

# SAVING HANNO

A Refugee Boy And His Dog

by Miriam Halahmy

illustrations by  
Karin Littlewood



Otter-Barry

BOOKS

[www.otterbarrybooks.com](http://www.otterbarrybooks.com)

## TEACHERS' RESOURCES AND ACTIVITY NOTES

### About the book and historical background

Saving Hanno was inspired by the little-known story of the destruction of pets at the outbreak of WWII. Some 750,000 pets were put down in the first few weeks of the war. People believed they could not feed their pets when rationing started and that the dogs would go mad in the bombing and bite people. The government announced that pets would not be allowed in the public shelters.

In doing my research, I read the story of two German Jewish children who had a place on a train to escape the Nazis but couldn't bring their dog with them. They couldn't bear to be parted from her, so they wrote to a British animal charity and asked the charity to take their dog and pay for quarantine. The charity agreed and the dog came to England. My story about Rudi and his little dog, Hanno, was born.



Rudi and his sister came to England on one of the many trains which became known as the Kindertransport. After Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, life became very difficult for German Jews. Then on the night of November 9/10th 1938, Nazi gangs attacked Jews all over Germany. They killed almost a hundred and injured many more. The gangs set fire to synagogues and smashed the glass in Jewish shops and homes. This terrible night became known as Kristallnacht – the Night of Broken Glass. Kristallnacht was reported in newspapers all over the world. Jews in many countries became worried for the German Jews. British Jews and many non-Jewish people too asked the British Government to help the German Jews. The government agreed to allow Jewish children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia (which Hitler also controlled) to come to Britain. Altogether at least 10,000 children arrived in Britain on the Kindertransport before Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939 and all the transports stopped.

As my book is for young children, I have kept references to the Holocaust to the minimum. One decision I made was to include the enforced wearing of the yellow star. Although the Nazis planned to force all Jews to wear the star after Kristallnacht, it was not put into action until after the end of my book. However, I felt this powerful symbol of the Holocaust was less brutal for young children than many other scenes and images. The star is a good starting point for discussing the persecution of an entire people.

The Jewish children who had been rescued by the Kindertransport settled down and made lives for themselves in Britain. Sadly, most of their families perished in the Holocaust. But the children of the Kindertransport have never forgotten how Britain saved their lives and helped them take their places as British citizens.

There are thousands of refugee children in Europe today who have been sent away from home alone to save their lives.

People who benefited from the Kindertransport and their families have raised thousands of pounds to help some of these children come to the UK, just as they themselves were helped as desperate German Jewish children over seventy years ago.

I hope this book helps my readers understand the plight of all children who have to leave home alone to seek a place of safety.



# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

## Saving Hanno – book cover

Look at the cover of *Saving Hanno*.

- a) What is a refugee?
- b) Why is Hanno wearing a label around his neck?
- c) If you have read the book, which part of the story does the book cover show? (Teachers - This is the moment in London, when Hanno comes out of quarantine and he and Rudi are reunited.)

## HISTORY

1. Rudi has been stuck at home for weeks because of Kristallnacht.

- a) How did Rudi keep himself amused when he was stuck at home?
- b) Look at this picture from page 8. What does this illustration show?



- c) What would you do to keep occupied if you were stuck at home for weeks?

2. When Rudi and Emil go back to school, they are treated differently because they are German Jews.

- a) Why do you think Rudi wished he and Emil could join the Hitler Youth?

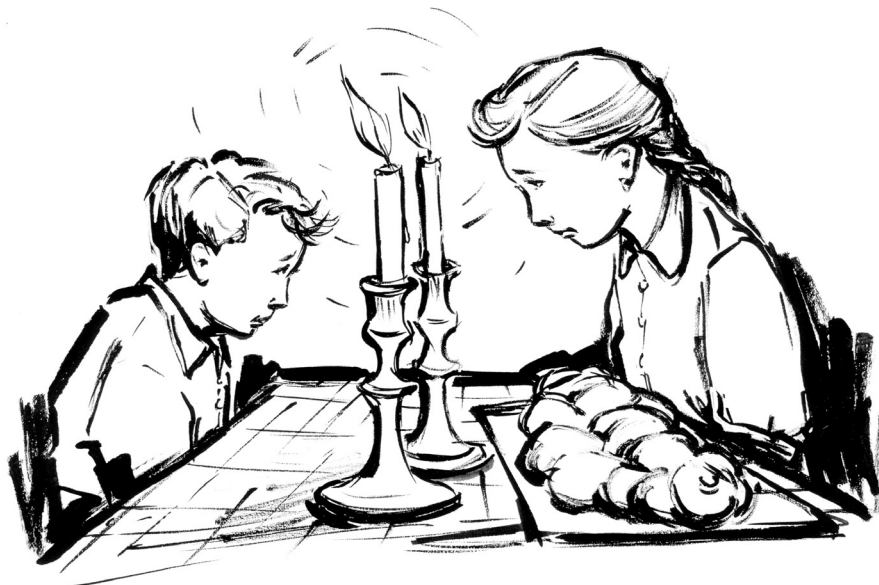


- b) Look at this picture from page 13. Can you see the Swastika symbol? Find out why that symbol was important in Nazi Germany.

- c) What do you think about the way the Nazi teacher treated Rudi and Emil?
- b) Why didn't Fraulein Becker protect them from the new teacher?
- c) What would you have done if you were Rudi and Emil?

**3. It is Friday night and Rudi and his family are observing the Jewish Sabbath.**

- a) Look at the picture on page 25. What Jewish symbols can you see in this picture?



- b) Rudi is told that he will go to England on a train because Jews are no longer welcome in Germany. Thousands of Jewish children from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were sent to England and other countries. This became known as The Kindertransport.
- c) Follow this link to find out some of the stories of the children who came to the UK : [https://www.het.org.uk/images/downloads/Exploring%20the%20Holocaust/C1\\_Britain\\_refugees\\_and\\_the\\_Kindertransport/Memories%20of%20the%20Kindertransport.pdf](https://www.het.org.uk/images/downloads/Exploring%20the%20Holocaust/C1_Britain_refugees_and_the_Kindertransport/Memories%20of%20the%20Kindertransport.pdf)
- d) From your research, write a letter home describing the journey and arriving in London.
- e) With a partner, prepare a short talk on what life was like for the children in their new homes.



# ART

1. Posters were very important in WW2. They provided a lot of information. They had very strong clear designs and many of them were printed in colour. Look up some of the posters which appeared in the UK in WW2. Which one do you like best?
2. Design a poster to tell people an important piece of information about life in WW2. (See attached examples : Photos of posters designed by English school children)



Posters by Y5 pupils, Highfield Primary School, Moortown, Leeds.

3. Design a poster for your school welcoming new children to help them feel at home.
4. **Note to Teachers :** *there are five pictures from the book in this activity pack. You are welcome to copy them for use in the classroom.*

## CREATIVE WRITING

1. Rudi and Lotte are told that they will be going to England on the train. Rudi's parents tell him that he will be like a pioneer, going first to find out everything and they will come later.

Rudi decides to keep notes for them on life in England.

- a) Read some of Rudi's notes. Make a list of things which are new to him. For example, tea with milk.
- b) Imagine a refugee child comes to live in your street and comes with you to school. What things might she/he write in her/his notebook which are special to the UK?
- c) If you suddenly had to leave your home and go and live in another country away from your family and friends, to keep you safe, what do you think you would miss? Write your own list.

2. Rudi is a German Jewish boy who comes to England to live with foster parents who are not Jewish. No one at school is Jewish either.

- a) What special things can you find out about being Jewish. For example : dietary laws, keeping the Sabbath, saying Hebrew prayers, going to synagogue, bar or bat mitzvah at age 13 years.
- b) Discuss with a partner how you think Rudi is treated? Does everyone in the book accept him or are some people nasty to him? Why might some people be nasty?

- c) Rudi is scared when they go to meet the Scouts. Why?

On page 86 the scoutmaster says,

“Did you come on the train from Germany?”

His eyes are fixed on me, but they're crinkled in a nice way.

I take a deep breath, and then I nod.

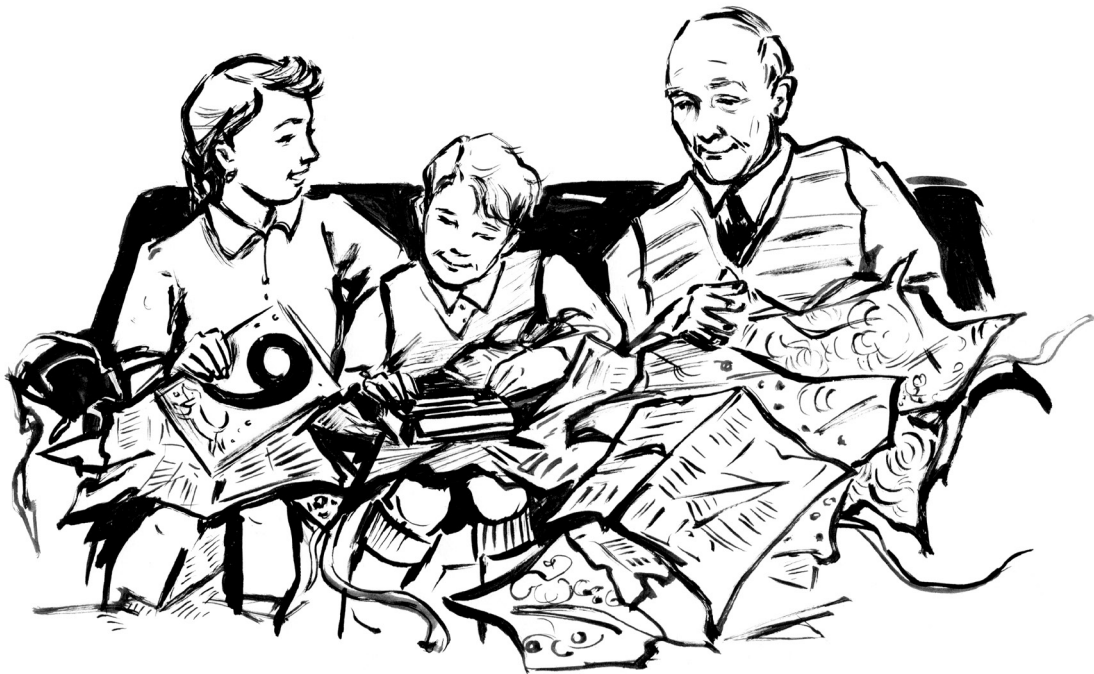
“Then I am even more pleased you have come to join us today,” he says.

Why is the scoutmaster pleased? Is the scoutmaster someone who ignores racism or stands up to it?



3. Imagine a new child comes to your school and he/she is bullied – perhaps because they come from another country or look different in some way. Would you walk past or would you stand up for the new child and help them?

- a) Discuss with your partner what you would choose to do.
- b) Write a diary entry about your decision and what happens as a result.



These notes are copyright © Otter-Barry Books 2021.

They may be downloaded free of charge for educational use in school and home.

Any form of commercial reproduction requires permission from the publishers:

please contact [info@otterbarrybooks.com](mailto:info@otterbarrybooks.com)