 1939. The Committee is prepared to bring over nominated children on the usual terms, i.e. on a guarantee to maintain the child up to the age of 18, and a deposit of £50 for emigration expenses. For "unnominated" children, however, it is ready to forego the deposit if the foster parent guarantees to maintain the child up to 18. A very few children (urgent cases) are brought over for whom a shorter guarantee may be accepted.

The Committee has already investigated 5,000 cases, of all ages and both sexes. The case-sheets and photos are now available in its office and it guarantees that any person willing to act as foster-parent can choose a child and be assured of being able to welcome it at his home within one month from the date of application. Nearly 250 children have already been brought to this country by the Committee and a further transport of 200 is expected very shortly. While the majority of the children are Jewish, they are not usually from orthodox families, and are ready to go into Christian homes if these are generously offered them.

Applications should be made to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. Nicholas Winton, at Room 217, Bloomsbury House, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1.

*Any communication on the subject
of this letter should be addressed to:-*

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE.

HOME OFFICE

(ALIENS DEPARTMENT).

CLELAND HOUSE,

PAGE STREET,

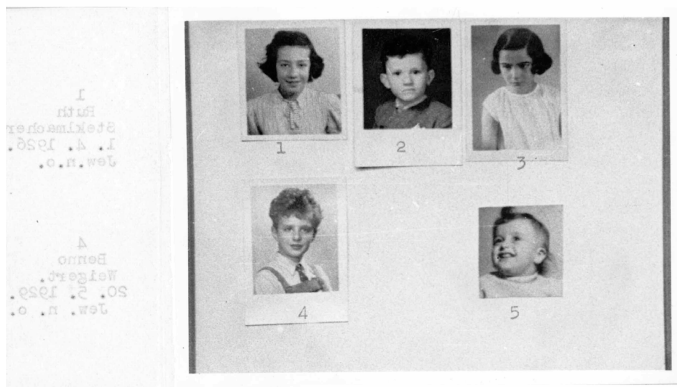
LONDON, S.W.1.

and the following number quoted :-



A.R. 18a

HOME OFFICE,
CLELAND HOUSE,
PAGE STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1.



BRITISH COMMITTEE for REFUGEES from CZECHOSLOVAKIA

CHILDREN'S SECTION

Telephone: MUSEum 2900 Ext. 217

BLOOMSBURY HOUSE,
Room 217,
BLOOMSBURY STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Particulars of 400 urgent cases.

Nationality.

Sudeten Germany	91
Germany	82
Austria	121
Slovakia	38
Czechoslovakia	68
	<u>400</u>

The country of origin has been taken where the children are stateless.

Jewish.....	364
not Jewish.....	34
father arrested.....	21
father or mother dead.....	46
both parents dead	
or in orphanage.....	18
father or mother	
unfit through illness	32
emigration possibilities	
for parents	41
expelled	124
live apart from their parents.....	36
father fled, address unknown.....	7
father or mother already	
in England or abroad.....	16
morally endangered	9

BRITISH COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA
CHILDREN'S SECTION

Telephone: MUSEum 2900 Ext. 217

BLOOMSBURY HOUSE
Room 217,
BLOOMSBURY STREET
LONDON, W.C. 1.

Dear Sir (or Madam),

It is not generally known that a Committee dealing entirely with Refugee Children from Czechoslovakia is in existence. The purpose of this letter is therefore to state shortly how we work and what assistance we require.

Up to the end of January last (that is 4 months after Munich) there was no organisation in London dealing with the children from Czechoslovakia. This Section of the Czech Committee was then started. From the beginning we worked under very great handicaps. The system of bringing children over in large numbers and putting them in camps had been dropped. Committees all over England had originally been formed to deal with Refugees from Germany and there was considerable haggling as to whether Czechs should be included within the Committees' scope of activity. Now this has changed and Bohemia at any rate, being a Protectorate, is considered part of Germany.

All this has resulted in the fact that up to now very little indeed has been done for the children in Czechoslovakia. A great number are German, Austrian or Sudetengerman, and have had to move more than once since they became wanderers. Their condition is appalling. Memories are short, and people are inclined to forget the misery which was caused when, for example, the plebiscite was cancelled in Sudetenland. Whole families had to leave with a few hours' notice. Their condition at the time was serious - it is now quite desperate. This poor country, which 6 months ago was the Saviour of the Peace of the World, is now almost forgotten.

Something must be done quickly to help at least the most urgent cases. Some children must be got out without delay.

At the most, only 200 children have so far left Czechoslovakia. This is a frightful position. Guarantors are available, as is evident from the number of children being brought out of Germany. Some of these guarantees must be used for our children, and I appeal most sincerely to your committee to aid us.

I have in the office case papers with photos of 5,000 children. Our office in Prague has investigated the cases and has selected from these 5,000 a list of 250 really desperately urgent cases. Will you please help us to place these children?

The conditions are the same as those in force for bringing children from Germany. Our office in Prague is working well and we can bring any child to this country within 5 weeks of it being guaranteed.

We will be only too pleased to give you any information you may require BY RETURN.

Hoping that you will see your way to help us,

I am,

Yours faithfully,

NICHOLAS G. WINFON, Hon. Sec.

May 1939.



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN EMBASSY

1 Grosvenor Square,
London, W. 1.
June 7, 1939.

Dear Sir:

I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 16, 1939 addressed to the President of the United States on the subject of refugee children of Czechoslovakia.

I also beg leave to state in reply that the United States Government is unable, in the absence of specific legislation, to permit immigration in excess of that provided for by existing immigration laws. However, in view of the possibility that private organizations might be in a position to be of some assistance, a copy of your letter was forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees in New York City.

Very truly yours,

Rudolf E. Schoenfeld
First Secretary of Embassy

Nicholas Winton, Esq.,
Honorary Secretary,
British Committee for Refugees
from Czechoslovakia,
Bloomsbury House, Room 217,
Bloomsbury Street, W.C. 1.

AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS
330 WEST 42nd STREET NEW YORK CITY

DR. STEPHEN S. WISE, PRESIDENT
LOUIS LIPSKY, VICE-PRES.
JACOB LEICHTMAN, TREASURER
NATHAN D. PERLMAN,
CHAIRMAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CABLE ADDRESS 'CONGRESS'
TELEPHONE LONGACRE 5-2600

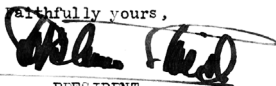
Dr. Wise's personal
address is 40 W 68 St.
May 26, 1932.

Mr. Nicholas Winton
217 Bloomsbury House
Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1
England

Dear Mr. Winton:

I wish to thank you for your letter. I have placed it in the hands of a Committee which is trying to arrange to include Czechoslovakian children within the provisions of the Wagner-Rogers Bill. The latter would make possible the bringing over of 10,000 children per year for each of two years out of Germany to America, these outside of the quota.

Sincerely yours,



SSW:s

PRESIDENT

ROBERT F. WAGNER
NEW YORK

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 27, 1939

m

Hon. Nicholas Winton, Secretary
British Committee for
Refugees from Czechoslovakia
Bloomsbury House
London W.C. 1
England

My dear Mr. Winton:

I was glad to have your letter of
May 16th regarding the refugee children from
Czechoslovakia.

The children refugee bill recently
approved by a joint subcommittee of the House
and the Senate specifically includes children
from Czechoslovakia. The bill, as you may know,
provides for the admission within the next two
years of 20,000 German refugee children outside
the quota.

I am very hopeful that it will be
enacted at the present session of Congress.

Very sincerely yours,





Dear Mrs. Winton.

Já jsem velice šťastná. Děkuji Vám
 Mrs. Winton, že jste dělala všechno
 co jste jen mohla, abych jsem moh-
 la přijít.

V plné úctě

Helena Bondyová

Dear Mrs. Winton,
 I am very happy. Thank you very much Mrs. Winton
 that you did everything you could do, to bring
 me over here. Yours sincerely,
 Helene Bondyová.

Liebe Frau Winton.
 Ich bin sehr glücklich. Ich danke Ihnen, Frau Winton
 dass Sie alles taten, was Sie konnten, damit ich
 herkommen konnte. Hochachtungsvoll
 Helene Bondyová.

Prague, August 15th 39

Dear Mrs. Winton,

I got your adress from my brother, in law:
Mr. Henry Franks. He informed me, that especially you,
helped him so much to find a new home for our son
Tommy Frank.

We know very well what troubles you, dear Mrs.
Winton, must have had with.

I thank you with all my heart for your help.
Thousand parents of our country thank you heartiest,
as we do - thousands wait for the news from you
and the ~~Bloomsbury~~ House, Bloomsbury Street W.C.1. London,
as we did.

God may bless and thank you and your
assistants: Mr. Levinsohn and Mr. Klaus, for your
troubles, your love, your work and your help.
We never will forget what you did for us and what
you will do for other children.

Sincerely yours.

Martha Franks,

Praha VII. Šabrmánova 45

STUDY QUESTIONS

SIR NICHOLAS WINTON

1. What was your personal reaction to the story of Nicholas Winton's project?
2. What in Nicholas Winton's life might have disposed him to take on this task of saving Jewish children from Czechoslovakia?
3. What personal risks do you think Nicholas Winton took?
4. Do you think he stood a chance to gain in any way from this project?
5. Why were there no other people stepping forward to save children?
Or were there such persons?
6. Was Nicholas Winton's project in any way unique?
7. Do you think his example has inspired others? Why do you or do you not think so?
8. Do you think it has taken too long a time for Winton's work to be recognized?
What are the reasons for your answer to this question?
9. Do you think that people like Winton in any way have an effect on the likelihood of future Holocausts?
10. Once the war started, Nicholas Winton joined the British Air Force and never mentioned what he had done for the children of Czechoslovakia. Why did he keep this a secret and how was his story finally revealed, 50 years later?
11. What was the reaction of "his children" when they finally met him in 1988?
How have the "children" paid back their adoptive parents and Nicholas Winton, for the gift of life? What problems might these children have encountered as they grew up?
12. In what ways does the fact that Winton never told anyone what he did make the story all the more powerful?
13. Joe Schlesinger (the narrator of the film and one of the "children") emphasizes that one of the "highest marks of civilization is ordinary human decency."
How is Winton an example of this?
14. Why is the film called "The Power of God?"

PRE-WAR EUROPE

1. What was life like for Czech children in the 1930's?
2. What was the initial reaction of the Czechs to Hitler and the Nazi invasion of the Sudeten region?
3. What happened when Hitler demanded he keep the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia at the Munich Conference? How did other European countries react?
4. What did the Czechs living in the Sudeten region do in response to Hitler's demand to keep the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia at the Munich Conference? What threatened all Czechs by the fall of 1938?
5. By the fall of 1938, what did it appear were Germany's plans for Europe?
6. Nicholas Winton was very anxious to get the children out of Czechoslovakia as quickly as possible. What was the hurry?

THE RESCUE

1. When Nicholas Winton visited Prague in December 1938, what did he observe? What became his mission?
2. On March 15, 1939 Germany invaded Czechoslovakia. What challenge did Winton face at this time? What urgency did he feel?
3. What methods did he use to accomplish his goals?
4. How did the Committee deal with authorities in Prague?
5. What were the logistics of transporting the children to England?
6. What role did other nations play in the rescue effort?
7. What happened on September 1, 1939 and to the last scheduled transport and the 250 children ready to leave?

THE CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

1. How were children that needed help located?
2. What were the hopes of Czech parents when they sent their children to England? What potential sacrifice were these parents making? What would these parents imagine would be their own future and that of their children as they put them on the train?
3. How did the children feel about leaving their families and being placed in foster homes?
4. What were their fears and hopes?
5. What memories do the children have of their train ride and what happened to them once they arrived in England?
6. How did children adjust to being raised in England?
7. What were some of the cultural differences they had to adapt to?
8. What was it like to be in Britain in wartime living with strangers?
9. What were the language issues?
10. How did foster families deal with the children's religious needs?
11. How did this experience affect the children's later lives?
12. Were the children more understanding and compassionate as adults than they might have been?
13. Did they seek to help others in the ways they were helped?
14. How were the experiences of the Czech children different from other European children?
15. What happened to almost all the parents of the rescued children? And how did the children find out the fate of their parents?

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. What occasions exist in the world today that call for brave leaders such as Nicholas Winton?
2. Could you be a "Winton," even on a small scale? How could this come about?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR YOUNG READERS

1. **Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation** – Emmanuel, Muriel and Gissing, Vera (ISBN: 0853034257) Vallentine Mitchell Publishers; 2002/2003 (Paperback)

Book may be obtained by contacting:

Vallentine Mitchell Publishers c/o ISBS

920 NE 58th Avenue, Suite 300

Portland, OR 97213-3786

EMAIL: orders@isbs.com

WEBSITE: www.vmbooks.com

2. **Pearls of Childhood: The Poignant True Wartime Story of a Young Girl Growing Up in an Adopted Land** – Gissing, Vera (ISBN: 0860518457) Robson Books Ltd.; 1988 / Reprinted 1999 and 2003. Third reprint due January 2007. (Paperback)
3. **Lest Innocent Blood be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There** – Hallie, Philip (ISBN: 0060925175) HarperCollins; 1994. (Paperback)
4. **Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust** – Block, Gay and Drucker, Malka – Revised Edition (ISBN: 0841913234) New York: Holmes & Meier; 1992 (Paperback)
5. **The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust** – RSM, Carol and Myers, Sondra (Eds.) (ISBN: 0814774067) NYU Press; 1991 (Paperback)
6. **The Path of the Righteous: Gentile Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust** – Paldiel, Mordecai (ISBN: 0881253766) KTAV Publishing House, Inc.; 1994 (Hardcover)
7. **When Courage was Stronger than Fear** – Hellman, Peter (ISBN: 1569244146) Marlowe and Company; 2004 (Paperback)

(If you have any problems locating these books, use www.google.com, or any Internet search engine, and search by the title for possible used copies.)