

RENIE INOW

- EASY TO READ LIFE STORY



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST



Key words

Jews: People who follow the religion of Judaism.

The Nazi party: The group who were in power in Germany from 1933 – 1945, led by Adolf Hitler.

Concentration camp: Places where the Nazis kept many people as prisoners. They were put there because the Nazis did not like them. In the camps people were forced to work as slaves or they were killed. There were many camps like this in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

Vermin: Animals such as rats which are thought of as dirty and carrying disease.

Kindertransport: A programme helping Jewish children to escape from the Nazis. It ran between November 1938 and September 1939.

The Holocaust: The attempt by the Nazis to kill all the Jews in Europe.

Renie Inow (*pronounced Renny*) was born in Germany in 1929. Renie lived with her father and mother, her sister Margalit and her brother Alfred. She and her family were **Jews**.

In 1939 Renie was ten years old. **The Nazi party** were the leaders of Germany. They thought that German people were better than Jewish people. They called Jewish people 'cockroaches' and '**vermin**'.

Renie's parents knew that they were in danger, and tried to leave Germany. Margalit was sent away to live in Sweden. Suddenly, Alfred was taken by the Nazis and sent to a **concentration camp**.

There were lots of stories that bad things were happening to Jewish people in concentration camps, so the family was very scared for Alfred.

Renie's parents were desperate to get her out of Germany to a safer place. They found out about the **Kindertransport**. This programme was helping children to escape and come and live in Britain, but their parents could not go with them. Renie had to leave Germany and travel to England on her own. She was 10 years old.

About 10,000 children from Germany and other countries were sent away from their families and came to Great Britain on the *Kindertransport*.

After Renie left, World War Two started and it was much harder for Jewish people to leave Germany. Renie's parents were stuck there.

Renie began a new life in England, living with her Aunt Hedwig. She received many letters from her parents in Germany, which she still has today.

The journey for many of the children on the *Kindertransport* was scary. Renie's father wanted to hear all about it. He said in a letter to her:

'We are looking forward to reading your report about the journey, how you travelled, what you saw, how long you were on the way and where you stayed overnight. And what do you think of the sea and the large ships?'

Renie's brother Alfred, was released from the concentration camp in 1940 and managed to leave Germany and join her in England.

Life was hard for Renie's parents in Germany. However in all their letters they wanted to sound positive, so that Renie would not worry about them.

On Renie's birthday she received a letter from her parents, including this message from her mother:

'My dear Renie, my very best wishes for your birthday. May you remain lovable and happy and a source of joy to everybody. Father and I think of you all the time.'

The Nazis tried to kill all the Jewish people in Europe. This is known as **the Holocaust**. People like Renie and her brother and sister were lucky that they got away in time. By the end of the war, the Nazis had killed six million Jews, including Renie's parents.

Renie kept writing letters to her sister and brother. She has lived in Britain ever since. She trained as a tailor and dress maker. She has travelled back to her home town in Germany to tell school children there her story.

Find out more...

The Holocaust: hmd.org.uk/holocaust

The *Kindertransport*: hmd.org.uk/kindertransport

Other resources for educators: hmd.org.uk/educators