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# Troublesome Sainthood

## *Nicholas Winton and the Contested History of Child Rescue in Prague, 1938–1940*

LAURA E. BRADE AND ROSE HOLMES

Between late 1938 and August 1939, eight children's transports left Prague, bringing 669 children to Great Britain to escape the Holocaust. This rescue mission has been increasingly discussed on both popular and scholarly platforms in recent years. The commemoration of Sir Nicholas Winton, who has been credited with single-handedly organizing this rescue, has been promoted by the now-adult children themselves and enthusiastically supported by the British and Czech governments, even though this operation was not, in fact, led by Winton alone but was part of a much larger voluntary sector project to support refugees fleeing fascism. This article outlines the intricate and, at times, fraught organization of the child migration and questions the historical implications of venerating humanitarian actors.

*Keywords:* humanitarianism; *Kindertransport*; Britain; childhood; migration; refugee; Czechoslovakia; Holocaust

In December 1938 a young British stockbroker named Nicholas Winton was preparing to go on a skiing holiday in Switzerland. Shortly before his departure, Winton received an urgent telegram from a friend in Prague. The telegram read:

600 children in Prague and elsewhere in Czechoslovakia urgently require emigration to England. 300 originally from Germany and Austria, 300 Sudetens and No Mans Land. Please stress seriousness of position to Council for German Jewry. Real danger expulsion necessitates equal treatment with German and Austrian Children.<sup>1</sup>

The telegram was signed by two officials of the Jewish community in Prague, Marie Schmolka and Hannah Steiner, as well as by Winton's friend, Martin Blake. Winton abruptly changed his holiday plans and went instead to the capital of Czechoslovakia. Only a few days into what would become a three-week stay in Prague, Winton resolved to cooperate with the refugee workers already in Prague to help the children of Jews, Communists and Social Democrats who had fled the Nazi occupation of the Sudetenland after the Munich Agreement in September. He returned to England, worked for Czech refugees over a period of several months in 1939, and then returned to his career and family life. Half a century later, his half-forgotten experiences would be resurrected and presented back to him in a very unexpected way.

In 1988, a scrapbook detailing Winton's wartime activities resurfaced after his wife, Grete, found it in a trunk in their attic. The family decided to show the scrapbook to historian Elisabeth Maxwell, who passed the details along to Esther Rantzen, the host of the BBC program "That's Life."<sup>2</sup> Winton was invited to come to an episode of the program in which Rantzen would show the scrapbook and tell the story of the Czech *Kindertransports* on live television. Unbeknownst to Winton, some of the former children he had helped bring to England were surrounding him in the studio audience. In a dramatic and moving scene, Rantzen introduced Winton to the now-adult children he had helped to save.<sup>3</sup> Until that moment, the "children" had not known who had been responsible for bringing them to England and, as a result, saving them from the Holocaust.

In recent years, Nicholas Winton has been widely and publicly praised for his extensive work in "rescuing" 669 children from Czechoslovakia in a Prague-based *Kindertransport*, which worked in parallel with the larger child migration schemes from Germany and Austria that brought around 10,000 unaccompanied children to Britain. Since his public introduction to the individuals he saved, Winton has become well known as the "British Schindler."<sup>4</sup> Winton makes a good hero. He was genuinely modest, unassuming, and repeatedly sought to share his accolades with his former colleagues. In his later life, as he accepted a knighthood, turned 106, was repeatedly nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize and received the Czech Republic's highest honors, his personal reluctance to accept praise became irrelevant.<sup>5</sup> Obituaries published after his death on July 1, 2015, usually told Winton's story in terms of an individual, heroic rescue, often

emphasizing that he had acted alone and kept quiet about his work for fifty years.<sup>6</sup> Commentators also tended to make a moral example from the story of Winton's actions, using them to challenge personal inactivity in the face of genocide and oppression.<sup>7</sup> Although Winton unquestionably acted admirably, the myth is now bigger than the man.

The *Kindertransport* can be seen as the zenith of British interwar international humanitarianism, in which an unprecedented number of children from Europe were supported by publicly raised funds. It also, as Tara Zahra has pointed out, represents the limitations of humanitarian intervention.<sup>8</sup> It was assumed (probably correctly) by those involved that relocating unaccompanied children would be more palatable to British public sensibilities than bringing their parents and older siblings along with them. Children were seen as the most deserving recipients of the limited aid available and as adaptable future citizens of the state that took them in. In an ironic turn, it is the former *Kinder* themselves who have been instrumental in propagating the myth of their rescue. For fifty years, the children from Czechoslovakia did not know whom to thank for saving their lives. There was never a British state organization managing the *Kindertransports*, and the network of voluntary organizations that had organized the migration was difficult to reconstruct. Once Winton's story had been brought to public attention in the late 1980s, these now adult "children" began to recount Winton's story as part of their memoirs in an effort to understand their own experience and to express their understandable gratitude towards their "rescuer." A particular version of the Prague *Kindertransports* began to spread and, with the production of documentary films and significant memorialization efforts by the British and Czech governments, became entrenched in the literature.<sup>9</sup> Winton's story is used as an exhortation against being a bystander. It suits us societally to create a discourse in which we use events around the Holocaust both to tell a "positive" story and as an exemplar of moral behavior in which "saving" children is presented as an unquestionable act of goodness.

In this article, we argue that a misleading myth has been constructed around Nicholas Winton's role in refugee rescue that obscures the extensive work carried out by international voluntary organizations and politically active individuals (with some governmental support). The British and Czech governments have invested heavily in the Winton myth—through monuments, television programs and commemorative practices—in part to

reframe their national Holocaust histories more positively. We use extensive archival research to reposition the work in Prague as a *collaborative* and *international* humanitarian effort between several organizations and individuals, including most prominently the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia, the British and American Quakers and Unitarians, and a number of individual Jewish social workers based in Prague. Notably, the overwhelming majority of people involved in conceiving and organizing the relief work both in Britain and Czechoslovakia were women.

As source material, we mainly use the archives of the organizations involved in supporting refugees from Czechoslovakia; the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC, which later became the Czech Refugee Trust Fund); the [American] Commission for Service in Czechoslovakia; the Refugee Children's Movement; and the Czechoslovak National Committee for Refugees Coming from Germany.<sup>10</sup> These organizations worked closely together on the ground in Prague and also with several small local groups active in the domestic support of refugees. However, local refugee organizations destroyed their case files after the Nazi occupation of the Bohemian Lands to protect their clients, leaving behind little documentation about their efforts. As a result, the surviving record on relief and refugee assistance work in the Bohemian Lands is from the perspective of foreign and international aid organizations (although the Prague-based offices of these organizations also destroyed their records), leaving few sources to reconstruct the daily activities of local Czechoslovak groups and their representatives.

Finally, we outline the ways in which the current British and Czech governments mobilize the Winton myth to avoid addressing more difficult aspects of each country's Holocaust history. This is not to suggest that we wish to replace the simplistic hagiography of Winton with a similar celebration of the voluntary sector. Far from it. As Johannes Paulmann has eloquently argued, historians of humanitarianism need to recognize the polycentric and multilayered nature of humanitarian work as well as investigate the triumphs and failures of humanitarian aid.<sup>11</sup>

Using an archival source base along with the published and unpublished memoirs of many individuals involved in the aid work, we tell the story of the efforts that brought 669 unaccompanied children, along with around 15,000 other refugees supported by the Czech Refugee Trust Fund, out of Czechoslovakia between 1938 and 1940.<sup>12</sup> The work of

voluntary organizations in America and Britain, and in Prague, was often chaotic, poorly organized and fraught with tension. Refugee aid should not be seen as a simple or heroic event; forced to respond to a humanitarian crisis with a permanent lack of funding, information and experience, it did not always get things right. It was often mired in internal tensions and grappled with external problems. We examine these tensions along with the problems and choices faced by multiple voluntary workers, including Winton, and the organizations they represented. We establish a new, messier, version of humanitarian intervention in Prague in the turbulent months before global conflict and challenge the simplistic stories we now find it culturally comfortable to tell ourselves about the one heroic man who saved trainloads of children.

#### BRITISH FUNDS FOR CZECHOSLOVAK REFUGEES

On the morning of September 30, 1938, Czechoslovakia was a significantly smaller country than it had been the day before. As a result of the Munich Agreement signed the night before, Czechoslovakia ceded the heavily fortified Sudeten region to Nazi Germany, losing not only land and military outposts but also the vast majority of the country's natural defenses. The rump state that remained, known as the Second Czecho-Slovak Republic, lasted only 169 days until the Nazi occupation of the rest of the Bohemian Lands on March 15, 1939. Just five days after the Munich Agreement, President Edvard Beneš resigned and fled the country. Slovakia pressed for greater autonomy and the Second Republic's government became increasingly autocratic under the right-wing coalition led by the Agrarian Party's Rudolf Beran. But perhaps the most visible effect of the Munich Agreement for the residents of the Bohemian Lands was a flood of over 160,000 refugees leaving the ceded territories of the Sudetenland.<sup>13</sup>

These refugees included Jews, Czechs and antifascist Sudeten Germans, as well as refugees who had fled from Nazi persecution in Germany and Austria in the preceding years. Taking only a few belongings with them, these people fled the occupied territories, leaving behind their businesses, homes and livelihoods. While some refugees found shelter with friends or family living in the interior of the country, many others were left without a place of refuge. Settling under tarpaulins along the roadside

or in abandoned buildings, these individuals could neither return to their homes nor remain in Czechoslovakia.

As minority rights protections were gradually dismantled in Central Europe over the course of the 1930s, the Czechoslovak government increasingly turned to ethnic categorization as the foundation for refugee policy. The refugee crisis sparked by the Munich Agreement accelerated this turn, as the Second Republic government was both authoritarian and nationalist. The former residents of the Sudetenland, most of whom were Czechoslovak citizens, received vastly diverse treatments by the Second Republic: whereas Slavic (Czech and Slovak) refugees were welcomed, German-speaking and Jewish refugees were seen as a threat to the Slavic ethnic and linguistic majority.<sup>14</sup> The government also increasingly based citizenship decisions on narrowly defined ethnic categories. This left many German-speaking and Jewish refugees (who had previously been Czechoslovak citizens) “in no doubt, that they can not reckon upon an extended stay” in the Bohemian Lands.<sup>15</sup>

Michal Frankl has convincingly argued that Jewish refugees from the Sudetenland were doubly threatened—not only because of the Czecho-Slovak government’s suspicion of German-speaking refugees (which many of these individuals were) but also due to the trend towards anti-Semitism in the Second Republic’s government, especially in regards to refugee policy.<sup>16</sup> Precisely because the Second Republic’s official policy towards refugees was vaguely articulated, local officials exercised a great deal of authority over its implementation; thus, local border patrols were encouraged to prevent Jewish refugees from entering the interior of the country. In one instance, a Jewish family with Czechoslovak citizenship who could prove its legal residence in the Czech interior was denied entry into the country on the grounds that the daughter lacked a passport. As a result, like many other Jewish refugees, this family was caught in the no-man’s-land between the Second Republic and the Sudetenland “completely without shelter.”<sup>17</sup> Fearing expulsion, many Jews avoided registering as refugees with the local officials. In November 1938, some 92,000 refugees had registered with the Czecho-Slovak Refugee Institute, while approximately 150,000 more (mostly Jews) had evaded registration. An American voluntary worker noted in a report: “The Jews have scarcely registered at all, as they fear if they register they may be expelled from the country and there must be several thousand Jews among the refugees.”<sup>18</sup>

In the view of foreign voluntary workers, the refugees in Czecho-Slovakia most in need of urgent emigration were those with leftist political affiliations, who were often housed in refugee camps on the outskirts of Prague. The main British organization supporting this urgent emigration was the British Committee for Refugees from Czecho-Slovakia. Established as a voluntary organization in September 1938, the BCRC supported refugees who were in immediate danger because of their political affiliations. It brought those refugees and their families to the United Kingdom as trans-migrants and arranged hospitality for their stay. It was funded in large part by the Lord Mayor's Appeal, which raised over £360,000 from the public in the winter of 1938/9. Of this fund, £80,000 was given to the BCRC. The BCRC supplemented these funds with other large collections from two left-wing sources: the *News Chronicle* newspaper (£30,500) and the National Labour Council's International Solidarity Fund (£4,500).<sup>19</sup> By March 1939, these funds had been exhausted in emergency relief in Czechoslovakia and emigration assistance. They had enabled approximately 3,500 refugees from Czechoslovakia, of whom the majority were anti-Nazi Sudeten Germans, to emigrate and enter the United Kingdom or other European countries.

The British government made £4 million as a "Czech Gift Fund" available to the Czecho-Slovak government for the emigration and resettlement of refugees in January 1939.<sup>20</sup> In return, the Czecho-Slovak government pledged to make the funds available to refugees and provide assistance "without any discrimination against any person on account of his religious belief, political opinions, or racial origins."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, under pressure from the British, the Czecho-Slovak government pledged not to force any individual to leave the new, smaller Czecho-Slovakia if migration would endanger that individual. This pledge was made in spite of the fact that the Czecho-Slovak government, since the Munich Agreement, had specifically instructed regional border guards to prevent Jews from fleeing the Nazi-occupied Sudeten region.<sup>22</sup> Still, the Czech Gift Fund agreement defined "refugees" in a way that meant the majority of the funds went to supporting German-speaking refugees. Given that the BCRC/Czech Refugee Trust Fund was designated primarily to help political refugees from Nazism—Jewish refugees were primarily categorized as "economic refugees"—some in the British Home Office felt that it would be counter to the purpose of the Czech Gift Fund to support only Jewish emigration

from former Czechoslovakia (though £500,000 was specifically earmarked for Jewish emigration to Palestine).<sup>23</sup>

This Czech Gift Fund was placed in an account in the Bank of England and handled by an agent in Prague. The Institute of Refugee Welfare, a Czecho-Slovak government institution, drew approximately £400,000 from this account to assist in the emigration of about 1,500 refugees. On March 15, 1939, the German invasion of the Bohemian Lands made further negotiation about administration of these funds impossible. The remainder of the Czech Gift Fund was placed at the disposal of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia in the form of advances from Her Majesty's Treasury until the formation of the Czech Refugee Trust, which was officially established on July 21, 1939, and administered by three trustees under the instruction of the British Home Secretary.<sup>24</sup> The Trust was explicitly for the purpose of "emigrating as rapidly as possible to countries of permanent settlement the great majority of the refugees brought in by the Committee [BCRC]."<sup>25</sup> When the Trust was set up, the BCRC was formally dissolved, and the trustees took over its work. In practice, the merging of the two organizations meant that the British government was formally taking over the administration of a voluntary committee, which retained many of the same (170) staff and services.<sup>26</sup>

The Czech Refugee Trust had two main goals: the re-emigration and settlement of refugees from Czechoslovakia to any country including, although preferably not, the United Kingdom, and the temporary maintenance and training for employment of refugees in the United Kingdom. In the six-month period between March 1939 and the start of the war in September 1939, a further 8,000 refugees were enabled to leave Czecho-Slovakia by the BCRC/Czech Refugee Trust Fund, working closely with the British Treasury represented by Robert J. Stopford and the Czecho-Slovak government's Institute for Refugee Welfare. Not all of these refugees entered Britain, as many received financial support in order to emigrate directly to other countries. Once the war had started, only a very few refugees were able to leave Britain, and the focus of the BCRC/Czech Refugee Trust Fund shifted to providing hospitality and training opportunities in Britain (mostly for domestic service, agriculture and industry). Although the majority of the refugees expressed the wish to work, and were capable of it, it was not always possible to obtain employment in Britain. In January 1940, of the just over 10,000 refugees

registered with the Trust about 4,500 were financially maintained by it.<sup>27</sup> In total 15,701 refugees were given financial assistance by the BCRC/ Czech Refugee Trust Fund, of whom 12,096 were admitted to the UK. After the war, many of the refugees who had been in Britain “temporarily”—some for as long as seven years—preferred to stay and were given permission to become naturalized British citizens. Some chose to return home or move elsewhere, often to the United States or Canada. In 1955 the Trust estimated that, of the approximately 12,096 refugees it had supported in the UK, around 50 percent had stayed in Britain, 30 percent had emigrated elsewhere, and 20 percent had returned home.<sup>28</sup> The Communist coup of February 1948 complicated resettlement matters for the Trust, which refused to release any funds to the Czechoslovak government or to any refugees who wanted to return there. The Trust did, however, continue to process applications for refugees, and around 4,086 people were admitted after 1948.<sup>29</sup>

#### THE *KINDERTRANSPORTS* FROM CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

Begun months before Nicholas Winton even considered coming to Prague, the efforts of British voluntary organizations to assist refugees in the Bohemian Lands relied on a number of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Formed in response to crisis and on an initial shoestring budget in 1938, the BCRC relied on mobilizing the expertise and local connections of the few British humanitarian workers already based in Prague. Quakers had been active in financially supporting German and Austrian refugees in Prague since 1936, when Friends there, helped by some funding from the Quaker Germany Emergency Committee, began supporting 430 non-Jewish and 260 Jewish refugees.<sup>30</sup> A little later Mary Penman, sister of the Labour MP Philip Noel-Baker and an experienced Quaker relief worker, proved a key contact for the BCRC. Penman had traveled to Prague in the autumn of 1938 to begin work with refugees. She had rented an apartment using her own money, which then served as a base for other relief workers. The work was initially intended to provide relief where possible, particularly to Sudeten Social Democrats, and help to facilitate emigration. It had got off to a slow start, and the workload seemed overwhelming until the arrival of Doreen Warriner invigorated their efforts.

Doreen Warriner would make a troublesome saint. A staunch feminist and internationalist with an interest in communism, Warriner worked as a lecturer in economics at University College London. She was outspoken about her left-wing political sympathies and was not afraid to publicly criticize government policy.<sup>31</sup> Having died in 1972 she would not have been available for interviews or public commemorations in the late 1980s, but most probably she would not have been seen as such an appropriate hero as Winton, especially given the ongoing Cold War context. Recently released MI5 files reveal that British Security Services had been monitoring her suspected Communist contacts from September 1938 until 1952, to the extent of intermittently recording her telephone conversations and intercepting her post. The Security Services had originally become interested in her through their observations of faculty at the School of Slavonic Studies at UCL. She was, however, not deemed to be a great risk and though her exit visa applications were examined, they were stamped with “Nothing Recorded Against.”<sup>32</sup> Doreen Warriner wrote a detailed and informative account of her time working in Czechoslovakia, “A Winter in Prague.”<sup>33</sup> Originally, she turned down a prestigious Rockefeller scholarship in order to go to Prague in October 1938 out of a desire to do something to help, and when she first arrived in Prague, she had £150 from Save the Children International Union, £300 raised from colleagues and friends, and the intention of helping 250 prominent Social Democrats leave the country.<sup>34</sup> On arrival, she introduced herself to Mary Penman, and the two women immediately began working together.<sup>35</sup> One gets the impression from archived letters that Penman provided the contacts and Warriner the drive. Warriner was a Labour Party member and formed a good working partnership with William Gillies, the Labour Party’s Secretary for International Development, in London as well as with David Wills and MP David Grenfell, who were in Prague administering Labour Party and *News Chronicle* funds for Czech relief.

The British government and the BCRC explicitly prioritized assistance to these “political” refugees, while simultaneously limiting assistance to Jewish refugees, who were considered to be “economic” or “racial” refugees.<sup>36</sup> It is worth noting here that, at this early stage, all the British humanitarian work in Czechoslovakia was being carried out by leftist organizations, which worked closely together on the ground. From her arrival until she left on April 24, 1939, Doreen Warriner was the BCRC’s

sole official representative in Prague, at which point Beatrice Wellington, who held the post until August 1939, replaced her.<sup>37</sup> The initial focus of the Prague workers was on supporting left-wing men, particularly those from the Sudeten area and political refugees from Germany and Austria, as it was felt that they were in the most immediate danger of imprisonment or deportation. The next priority were the wives and children of those men and providing assistance to people trapped in no-man's-land and refugee camps.

The efforts of the BCRC brought British attention to the plight of refugee children in late November 1938, which would begin a series of events that would eventually lead Winton to Prague. Official work bringing unaccompanied children from Prague to Britain was enabled by the November 21, 1938, announcement that the British government would allow a certain number of such children into Britain.<sup>38</sup> In response to this, Margaret Layton, the secretary of the BCRC, began correspondence with the Inter-Aid Committee and the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany and Austria (two organizations that would imminently merge to become the Refugee Children's Movement, the name we will use here). Layton had become interested in the RCM's plans for organized mass immigration of unaccompanied children from Germany and Austria to Britain, and she wrote to Warriner in Prague suggesting a similar plan.<sup>39</sup> Warriner was positive about the idea and, given her own massive workload, delegated the fledgling scheme to Martin Blake, a new volunteer, who enlisted the help of his friend Nicholas Winton.<sup>40</sup> Blake and Winton quickly proved to be passionate and dynamic additions to the team. Warriner was impressed with their quick assumption of leadership over the task and wrote to Layton, "Winton is doing really splendid work for the children, and I have asked his employer to let him stay for another two weeks." She also wrote on December 28, "Blake has taken over the completion of the lists [of children] and will inform you."<sup>41</sup> Winton and Blake certainly used their initiative to set up the official children's section of the BCRC, but it is worth underscoring again here that the records of the BCRC clearly show that the Children's Section—administered first by Winton and Blake and later by their colleague Trevor Chadwick—was an official subsidiary section fully financed by the BCRC, in the same way that other committee members were responsible for administering other sections, for example the Polish Office, the Hospitality Section or the

Domestic Section.<sup>42</sup> Winton took ownership of the project to evacuate children, in the same way that other relief workers had responsibility for specific schemes or lists, but he was always acting under the auspices of the BCRC and provided by them with a total budget of £5,000.<sup>43</sup>

The Prague representatives of the BCRC sensed the urgency of the refugee situation and pressed for large-scale evacuations to begin immediately, continuing to focus their efforts on politically active men. While the BCRC was keen to use the opportunity presented by the November 21, 1938, announcement in the House of Commons to get as many vulnerable people out of Czechoslovakia as possible, its members were angry at what they saw as a continued abdication of governmental responsibility towards refugees. In a memorandum intended to be on behalf of all the voluntary organizations working with refugees, the Committee welcomed the decision on November 21 but noted:

At the same time the voluntary organizations find themselves totally unable to accept the implication that the extent to which the rescue of thousands can be organized, temporary refuge provided, and large-scale migration of hundreds of thousands carried out must remain entirely dependent on private effort.<sup>44</sup>

The danger faced by those they were trying to help was clear to the BCRC, as a January 1939 letter from the Independent Member of Parliament, humanitarian campaigner, and advisor to the BCRC Eleanor Rathbone shows. Rathbone, who was in Prague as part of a British government delegation, described the situation there as “extremely menacing.” Rathbone, whose advocacy for refugees during this period was influential in humanitarian circles, recommended immediate evacuation of politically endangered men.<sup>45</sup>

Rathbone’s concern stemmed, in part, from the Czecho-Slovak government’s increasingly hostile treatment of refugees, particularly Jewish refugees. In mid-November 1938, the Ministry of Interior instructed its regional offices to prevent “the permeation of Jews” into the current territory of the Czecho-Slovak Republic.<sup>46</sup> All along the demarcation line between the German-occupied Sudetenland and the rump state of Czecho-Slovakia, the local authorities prevented Jews from entering Czecho-Slovakia. In Louny, located northwest of Prague, a group of twelve refugees attempted to cross the border. When they were prevented

from doing so by the border authorities, they camped along the highway in the neutral no-man's-land.<sup>47</sup> Eventually the head of the Czechoslovak Red Cross convinced the Ministry of the Interior to allow temporary shelter to the refugees as they tried to negotiate their return to German-occupied territories, which the current government believed to be a more viable—and faster—option to rid themselves of unwanted refugees than the vague promises made by the British and other governments regarding overseas emigration.

While the Czecho-Slovak border officials sent as many Jewish refugees as possible back over the new border, government officials in Prague denied German-speaking and Jewish refugees the opportunity to opt for Czechoslovak citizenship—even if they had been Czechoslovak citizens prior to the Munich Agreement—and enacted anti-Jewish legislation (including expelling Jews from government service, forcing Jewish professors out of the universities, denying Jewish refugees from the Sudetenland access to their own funds as well as preventing them from entering Czecho-Slovak industries and professions).<sup>48</sup> Despite the anti-Semitic practices occurring at the border and within the Czecho-Slovak government, Prague officials anxious for Western assistance extolled the efforts of voluntary organizations to aid refugees in refugee camps, in part claiming the efforts of the voluntary organizations as their own.

By November 1938, the refugee situation in the Second Republic had worsened to the point that the government founded an Institute for Refugee Welfare as a subdivision of the Ministry for Social Welfare. The Refugee Institute's tasks were twofold: first, to provide resettlement services, including health, employment and housing, to Czech- and Slovak-speaking refugees from the borderlands; and second, to assist in the continued emigration of those refugees, primarily German-speakers, Jews and other national minorities.<sup>49</sup> To accomplish this, the Refugee Institute worked closely with Robert Stopford and the BCRC representatives as the Czecho-Slovak administrators of the Czech Gift Fund.<sup>50</sup>

In theory, these services were to be offered to refugees regardless of religion, political affiliation or ethnicity. In practice, the Refugee Institute offered services based on ethnic criteria: while social, medical and resettlement services were offered to Czech and other Slovak refugees, the Institute promoted the emigration of Jewish and anti-Nazi German refugees. In the Institute's internal documents, there is a clear division

between services offered to “our people” and those offered to “Jews” and other national minorities. In January 1939, the Refugee Institute held regular meetings to debate several “voluntary” migration schemes for Jews to places like Rhodesia, Madagascar, southwest France, New Caledonia, Bolivia, Canada and Nicaragua.<sup>51</sup> The Refugee Institute’s primary responsibility prior to March 15, 1939, was to communicate refugee policy to the refugee assistance organizations and to administer the Czech Gift Fund to facilitate emigration. On January 14, 1939, the Refugee Institute stated that this fund would be administered in such a way so as to “partially solve the Jewish emigration question.”<sup>52</sup> As Tara Zahra argues, the Refugee Institute was simultaneously a humanitarian organization and one that contributed to the removal of the Jewish population from the Bohemian Lands, demonstrating that there was “an ambiguous frontier between rescue and removal at the international level.”<sup>53</sup> Perhaps because of this, the Refugee Institute played an essential role in helping connect foreign and Czecho-Slovak voluntary workers: it hosted regular meetings for all refugee aid organizations and even offered office space to foreign voluntary groups.<sup>54</sup>

The task of emigration case-work was left to Czechoslovak voluntary organizations and social workers. For Jewish refugees, emigration casework was handled by the office of the HICEM (an international organization formed in 1926 to centralize the refugee assistance work of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society [HIAS], the Jewish Colonization Office [ICA] and EmigDirect and whose name was an amalgamation of all three organizations), while other forms of immediate social assistance were taken up by the Jewish Religious Community of Greater Prague and the local Jewish religious communities throughout the Bohemian Lands. Similar services were offered to refugees from Germany and Austria and other anti-Nazis by voluntary organizations dedicated to particular subsets of the refugee population (like the Šalda Committee which concentrated on Communist refugees and intellectuals, the Social Democratic Refugee Aid Committee, the Democratic Refugee Aid Committee and the Union of Private Employees). Organizations like the Czechoslovak Red Cross offered funds to help support the relief work of other voluntary organizations. Representatives of both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations had been working closely with the Czechoslovak government on issues of refugee

policy since the early 1930s and continued to meet regularly with the Refugee Institute during the Second Republic period.

Czechoslovaks were not passive recipients of foreign aid. The work of Czecho-Slovak voluntary organization was essential: without their knowledge of local conditions, language, and their connections with the Second Republic government, the efforts of international aid organizations would not have gotten off the ground as quickly as they did. Representatives of these organizations, like Marie Schmolka of HICEM, traveled abroad to advocate for the refugees in the Bohemian Lands and met with foreign voluntary workers when they arrived in Prague.<sup>55</sup> Some of Doreen Warriner's first meetings in Prague were with leaders of the Social Democratic Refugee Aid Committee and the Union of Private Employees, who drafted lists of refugees needing to leave.<sup>56</sup> Warriner continued to work closely with these representatives during her time in Prague: they brought her to refugee camps, shared office space and organized the transports of refugees to Britain.

Warriner was particularly critical of the assistance provided by the Refugee Institute. In a letter to the editors of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* in December 1938, she lambasted the Czecho-Slovaks' care of German-speaking (and often Jewish) Czechoslovak refugees from the Sudetenland, which she characterized as being "the worst" treatment of any refugee group.<sup>57</sup> She further accused the managers of the refugee camps of underfeeding the refugees and placing them in overcrowded camps where Czechoslovak officials treated them poorly. In its response to Warriner's article, the Refugee Institute asserted that the reason German-speaking refugees felt that they were being mistreated by the Czecho-Slovak government was simply a result of their not being Czech enough to feel comfortable living in Czecho-Slovakia and was further exacerbated by their lack of Czech friends or relatives (who, in the minds of the Czecho-Slovak government, would have provided these sorry individuals with housing). The fact that these German-speaking, often Jewish and often Social Democrat refugees lived in refugee camps further demonstrated that they could not be Czechoslovak and therefore could not remain in Czecho-Slovakia.<sup>58</sup>

Given the appalling and rapidly worsening conditions in the camps, representatives of the BCRC felt the best option was to get as many refugees out of Czechoslovakia as possible, and as quickly as possible, rather than

attempt to provide domestic support. Warriner recalled that it was on David Grenfell's suggestion that she asked the young Quaker voluntary worker Tessa Rowntree and Tessa's cousin Jean to begin escorting trainloads of refugees in early November to Gdynia in Poland where they could take ships on to England.<sup>59</sup> It was felt that having dedicated trains with British escorts/witnesses was the best guarantee of refugee safety in transit.

The situation in Prague became even more fraught and dangerous after the Nazi invasion of the remainder of a weakened Czecho-Slovakia on March 15, 1939. The voluntary workers in Prague associated with the BCRC began to work with increasing urgency. Beatrice Wellington, who was originally an independent Canadian aid worker working with Sudeten Social Democrats but had become officially associated with first the Quakers and then the BCRC, organized her relief work strictly in priority order of the Gestapo lists she had managed to obtain.<sup>60</sup> Wellington became the BCRC's sole official representative in Prague when Doreen Warriner returned to London in April 1939.<sup>61</sup> The stress suffered by Wellington was clearly immense: she faced a huge workload and was additionally questioned several times by the Gestapo. Colleagues noted that Wellington became increasingly strained by her efforts to assist refugees with the BCRC. "We work with Beatrice Wellington," one American refugee worker noted in May 1939, "whenever her nearly-deranged nerves allow her to. But she is pretty nearly a case herself."<sup>62</sup>

What is clear from all these records is that the humanitarian workers in Prague were a collection of individuals and representatives of organizations who came from very different backgrounds and levels of experience. Czechoslovak aid groups acted as liaisons between refugees, the Czecho-Slovak government and foreign aid groups, while the officials of the BCRC led British aid efforts. The primary recipients of early refugee aid in the Bohemian Lands were politically active men, followed by their wives and children. It was not until after the Refugee Children's Movement laid plans to bring German and Austrian children to Great Britain that members of the BCRC began considering a similar scheme for children from Czecho-Slovakia. Nicholas Winton was just one of many. While he would do essential work in London to coordinate the entrance permits, other voluntary workers were more instrumental in organizing the departure of the transports.

Shortly after Winton left Prague in January 1939, Reverend Waitstill and his wife Martha Sharp arrived as the representatives selected by the American Unitarian-Quaker task force to serve as the commissioners of the Commission for Service in Czechoslovakia. On their way to Czechoslovakia, the Sharps had stopped in England to meet with individuals who were familiar with the refugee situation in Prague, including the British Unitarian Minister E. Rosalind Lee and Nicholas Winton.<sup>63</sup> Lee, who had been working with the other British representatives in Prague, provided the couple with a list of important figures arranging the emigration of refugees. While Winton busily worked to obtain foster homes and permissions from the British Home Office, the Sharps were told that the selection of refugee children in Czechoslovakia was largely left in the hands of Trevor Chadwick. Chadwick, a British schoolmaster, and Winton had met in Prague where Chadwick had gone to select two refugee children to bring to his school. When Winton returned to England, Chadwick offered his services as the Prague coordinator of the children's transports, provided that Winton was able to get the necessary permits.<sup>64</sup> Chadwick stayed in Prague between February and June 1939, when he left rather rapidly, which suggests that he may have become aware that the Gestapo suspected him of forging travel documents.<sup>65</sup> Prior to the transport's departure, Martha Sharp shared several meals with Warriner and Chadwick and volunteered to help Chadwick, who was to accompany the transport.<sup>66</sup>

Humanitarian work existed in two worlds, one in Great Britain and the other in Prague. The workers in Prague often slipped over the line between humanitarianism and political resistance. Doreen Warriner and Beatrice Wellington were both questioned by the Gestapo, and Warriner had to return to Britain in April 1939 after R. J. Stopford of the Treasury informed her that he had seen a card in her name signed by the Consul in Katowice, implying she was next in line to be arrested by the Gestapo.<sup>67</sup> Tessa Rowntree recalls smuggling Jewish possessions out with her and lying to border guards about documents. She and Doreen Warriner spent a whole day in a hotel room ripping up the real passports of political escapees, who had just been given false identities, and flushing them down the toilet.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Martha Sharp recalls memorizing and destroying any piece of paper that could have served to identify the individuals she and her husband were assisting to leave once they realized that the Gestapo had searched and wired their rooms.<sup>69</sup> Tessa Rowntree also recalled an

incident when a refugee appeared with a pistol and declared he would kill himself and everyone else in the room. Beatrice Wellington walked up to him and talked him into giving up the pistol. They hid it in Doreen Warriner's bedroom under a pile of sanitary towels then threw it off the Charles Bridge.<sup>70</sup> Waitstill Sharp wrote cryptic messages back to the committee he represented in the United States to apologize for not keeping detailed financial records regarding their refugee work as he feared that this "would imperil the life and liberty of myself and every Czech with whom we do business" if the Germans discovered how the Sharps were spending money in the Protectorate.<sup>71</sup>

By early February 1939—after Winton's departure—Chadwick and the Czechoslovak refugee aid committees determined some protocols for selecting the Jewish children. The children were divided into two groups: Jewish refugee children from Germany and Austria would register with the Šalda Refugee Committee, and Jewish refugee children from the Sudetenland with another committee. In order to be considered for a transport, the children were required to submit their names, birthdates, last residence, nationality, a certificate of health, three passport photographs, the relevant information about the parents as well as an attestation from their parents that they had no objection to sending their child to England on a *Kindertransport*. For those in Prague, the parents could do this in person, while children in other cities with large Jewish communities (Brno, Ostrava, Prostějov, Bratislava, Plzeň, Jihlava and Olomouc) could register with their local Jewish Religious Community, which would pass along their information to the refugee committees in Prague. Children who did not live in these areas could apply by mail. As far as the major Jewish organizations were concerned at the time, the most important individuals for organizing the *Kindertransports* were Doreen Warriner, E. Rosalind Lee, Tessa Rowntree and Beatrice Wellington.<sup>72</sup>

The process by which the lists of children to be evacuated were compiled is significant, as it indicates the level of cooperation between the voluntary agencies on the ground in Prague. The majority of the children were recommended by five Czech committees, which been working together and with the Czechoslovak government to assist German refugees from Nazism since the early 1930s and had compiled lists of refugees in desperate need of emigration assistance. At least 250 of these children were German and Austrian refugees who were based in and around Prague and

whose names were submitted to Winton by Jewish social worker Marie Schmolka, as part of her work with the *Kindercomité*.<sup>73</sup> The Save the Children International Union representative in Prague drew up a list of approximately twenty Sudeten children who had previously been supported by the organization and passed it to Doreen Warriner. The “Wallner” list comprised about fifty names of Jewish children from no-man’s-land who were to be financially supported and cared for in England by the East London Mission to the Jews.<sup>74</sup> Blake and Winton’s first list of 500 priority refugee children living precariously in the Second Czecho-Slovak Republic was thus created on the recommendation of the Czech committees. It was the list taken by the men when they returned to London in late January 1939 to begin organizing transports and accommodation for the children, twenty of whom were being housed temporarily in the YWCA in Prague (a hospitality scheme organized by Warriner) until they could be evacuated.<sup>75</sup>

Meanwhile, workers in Prague continued to draw up lists of children to add to the original 500. Fifty-two of the children who came to England were in fact Unitarians—brought to England through the efforts of Martha Sharp, who maintained close ties with the Unitarian chapels in Prague and Britain and referred cases she was working with to Chadwick.<sup>76</sup> Reverend Rosalind Lee and the Unitarians in England were able to find foster homes for the children that the Sharps recommended.<sup>77</sup> In the end, the 669 children who arrived in Britain were not all part of the original list of five hundred.

At noon on March 14, 1939, the twenty YWCA children left Prague on a KLM plane bound for England—the first of the 669 unaccompanied children to leave the Bohemian Lands.<sup>78</sup> The rest of the children would be sent to Britain on trains between April 19 and August 2, 1939. A total of seven groups of children left Prague on trains in groups of between 36 and 241, escorted by adults, who were mostly the British volunteers already working in Prague (these were preferred as it was felt a British passport holder provided some security when passing through hostile border controls).<sup>79</sup> Tessa and Jean Rowntree escorted at least two of the trainloads of unaccompanied children back to Britain in 1939. Tessa brought some children back to her parents’ home in York to be fostered when previous plans for their care fell through.<sup>80</sup>

On March 15, 1939, the Nazis occupied the remainder of the Bohemian Lands, creating the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The number of children threatened by Nazi persecution rose dramatically, and relief workers in Prague faced the pressure of making decisions on which children to support. Czechoslovaks who applied for a place on a transport after the Nazi occupation of the Bohemian Lands often relied on other organizations, and on Trevor Chadwick, to become one of the 669 unaccompanied children who reached Britain. In the Sharps' estimation, Trevor Chadwick was the most knowledgeable individual about the organization of children's transports. At the end of April, Waitstill Sharp wrote that Chadwick's opinion on the matter of children's transports was "the very best we could obtain from any authority in Bohemia and Moravia."<sup>81</sup>

The shift away from Winton's original list, comprised mostly of refugees from the Sudetenland, to assisting primarily Jewish children can be attributed to the work of Chadwick and František Ullmann of the Jewish Religious Community in Prague. By April 1939, it was clear to Chadwick that it was *Jewishness* that posed the greatest problem for children in the Bohemian Lands. If any children were to leave the Bohemian Lands, those of "non-Aryan race" should be considered first.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, Chadwick began working closely with Ullmann, who had been arranging the Youth Aliyah transports. According to the Sharps, Ullmann was "responsible for a great share of [the work]" in arranging the transports to England as well. Indeed, after Chadwick left the Bohemian Lands for good in June 1939, Ullmann and the Jewish Religious Community in Prague took charge of the children's emigration altogether, working closely with the representative of the BCRC.<sup>83</sup>

Jewishness also presented a problem to those finding accommodation and support for the children in Britain. It was simply not possible to find enough Jewish foster homes to provide adequate religious instruction for Jewish children. Some relief workers from British Jewish organizations were deeply concerned over the assimilation of children, and were particularly worried about a potential loss of Jewish faith and identity.<sup>84</sup> Others felt that it was of the utmost urgency to get as many children safely to Britain as quickly as possible, and issues such as religious observance could be sorted out later.<sup>85</sup> In reality, the religious observance of the children was simply not as important to the majority of humanitarian workers as was their survival, and it is clear that many of the children's religious educa-

tion was simply ignored by the RCM and the BCRC and left up to foster carers to organize, with inevitably mixed results.

Once in Britain, the children were dispersed into the care of family or friends, private foster homes, refugee hostels run by the Czech Refugee Trust Fund or Zionist training farms run by Youth Aliyah. For the first two or three years, the children from Czechoslovakia, along with the approximately 10,000 unaccompanied children from Germany and Austria, were officially under the supervision of the Refugee Children's Movement. In late 1942, however, responsibility for the former was transferred back to the Czech Refugee Trust, which had more funds and resources than the RCM. In 1946 the Trust wanted to transfer guardianship of the remaining children under the age of twenty-one back to the RCM but it is not clear whether this happened.<sup>86</sup> In any case, the majority of the children who remained in Britain became naturalized British citizens either through marriage or under the British Nationality Act, 1948.<sup>87</sup>

As they grew into adulthood, the *Kinder* scattered across the country and, after the war's end, across the globe. Approximately 60 percent of the *Kinder* lost at least one of their parents in the Holocaust.<sup>88</sup> Once the war had begun, Winton had almost no contact or interaction with the children from Czechoslovakia. The only exception being a letter he wrote to the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister in Exile Jan Masaryk, stating that he believed that his work as the Honorary Secretary of the Children's Section of the BCRC was not complete until he "[saw] these children back 'at home' once more" at the conclusion of the war.<sup>89</sup> Neither Winton nor the other Prague refugee workers ever spoke much about their efforts to bring children from the Bohemian Lands to Britain. The vast majority of the Prague refugee workers, including Warriner and Chadwick, died in the 1970s and 1980s. For their part, the now grown-up children also rarely discussed their refugee pasts—anxious, as many of them were, to move on with their lives, join the work force and start families.

#### BRITISH AND CZECH COMMEMORATION OF THE *KINDERTRANSPORTS*

Commemoration in Britain of the *Kindertransports* from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia was begun by the efforts of former *Kinder* who retained a sense of their origins and identity into adulthood. Following the 1989

reunion of *Kinder* organized by Bertha Leverton and the contemporaneous acknowledgment of the *Kinder* as a distinctive group of refugees, an emergence of memoirs in the 1990s began to form a body of literature on the experience. Books such as Martha Blend's *A Child Alone* or Vera Gissing's *Pearls of Childhood* followed a pattern of outlining a childhood in Germany, Austria or Czechoslovakia, followed by a detailed account of the journey to Britain and the experience of being fostered and adapting, and ending with a brief account of later life.<sup>90</sup> In most memoirs of former *Kinder*, the writers tend to give thanks for providing refuge. In almost every interview she has given since discovering Winton's identity in 1988, Gissing reiterates the sentiment that "[Winton] gave us life, and our children life, and our grandchildren life ... there are thousands of us in this world and all thanks to him."<sup>91</sup> This is an entirely understandable impulse, but the former *Kinder* were not always clear to whom their gratitude should be directed. It is our assertion that this very natural desire of former child refugees to want to express gratitude for a rescue about which they remembered little was taken up both by media eager to tell a "positive" story about the Holocaust and by British and Czech governments keen to celebrate the alleged humanitarian actions of their antecedents. Historians of the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands as well as scholars working on refugee issues have often included brief mentions of the Czech children's transports and in so doing, restate and reify the myth that it was Winton who was solely responsible for the rescue of the children.<sup>92</sup> A statue of Winton erected at Prague's main railway station depicts Winton assisting children onto the trains—something he never did. Two children of relief workers have recently challenged this narrative. W. R. Chadwick, the son of Prague relief worker Trevor Chadwick, has written an informative book about the work of the BCRC, in part aiming to "debunk" the idea that it was all Winton's work.<sup>93</sup> Winton's own daughter Barbara has written in a similar vein in her biography of her father, where she specifically seeks to "disentangle the real person from the myth of the one-dimensional 'hero' figure, and to point out where truth diverts from myth in the rescue story."<sup>94</sup> Although focused on Winton's life, the roles of other voluntary workers in Prague are explicitly foregrounded.

Recent discussion of the Holocaust in Britain has tended to emphasize the importance of remembrance and assert Britain's "special" role in supporting those persecuted in Europe. Historians and educators, who often

criticize the “self-congratulatory narrative” of British commemoration of the Holocaust in general and the *Kindertransport* in particular, have comprehensively discussed this tendency.<sup>95</sup> The January 2015 Holocaust Commission report, which was specially commissioned by the Prime Minister’s Office, outlined Britain’s commitment to provide a formal, *national* process of memorial. The relatively brief report mentions Winton by name:

We must also remember the courage and kindness of the unsung heroes whose strong belief in British values, and readiness to reach out a hand, breached the divide rather than put up a wall. Frank Foley and Sir Nicholas Winton are just two whose extraordinary deeds of courage and bravery saved so many. They deserve our lasting respect and eternal gratitude.<sup>96</sup>

This ostensibly simple statement reveals a clear desire to forcibly impose national constructions of “British” values onto the past without acknowledging that, first, many of the “extraordinary deeds of courage” were expressly *against* the policy of the British government of the time and, second, that individuals such as Foley and Winton worked as part of complex networks. A simple story with one (male) hero, which echoes the well-known Oskar Schindler case, seems a convenient narrative to propagate. As the contemporary British government takes the lead in commemorating the humanitarian work of these individuals, it is able to circumvent acknowledgment of the awkward role of its predecessors, which had often in fact failed in “readiness to reach out a hand.”

For his 105th birthday celebration, Winton received a letter from the Czech President Miloš Zeman notifying him that he would receive the Czech Republic’s highest honor, the Order of the White Lion, which would be presented to him in a ceremony in Prague on October 28, 2014. The award, which is given to individuals for outstanding services to the Czech Republic, was presented to Winton in conjunction with the celebration of Independence Day in the Czech Republic, at the Prague Castle. In inviting Winton to Prague for the presentation of the award, Zeman wrote:

History is made up of human stories and their intricate fates. The ones that become part of historical memory are especially those who did not originally intend to become famous nor did they consider

their own actions to be extraordinary. They simply did what they considered to be right, according to the best of their knowledge and conscience. And that's what makes them true heroes, which every era of human history needs—to serve as a lesson and an inspiration to others.<sup>97</sup>

By lionizing Winton in this way, the Czech government has not only reinforced the image of Winton as a hero but has simultaneously bolstered the Czech public's tendency to see themselves as merely victims of Nazi, and German nationalist, aggression. Even after his death, Winton makes the headlines in the Czech newspapers, and it is Czech citizens who repeatedly attempt to nominate Winton for the Nobel Peace Prize. In a country that has yet to address the most difficult questions about the roles Czechs played in the Holocaust, the “Czech fairy tale” about Winton allows Czechs to avoid addressing the ways in which Czechs participated in the persecution of Jewish co-nationals.<sup>98</sup>

More recently, the Slovak filmmaker Matej Mináč has made a series of three films about Nicholas Winton (*All My Loved Ones* [1999]; *The Power of Good: Nicholas Winton* [2002]; and *Nicky's Family* [2011]), motivated in large part by a desire to tell a story about the Holocaust that had some hope.<sup>99</sup> After deciding to do a feature film about wartime experiences from a child's perspective, Mináč decided that the original source of inspiration for the film—his mother's family, whose story “was sad through and through”—also needed to include a tale of rescue, a source of hope for the filmgoers.<sup>100</sup> “I felt that we needed something positive,” Mináč said of his film *Všichni moji blízcí/All My Loved Ones*, “a ray of light in the dark sea of evil that was the Holocaust.”<sup>101</sup> Mináč's films on Winton, as well as his ongoing effort to nominate Winton for the Nobel Peace Prize, reinforce this myth. In a recent radio interview, Mináč contended, “Thanks to me, Winton's story became known.” Mináč further maintains that as a documentary filmmaker, he reserves the right to artistic license: “I am not a historian nor a historiographer and I make films about what I choose, about what appeals to me.”<sup>102</sup> However, Mináč has repeatedly marketed his films as educational documentaries, which rely heavily on archival documents, historical film footage, and survivor interviews to tell the “true” story of the rescue of 669 children from Czechoslovakia. In each of the three Mináč films, Winton is portrayed as staying in Prague to

witness the Nazi occupation and working almost entirely by himself (with the exception of a few “helpers” and several female secretaries, including one that seems to be a depiction of Doreen Warriner).<sup>103</sup> At various points in the three films, Winton is depicted loading children onto the trains in Prague while Gestapo agents eye him suspiciously, making all of the necessary travel arrangements and working alone on a plan that had been thought impossible by every other individual working with refugees. While Mináč can claim a certain degree of artistic license, painting the rescue mission in this light is simply misleading and inaccurate.

#### HUMANITARIAN AID ORGANIZATIONS AS “RESCUERS”

In postwar testimonies, Nicholas Winton himself downplayed the importance of his role in the children’s transports and emphasized the influential work of both Warriner and Chadwick.<sup>104</sup> Winton was in Prague for just three weeks, before the German occupation. He accompanied no trains, made no travel arrangements, never encountered the Gestapo or any personal danger, did not use his own money and, most importantly, did not act alone. He was the desk-based architect of a plan which, extensively guided by the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia and implemented by others in Prague, successfully supported the evacuation of 669 unaccompanied children in a project that should be seen alongside the *Kindertransports* from Germany and Austria organized by the Refugee Children’s Movement.<sup>105</sup> This is a considerable and commendable achievement. However, considering that 15,000 refugees, the majority of whom were left wing and/or Jewish *adults*, were helped by the BCRC, Winton’s achievement must be put in proportion. In these concluding remarks, we would like to raise some questions about how the story that has been erroneously told about Nicholas Winton fits into the bigger stories we tell ourselves about heroism, the Holocaust, gender and humanitarianism.

The story that foregrounds the work of Nicholas Winton in the rescue of 669 children from Czechoslovakia is a story that portrays citizens of “bystander” nations in the Holocaust as having the possibility of individual redemption through solitary acts of disinterested heroism. Tales of rescues organized by men like Oskar Schindler, Raoul Wallenberg and Přemysl Pitter are simple and sellable, with one hero fighting against per-

secution and injustice. Since Raul Hilberg first articulated the framework of victim-perpetrator-bystander, other scholars have refined and added to that theoretical model.<sup>106</sup> One modification that has been suggested is the addition of a fourth rescuer category to Hilberg's original linear model. However, it is our assertion that a distinct "rescuer" category reinforces the tendency to focus solely on hagiographic accounts of single altruistic rescuers.<sup>107</sup> In this instance, the role of groups of British and American citizens in negotiating the evacuation of thousands of Czech, German and Austrian citizens from Prague has been vastly oversimplified, reducing the story to that of one man and a few train carriages of children.

Telling stories about rescuing refugees—regardless of who is purportedly doing the rescuing—presents problems with respect to the representation of those refugees. Scholars and activists have for some time condemned representations of refugees that show them as merely passive, vulnerable subjects for the intervention of others, and, as Peter Gatrell has persuasively argued, humanitarian organizations can themselves contribute to the depersonalization of those they seek to save.<sup>108</sup> When children are the subjects of humanitarian aid, assumptions of their passivity in the act of rescue can be amplified. Simplistic stories of "rescue" that downplay the complicated, sometimes mundane and often, frankly, unheroic actions of humanitarian workers do a disservice to the recipients of humanitarianism as much as to the actors.

Beyond downplaying the messiness of humanitarianism and the problematic representation of those "saved," hero myths tend to write women out of the history of rescue and cast humanitarianism as a masculine endeavor. Women involved in rescue efforts often worked behind the scenes—meeting with refugees to help them complete the necessary paperwork, typing up important documents (like Eugenia Szamosi, who typed up many of the *Schutzpässe* for Raoul Wallenberg and other consular officials to distribute in Budapest in 1944) and offering networks of domestic hospitality and pastoral support—duties that have been recast as secondary or "natural" caring activities. Rewriting women as subordinate secretaries and surrogate mothers discounts their leadership roles in humanitarian endeavors, as Mináč has done with his portrayal of Doreen Warriner in his films about Winton. Furthermore, this masculine understanding of the humanitarian as a hero acting alone provides a platform for states like Britain and the Czech Republic, in commemorating the

activities of individual citizens, to overlook the more morally ambiguous elements of their national wartime histories.

This misleading rewriting of humanitarian history mobilizes the understandable impulse of child survivors to want to express gratitude for a rescue about which they remember little and misdirects it towards a single figure, who becomes depicted as a saintly rescuer. Winton was well cast in this role. He was a sincere and modest person, who did not seek public acclaim for his extensive work. He was also white, male, British, middle class, articulate, extremely long-lived and never publicly expressed any left-wing political views, all factors that rendered him unusual if not unique among the Prague workers and made him a safe choice for a simplistic hagiography. History, however, is rarely this neat. While Winton should be remembered for his work, it is crucial that his role be perceived in context.

The humanitarian work in Czechoslovakia in 1938 and 1939 was chaotic, complex and deeply political. It saw a disparate array of humanitarian workers from Britain, America and Czechoslovakia trying to do the best they could for refugees and political prisoners in dangerous circumstances. Many of them became deeply dispirited with their work, feeling that they could do very little without much more significant international governmental support. They were painfully aware that they were offering only a short-term emergency solution that did not come close to supporting all who needed it. When we tell the complicated story of how this diverse group of very human activists worked in the dangerous and murky political climate of their time, we should not reduce the account to just one saint.

## NOTES

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1. Telegram from Marie Schmolka, Hannah Steiner and Martin Blake, December 22, 1938, Nicholas Winton's Scrapbook, Yad Vashem Archive (hereafter YVA), O.7.cz/118, 10.

2. Dr. Elisabeth "Betty" Maxwell was a researcher of the Holocaust and was married to publishing tycoon Robert Maxwell.

3. The video clip of this section of the program is available on YouTube. [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=6\\_nFuJAF5F0](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=6_nFuJAF5F0) (accessed June 16, 2015).

4. For example, see Jonathan Romain, "A Salute to the 'British Schindler' as He Turns 104," *Guardian*, May 17, 2013; Neil Tweedie, "The Unsung British Hero with His Own Schindler's List," *Daily Telegraph*, May 17, 2013.

5. Winton was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in March 2003. He celebrated his 106th birthday on May 19, 2015. He was first nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize by Czech Lower House Head Miroslava Němcová, who nominated him repeatedly between 2010 and 2013, supported by various petitions. Her successor Jan Hamáček continued her efforts by nominating him again in January 2014. He accepted the Order of the White Lion from President Miloš Zeman on October 14, 2014.

6. See, for example, Amanda Williams and Hannah Parry, "Thank You for Our Lives': Touching Tribute to 'Britain's Schindler' Sir Nicholas Winton as He Dies Aged 106 from the Children Who Wouldn't Be Here without Him," *Daily Mail*, July 1, 2015, where it is claimed that he acted "almost single-handedly." The obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*, July 1, 2015, stated: "On his own initiative, he set up an office at a dining-room table in his hotel in Wenceslas Square, and early in 1939 launched the Czech Kindertransport." This was not universal. The *Guardian's* obituary by Stephen Bates on July 1, 2015, pointed out that Winton was part of a team, although the following day in the same publication, Jonathan Romain inaccurately wrote, "he [Winton] brought together a team of people to commission trains to take children to England, persuaded the Home Office to let them in, galvanised donations to help pay for them, found families to host them, and sorted out the complex paperwork necessary for both countries," Jonathan Romain, "Nicholas Winton Was a Beacon of Humanity," *Guardian*, July 2, 2015.

7. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis called Winton "a role model for us to follow" and twice (erroneously) said that he risked his life to save others. See "Thought for the Day," BBC Radio 4, July 3, 2015.

8. Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 77.

9. The historical (rather than memoir-based) literature on the *Kindertransports* which focuses on or mentions in some detail the Czech project includes Jana Burešová, "Nicholas Winton, Man and Myth: A Czech Perspective," in Andrea Hammel and Bea Lewkowicz, eds., *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39: New Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 47–58; Muriel Emanuel and Vera Gissing, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002); Vera K. Fast, *Children's Exodus: A History of the Kindertransport* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Oppenheimer, *Into the*

*Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (London: Bloomsbury Publishers, 2000); and the film directed by Harris, *Into the Arms of Strangers* (2000).

10. The archives of the BCRC/Czech Refugee Trust Fund are in the National Archives at Kew, London (hereafter NA). The Commission for Service in Czechoslovakia archives are in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC (hereafter USHMM). The Refugee Children's Movement archives are at the London Metropolitan Archives, London. The archives of the Czechoslovak National Committee for Refugees Coming from Germany are held at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York City (hereafter YIVO), with additional records held at the National Archive of the Czech Republic, Prague (hereafter NACR).

11. Johannes Paulmann, "Conjectures in the History of International Humanitarian Aid during the Twentieth Century," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 215–38.

12. An exact figure is difficult to determine as many refugees fled the Bohemian Lands without notifying the Czech or Nazi authorities. See Bohumil Černý, "Die Emigration der Juden aus den Böhmisches Ländern, 1938–1941," *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente*, no. 4 (1997): 73.

13. The refugee crisis from Czechoslovakia grew throughout the fall of 1938 as additional portions of the country were ceded to Hungary and Poland following the Vienna Accords. Refugees fled from these regions as well, bringing the total number of refugees in Czechoslovakia to somewhere between 200,000 and 250,000. Peter Heumos, *Die Emigration aus der Tschechoslowakei nach Westeuropa und dem Nahen Osten, 1938–1945: Politisch-soziale Struktur, Organisation und Asylbedingungen der tschechischen, jüdischen, deutschen und slowakischen Flüchtlinge während des Nationalsozialismus, Darstellung und Dokumentation* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag 1989), 16.

14. For the Second Republic's policies towards refugees and anti-Jewish legislation, see Jan Benda, *Útěky a vyhánění z pohraničí českých zemí, 1938–1939* (Flight and expulsion from the Bohemian Borderlands, 1938–1939) (Prague: Karolinum, 2012); Jan Gebhart and Jan Kuklík, *Druhá republika, 1938–1939: Spár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě* (The Second Republic, 1938–1939: The conflict between democracy and totalitarianism in political, social and cultural life) (Prague/Litomyšl: Paseka, 2004); Jan Rataj, *O autoritativní národní stát: Ideologické proměny české politiky v druhé republice, 1938–1939* (The authoritarian nation-state: The ideological transformation of Czech politics in the Second Republic, 1938–1939) (Prague: Karolinum, 1997); Miroslav Kárný, "Politické a ekonomické aspekty 'židovské otázky' v pomnichovském Československu" (Political and economic aspects of the Jewish question in

post-Munich Czechoslovakia), *Sborník historický* 36 (1989): 171–212. See also Tara Zahra, *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016), 146.

15. Memorandum on the Problem of the Sudeten German Refugees, Maurice H. Macmillian to Richard A. Butler, November 2, 1938, [NA] PRO, FO 371/21586, C 13639/11896/12, in Heumos, *Die Emigration*, 296.

16. Michal Frankl, “Prejudiced Asylum: Czechoslovak Refugee Policy, 1918–60,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 49, no. 3 (2014): 537–55.

17. Transportování židů z obsazených území, November 14, 1938, NACR, MPSP-R, box 161, inventory number 355.

18. This estimate likely includes refugees who had fled the territories ceded to Poland and Hungary. Preliminary and Confidential Report from Robert C. Dexter to the American Unitarian Association, November 16, 1938, Copy of the Martha and Waitstill Sharp Collection, USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 1, box 2, folder 8. The original documents of the Martha and Waitstill Sharp Collection are held at John Hay Library, Brown University, Ms.2011.008, boxes 1–10.

19. Author Unknown, “Czech Refugee Trust Fund History,” part of the Annual Report, March 31, 1955, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/5. For the *News Chronicle* records see *ibid.*, HO 294/41.

20. This was part of a £14 million pound trilateral agreement between Great Britain, France and Czecho-Slovakia known as the Czecho-Slovakia (Financial Assistance) Act, which was ratified in January 1939 and was intended to provide Czecho-Slovakia with funds to reconstruct the economy and address the refugee problems after the Munich Agreement. The vast majority of the amount was a loan for the purpose of assisting in the resettlement of refugees from the territory surrendered to Germany. See *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th series, February 9, 1939, vol. 343, cols.1190–202. See also “Financial Assistance to Czechoslovakia,” NACR, MPSP-R, box 158, inventory number 347, Stopfordova akce: všeobecné. For a detailed description of the agreement, see Jan Kuklík, *Do poslední pence: Československo-britská jednání o majetkoprávních a finančních otázkách, 1938–1982* (To the last penny: Czechoslovak-British negotiations on property rights and financial questions, 1938–1982) (Prague: Karolinum, 2007).

21. Dr. Vilém Popíšil to Lord Halifax, “Financial Assistance to Czechoslovakia Agreement,” NACR, MPSP-R, box 158, inventory number 347, Stopfordova akce: všeobecné.

22. Memorandum from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the transportation of Jews from the occupied territories across the demarcation line of the Czechoslovak Territory, November 14, 1938, NACR, MPSP-R, box 161, inventory number 355.

23. Heumos, *Die Emigration aus der Tschechoslowakei*, 79; minutes of the meeting between the Czecho-Slovak Financial Delegation, the British Delegation and the French Delegation at the Savoy Hotel, January 26, 1939, NACR, MPSP-R, box 168, inventory number 361, Příjmy – všeobecné. See also Czecho-Slovak Ministry of Finance and the Governor of the National Bank of Czecho-Slovakia to John Monroe Troutbeck, January 30, 1939, *ibid.*

24. Over the years the trustees included Sir Malcolm Delevingne (former deputy permanent under-secretary of state in the Home Office), Ewart G. Culpin (architect and former director of London County Council), Erich Turk (businessman), David Grenfell (MP), H. Wilson Harris (MP), Sir Alexander Paterson (expert on prison reform).

25. Memorandum by Sir Henry Bunbury (director of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund), “Emigration and Unemployment,” December 11, 1939, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/24.

26. This caused tension among individuals and groups that had been involved with the BCRC on a voluntary basis. An Advisory Committee, which included Eleanor Rathbone MP and Bertha L. Bracey (secretary of the Society of Friends’ Germany Emergency Committee), expressed concern at the “mechanization” of relationships between the Trust and refugees, which they attributed to its behaving increasingly like a government department rather than a voluntary organization. See “Notes of a Meeting between Sir Alexander Maxwell and the Advisory Committee on Czech Refugees,” June 10, 1941, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/22.

27. Advisory Committee minutes, January 22, 1940, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/22.

28. These figures include the 15,071 pre-1940 refugees from Nazism and the 4,086 post-1948 refugees from Communism. “Czech Refugee Trust Fund History,” part of the Annual Report, March 31, 1955, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/5.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Germany Emergency Committee Minutes, May 18, 1936, Friends’ House Archives, Euston, London.

31. See in particular her letter to the editors of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*, December 20, 1938, in which she wrote that any solutions to the refugee crisis other than collective emigration policies were a mere palliative to the conscience. Warriner was aged 34 when she left for Prague. For further biographical information, see the informative entry on her life and work in Sybil Oldfield, *Doers of the Word: British Women Humanitarians 1900–1950* (privately published, 2006), 261–63.

32. NA, Doreen Warriner MI5 file, KV6/83. There are copies of several letters to and from Warriner’s home address in her file, and several references to her “Communist” connections. The telephone checks are all from after 1945.

33. Doreen Warriner, "A Winter in Prague," *Slavonic and East European Review* 62, no. 4 (April 1984): 209–40.

34. Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*, 261–63.

35. Warriner, "A Winter in Prague," 210.

36. Louise London has argued that while British voluntary organizations and the British government worked to bring refugees out of Czechoslovakia, they opposed mass emigration of Jews from Czechoslovakia by explicitly directing funds away from Jewish refugees. In the case of the BCRC this was done by creating a system of priorities to determine in which order refugees would be assisted. See Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933–1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 142–68.

37. See, among other documents, Beatrice Wellington to Rosalind Lee, November 15, 1939, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/12.

38. See *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, 5th series, November 21, 1938, vol. 341, columns 1428–814286.

39. Margaret Layton to Doreen Warriner, December 17, 1938, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/53. In an interview in 1995, Winton credited Warriner with suggesting that he organize children's transports. See Oral History Interview with Nicholas Winton, November 17, 1995, USHMM, RG-50.030\*0422.

40. Doreen Warriner to Margaret Layton, December 28, 1938, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/53.

41. Doreen Warriner to Margaret Layton, January 12, 1939, and December 28, 1938, NA BCRC Files, HO 296/53 and 294/53.

42. To flesh out these examples: Clare Hollingworth was the official BCRC representative in Poland based at the British Consulate in Katowice. For her correspondence with the BCRC, see NA, BCRC files, HO 294/56. She was replaced in July 1939 by Margaret Dougan. The Hospitality Secretary Kate Thornycroft was responsible for supervising the establishment of hostels in Britain. The curatorship of the Domestic Section was usually handled by Beatrice Wellington. It was one of the busiest sections as, for young women, a domestic visa was one of the main routes of entry into Britain. Other committees before 1940 were the Medical Committee, the Finance Committee, the Case Committee, the Visa Committee, the Emigration, Employment and Training Committee, the Executive Committee and the Education Section. For further details of committee structure and membership and details of the funding of the Children's Section, see Finance Committee meetings reports, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/43.

43. Finance Committee meeting minutes, February 28, 1939, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/43.

44. "Action of Governments and of Private Organisations in Regard to Refugees—Draft Memorandum," November 25, 1938, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/53.

45. Eleanor Rathbone to the BCRC, January 20, 1939, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/39. For more information on Rathbone's work, see Susan Cohen, *Rescue the Perishing: Eleanor Rathbone and the Refugees* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2010).

46. Memorandum from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the transportation of Jews from the occupied territories across the demarcation line of the Czechoslovak Territory, November 14, 1938, NACR, MPSP-R, box 161, inventory number 355.

47. Ibid.

48. George F. Kennan, *From Prague after Munich: Diplomatic Papers, 1938–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 46–49.

49. For more details on the role of the Refugee Institute, see Benda, *Útěky a vyhánění*, 216–28.

50. Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 172.

51. Minutes of the meeting of the Emigration Division, January 21, 1939, NACR, MPSP-R, box 155, inventory number 340, folder I.

52. Information about Emigration Actions carried out by private organizations or individuals, January 14, 1939, NACR, MPSP-R, box 155, inventory number 340; memorandum of the Ministry of Social Welfare regarding news about social assistance to refugees in ČTK and Radiojournal in Prague, December 20, 1938, *ibid.*, box 36, inventory number 191.

53. Zahra, *The Great Departure*, 175.

54. Martha Cogan Sharp Memoir, USHMM, RG-67.017, Copy of Martha and Waitstill Sharp Collection, Series 4, box 30, folder 2, 44; Datebooks, *ibid.*, Series 2, box 25, folder 45, 35.

55. British refugee expert John Hope Simpson called Schmolka, “the head of the Jewish organizations in Czechoslovakia.” See Document 4, “Die Flüchtlinge in der Tschechoslowakei: Pläydoyer des Royal Institute of International Affairs für ihre Aufnahme in Großbritannien,” October 20, 1938, in Heumos, *Die Emigration aus der Tschechoslowakei*, 291.

56. Warriner, “Winter in Prague,” 212.

57. Doreen Warriner, letter to the editor, *Manchester Guardian*, December 20, 1938.

58. Memorandum from the Ministry of Social Welfare regarding the care of refugees of German nationality and unfavourable reports in the daily press, December 21, 1938, NACR, MPSP-R, box 36, inventory number 191.

59. Warriner, “A Winter in Prague,” 213. Tessa and Jean escorted several train-loads of refugees to the Russian and Polish borders in late 1938 and early 1939. Interview with Elisabeth “Tessa” Cadbury, May 7, 1994, Imperial War Museum Sound Archive, IWMSA/14205.

60. Beatrice Wellington to Margaret Layton, June, 21, 1939, NA BCRC files, HO 294/54.
61. See, for example, Beatrice Wellington to Rosalind Lee, November 15, 1939, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/12.
62. Waitstill Sharp to Malcolm Davis, Robert Dexter and Brackett Lewis, May 20, 1939, Copy of Martha and Waitstill Sharp Collection, USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 1, box 2, folder 15. Beatrice Wellington moved to London in late 1940 after spending some time working between Prague and Budapest. She worked in Bloomsbury House in the Central Department for Interned Refugees. Correspondence in the Czech Refugee Trust Fund files shows she was in regular communication with the trustees. See Trustee Correspondence files, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/1–HO 294/3.
63. YVA, O.7.cz/118.
64. W. R. Chadwick, *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees, 1938/39* (Leicester: Matador, 2010), 71–72.
65. Emigration Division meeting minutes, January 21, 1939, NACR, MPSP-R, box 155, inventory number 340, folder 1.
66. Martha Sharp Cogan, “Church Mouse in the White House,” USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 4, box 30, folder 2, p. 69; Warriner, “A Winter in Prague,” 219; YVA, O.7.cz/118.
67. Warriner, “A Winter in Prague,” 236.
68. Interview with Elisabeth “Tessa” Cadbury.
69. Report from Martha Sharp, March 1945, Copy of the Martha and Waitstill Sharp Collection, USHMM RG-67.017, Series 1, box 1, folder 2.
70. Interview with Elisabeth “Tessa” Cadbury.
71. Waitstill Sharp to Robert Dexter, June 13, 1939, Copy of the Martha and Waitstill Sharp Collection, USHMM RG-67.017, Series 1, box 2, folder 8.
72. Guidelines for the Children’s Action, February 3, 1939, YIVO, Records of the HICEM Office in Prague, RG 245.10, folder 4, MKM 15.135.
73. For a reference to the “Kindercomité” list, see Doreen Warriner to Margaret Layton, December 29, 1938, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/53.
74. *Ibid.*
75. See William Gillies to Margaret Layton, November 10, 1938. NA, BCRC files, HO 294/53.
76. YVA, O.7.cz/118. Also see the case file and correspondence associated with Jacques Gruen: USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 1, box 5, folder 36; Dorothy Barrett to Waitstill Sharp, August 3, 1939, *ibid.*; Jacques Gruen to Martha Sharp, August 15, 1939, and Ashton Sanborn to Jacques Gruen, August 10, 1939, USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 3, box 27, folder 11, pp. 38–39.

77. See Rote Falken group to Nicholas Winton, July 2, 1939, YVA O.7.cz/118, 74.

78. Sharp Cogan, "Church Mouse in the White House"; Warriner, "A Winter in Prague," 219; YVA O.7.cz/118.

79. The dates and numbers of transports from Prague are as follows: March 14, 1939, 20 children; April 19, 1939, 36 children; April 29, 1939, 29 children; May 13, 1939, 61 children; June 2, 1939, 123 children; July 1, 1939, 241 children; July 20, 1939, 76 children; August 2, 1939, 68 children. An additional fifteen children were on the Czech lists but came on trains from Berlin or Vienna. Vera Gissing reproduces a very clear and useful image of the summary of the transports from Prague in her book with Muriel Emanuel, *Nicholas Winton and the Rescued Generation* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2002), 127. The original report from which Gissing reproduces the image is in the Refugee Children's Movement Annual Reports, RCM, London Metropolitan Archives, 2993/03/04/04/1.

80. York City Archives, Accession 404, York Refugee Committee minutes, July 4, 1939.

81. Waitstill Sharp to Martha Sharp, April 18, 1939, USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 1, box 10, folder 92, p. 2.

82. Telegram from Waitstill Sharp to Brackett Lewis and Robert Dexter, April 18, 1939, USHMM, RG-67.017M, Series 1 box 7, folder 60. See also cable from Chadwick to the European Bureau of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 18, 1939, USHMM, RG-67.017, Series 1, box 10, folder 94, p. 21.

83. Martha Sharp to Malcolm Davis, July 15, 1939, USHMM, RG-67.017M, Series 1, box 8, folder 65, p. 29. The Youth Aliyah movement sought to resettle Jewish children from Europe in Palestine.

84. Barry Turner, *...And the Policeman Smiled: 10,000 Children Escape from Nazi Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

85. Oldfield, *Doers of the Word*, 93.

86. The initial 1942 transfer is repeatedly referred to in the BCRC files but see, for example, E. Turk to Mary Dudding, January 23, 1943, NA, BCRC files, HO 294/3. For reference to the 1946 proposed return of guardianship to the RCM, see "Memorandum for discussion with the Home Office," May 28, 1946, *ibid.*, HO 294/7.

87. Kindertransport Survey, "Making New Lives in Britain," Association of Jewish Refugees, 2008, <http://www.ajr.org.uk/kindersurvey> (accessed June 3, 2015).

88. *Ibid.*

89. Nicholas Winton to Jan Masaryk, September 21, 1941, Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, LA V. Sekce, box 524.

90. Martha Blend, *A Child Alone* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1995); Vera Gissing, *Pearls of Childhood* (1989; London: St. Martin's Press, 2007). Other examples of *Kinder* memoirs include Lore Segal, *Other People's Houses* (1964; London: Harcourt, Brace & World, 2004); Karen Gershon, *We Came as Children: A Collective Autobiography* (London: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966); Charles Hannam, *A Boy in Your Situation* (London: Harper & Row 1977); Charles Hannam, *Almost an Englishman* (London: A. Deutsch, 1979); Charles Hannam, *Outsider Inside* (London: Alpha Press, 2008); Bertha Leverton and Shmuel Lowerton, eds., *I Came Alone: The Stories of the Kindertransports* (London: Book Guild, 1990).

91. BBC News UK, "Winton's Children: Vera Gissing," BBC News, September 3, 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk\\_news/8227334.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/8227334.stm) (accessed January 13, 2015).

92. See Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); "Nicholas Winton and the Rescue of Children from Czechoslovakia, 1938–1939," in USHMM Holocaust Encyclopaedia, <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007780> (accessed June 4, 2015); Jana Burešová, "Nicholas Winton, Man and Myth: A Czech Perspective," in Hammel and Lewkowicz, eds., *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39*, 47–58

93. Chadwick, *The Rescue of the Prague Refugees*.

94. Barbara Winton, *If It's Not Impossible...: The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton* (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2014), xvi–xvii.

95. The "self-congratulatory narrative" quote is from Caroline Sharples, who provides a particularly useful analysis in her article, "The Kindertransport in British Historical Memory," in Hammel and Lewkowicz, eds., *The Kindertransport to Britain 1938/39*, 15–27. See also Tony Kushner, *Remembering Refugees Then and Now* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); London, *Whitehall and the Jews*; David Cesarani and Paul Levine, eds., *Bystanders to the Holocaust: A Re-Evaluation* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

96. Mick Davis (Commission Chairman) "Britain's Promise to Remember: The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report," January 27, 2015. Available from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). (accessed February 2, 2015).

97. "Prezident republiky zaslal blahopřejný dopis Siru Nicholasi Wintonovi" (The President of the Republic sent a congratulatory letter to Sir Nicholas Winton), <https://www.hrad.cz/cs/pro-media/tiskove-zpravy/aktualni-tiskove-zpravy/prezident-republiky-zaslal-blahoprejny-dopis-siru-nicholasi-wintonovi-10614> (accessed December 16, 2016).

98. Anna Hájková and Martin Šmok, "NAZOR: Česká pohádka o Wintonovi aneb holokaust s happy endem" (OPINION: The Czech fairy tale about Winton or the Holocaust with a happy ending), *Dnes*, November 9, 2014,

[http://zpravy.idnes.cz/nicholas-winton-glosa-anna-hajkova-martin-smok-flj-/domaci.aspx?c=A141106\\_101441\\_domaci\\_aha#utm\\_source=sph.idnes&utm\\_medium=richtext&utm\\_content=clanek-box](http://zpravy.idnes.cz/nicholas-winton-glosa-anna-hajkova-martin-smok-flj-/domaci.aspx?c=A141106_101441_domaci_aha#utm_source=sph.idnes&utm_medium=richtext&utm_content=clanek-box) (accessed November 12, 2014).

99. Press Kit for *Nicky's Family*, <http://www.menemshafilms.com/nickys-family> (accessed January 13, 2015); David Vaughn, "Matěj Mináč: Award-Winning Film Maker Who Proved His Mother Wrong," *Radio Praha*, February 10, 2003, <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/one-on-one/matej-minac-award-winning-film-maker-who-proved-his-mother-wrong> (accessed January 13, 2015); interview with Zuzana Mináčová, Centropa, <http://www.centropa.org/biography/zuzana-minacova#Post-war> (accessed January 13, 2015).

100. Interview with Zuzana Mináčová. Mináčová's father hid her and her sister in Slovakia during the war, but the sisters were eventually discovered and survived concentration and work camps in Sered, Auschwitz and Vrchlabi/Hohenelbe. Although her parents also survived, the rest of her very large extended family were murdered in the Holocaust.

101. Matej Mináč and Marie Formáčková, *Loterie života: Nicholase Wintona* (Lottery of life: Nicholas Winton) (Prague: WIP s.r.o, 2004), 49.

102. Tomáš Pavlíček and Ondřej Čihák, "Historici: Winton nebyl osamělý hrdina, a jeho příběh je českým alibi holokaustu" (Historians: Winton is not a lone hero and his story is a Czech alibi for the Holocaust), *Český rozhlas*, November 19, 2014, [http://www.rozhlas.cz/plus/proaproti/\\_zprava/1422267](http://www.rozhlas.cz/plus/proaproti/_zprava/1422267) (accessed January 25, 2015).

103. In *Nicky's Family* there is a recreation of Winton working in the Prague office with a man and a woman, who are presumably supposed to represent Chadwick and Warriner. Warriner is always at the typewriter in a secretarial role or looking awestruck/helpless/devoted to Winton. The Chadwick character acts as though he is following Winton's orders and directions. Both characters are clearly presented as being Winton's helpers and are never named.

104. Nicholas Winton mentioned his relatively minor role in several interviews and talks. See, for example, Nicholas Winton, recording of talk given to Maidenhead Rotary Club April 25, 1988, IWMSA/29697.

105. In practice, the BCRC and the RCM worked closely together.

106. Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992).

107. Robert M. Ehrenreich and Tim Cole, "The Perpetrator-Bystander-Victim Constellation: Rethinking Genocidal Relationships," *Human Organization* 64, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 213–24.

108. See, for example, Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, eds. *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008);

Peter Gatrell, *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

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