

RENIE INOW



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Renie Inow was 10 years old when she travelled alone on the *Kindertransport* in 1939, leaving her parents behind in Germany. She continued to receive letters from them until 1939. Renie still has these letters, and some of them are shared here.



'When I said goodbye to my parents at Cologne train station, although there were many parents and children around I can only remember my parents and looking at their faces and thinking I might never see them again.'

Renie Inow (*pronounced Renny*) was born in Wuppertal, Germany in 1929 and was raised in a traditional Jewish family. Born to her father Max and mother Beatrice, she had an older sister, Margalit and brother, Alfred.

When Renie was six years old, her sister was sent to live in Sweden, where she remained until the end of the war. Renie's parents, understanding that their future might be in danger, decided the safest place for the family was away from Germany, so they tried to find ways to leave.

In 1939, tensions in Germany were high. The Nazis had been making life difficult for the Jewish population for a long time, but it was getting steadily worse. Renie remembers the feeling of hate that was building towards the Jews.

When Renie's brother Alfred was sent to Dachau concentration camp, the family feared the worst. Her parents were able to get a visa for Renie to leave Germany and travel to England on her own on the *Kindertransport*. She was 10 years old.

The *Kindertransport* was a unique humanitarian programme which ran between November 1938 and September 1939. Approximately 10,000 children, the majority of whom were Jewish, were sent away from their homes and families in Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and went to Great Britain.

Renie began her new life in England, living with her Aunt Hedwig and her three cousins. She received many letters from her parents in Germany, which she treasured and still has in her possession today. From the letters they exchanged, we are able to tell a lot about Renie's life as a *Kindertransportee*.

We know that the journey for Jewish children was daunting and scary. Renie's father wanted to hear all about it. For many children it was the first time they would be away from their parents. 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? The ships are much bigger than those you have seen on the Rhein.'

Renie's brother Alfred was released from Dachau concentration camp and allowed to join her in England in 1940.

Although life was very difficult for Renie's parents in Germany, in all their letters they wanted to maintain a positive tone of voice, so that Renie would not worry about them. A lot of the letters they sent were censored: the Nazis didn't want people outside the country to get any information about what was happening or what conditions were like for Jewish people. Therefore in their written exchanges they often recounted the times they spent together before the war. Her father wrote:

'Do you remember our prank with the blueberries? We sometimes used to buy some fruit before we returned home from our rambles in order to show Mother how much we had picked. A pity only that we could not keep our secret and soon we had to admit to Mother that we had cheated.'

The first birthday that Renie spent in England was bittersweet, and she received letters from many of her family members. Her mother wrote:

'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.'

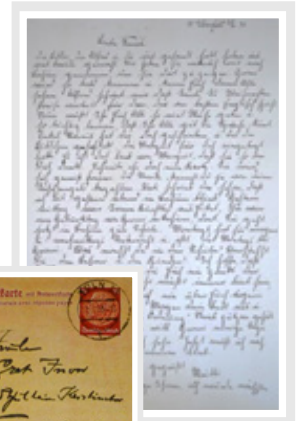
A few months after Renie moved to London, she was one of many children evacuated from the city to the countryside, away from the danger of Nazi air raids. Despite living safely in Hertfordshire and later in Worcestershire, Renie still felt isolated, and that no one understood what she was feeling. She recalls:

'I remember Mr and Mrs Barnes asking if I wanted to call them Mum and Dad. I was shocked as I wasn't ready to stop thinking about my mother and father in Germany. I resolved to call them 'Mum and Dad' but the words would mean the same as 'Mary and John' to me. I was living inside a bubble where I never felt like I fitted in.'

Renie stopped receiving letters from her parents in September 1939. She and her siblings did not know why. Her mother and father had been transported to Nazi-occupied Poland. In 1941, they were taken from the Łódź Ghetto and murdered.

After the war Renie moved back to London from Worcestershire and completed a course in tailoring and learned dress making and cutting, although she did not enjoy this. She continued to write letters to her sister and brother. Later in her life she spent time in Israel and visited her home town of Wuppertal in Germany to tell her story to groups of schoolchildren.

The letters between Renie and her parents help us to think about what life was like for Jewish children who came to Britain in the war and what it was like for those who stayed in Germany and other Nazi-occupied countries.






Find out more...

The Holocaust: hmd.org.uk/holocaust

The Kindertransport: hmd.org.uk/kindertransport

hmd.org.uk
enquiries@hmd.org.uk
020 7785 7029

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Learning lessons from the past to create a safer better future

RENIE INOW



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH
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Roedd Renie Inow'n 10 oed pan deithiodd ar ei phen ei hun ar y *Kindertransport* ym 1939, gan adael ei rhieni ar ôl yn yr Almaen. Parhaodd i dderbyn llythyrau ganddyn nhw nes 1939. Mae gan Renie'r llythyrau hyn o hyd ac mae rhai ohonyn nhw'n cael eu rhannu yma.



*'pan ffarweliais â fy rhieni yng ngorsaf
drenau Cologne, er bod yna lawer o rieni a
phlant yno, yr unig gof sydd gen i yw fy
rhieni a'u hwynebau a meddwl efallai na
welwn i fyth mohonyn nhw eto'*

Ganwyd Renie Inow (*sy'n cael ei ynganu fel Renny*) yn Wuppertal, yr Almaen ym 1929. Fe'i magwyd mewn teulu Iddewig traddodiadol, gyda'i thad, Max, ei mam, Beatrice, a'i chwaer a'i brawd hŷn, Margalit ac Alfred.

Pan oedd Renie'n chwech oed, cafodd ei chwaer ei hanfon i Sweden, ac yno y bu nes diwedd y rhyfel. Roedd rhieni Renie yn sylweddoli eu bod nhw mewn perygl felly dyma nhw'n penderfynu y byddai'r teulu'n fwy diogel i ffwrdd o'r Almaen ac felly fe aethon nhw ati i chwilio am ffyrdd o adael.

Ym 1939, roedd llawer iawn o densiwn yn yr Almaen. Roedd y Natsïaid wedi bod yn gwneud bywyd yn anodd iawn i'r boblogaeth Iddewig, ond roedd pethau'n raddol waethygu. Mae Renie'n cofio'r teimlad o atgasedd a oedd yn tyfu tuag at Iddewon.

Pan gafodd Alfred, brawd Renie, ei anfon i wersyll crynhoi Dachau, roedd y teulu'n ofni'r gwaethaf. Llwyddodd ei rhieni i gael fisa i Renie allu gadael yr Almaen a theithio i Loegr ar ei phen ei hun ar y *Kindertransport*. Roedd hi'n 10 oed.

Roedd y *Kindertransport* yn rhaglen ddyngarol unigryw a fu ar waith rhwng Tachwedd 1938 a Medi 1939. Cafodd tua 10,000 o blant, y mwyafrif yn Iddewon, eu hanfon o'u cartrefi a'u teuluoedd yn yr Almaen, Awstria a Tsiecoslofacia, i Brydain.

Dechreuodd Renie ei bywyd newydd yn Lloegr, yn byw gyda'i modryb Hedwig a'i thri chefnider. Derbyniodd lawer o llythyrau gan ei rhieni yn yr Almaen. Roedd hi'n trysori'r llythyrau ac mae wedi dal gafael arnynt hyd heddiw. O ddarllen y llythyrau rhyngddynt, gallwn ddysgu llawer am fywyd Renie fel *Kindertransportee*.

Gwyddom fod y daith i blant Iddewig yn un llawn ofn a phryder. Roedd tad Renie eisiau clywed popeth am y daith. I lawer o blant, dyma'r tro cyntaf iddyn nhw fod i ffwrdd o'u rhieni. Meddai ei thad mewn llythyr ati:

'Rydym ni'n edrych ymlaen at ddarllen hanes y daith, sut gwnest ti deithio, beth welaist ti, am faint fuest ti'n teithio a ble arhosaist ti dros nos. A beth wyt ti'n meddwl am y môr a'r llongau mawr? Mae'r llongau'n fwy o lawer na'r rhai rwy'ti wedi'u gweld ar y Rhein'

Cafodd Alfred, brawd Renie, ei ryddhau o wersyll crynhoi Dachau ac ymunodd â hi yn Lloegr ym 1940.

Er bod bywyd yn anodd iawn i rieni Renie yn yr Almaen, roedden nhw am swnio'n bositif yn eu llythyrau i gyd fel na fyddai Renie yn poeni amdanyn nhw. Cafodd llawer o'r llythyrau yr anfonon nhw eu sensro: doedd y Natsïaid ddim eisiau i bobl y tu allan i'r wlad gael unrhyw wybodaeth am yr hyn oedd yn digwydd neu sut amodau oedd yn wynebu'r bobl Iddewig. Felly yn eu llythyron bydden nhw'n aml yn sôn am yr amser iddyn nhw ei dreulio gyda'i gilydd cyn y rhyfel. Ysgrifennodd ei thad:

'Wyt ti'n cofio'r tric gyda'r llus? Weithiau bydden ni'n prynu ffrwyth ar y ffordd adre ar ôl bod am dro er mwyn dangos i Mam faint roedden ni wedi'i gasglu. Trueni nad oedden ni'n gallu cadw'r gyfrinach a'n bod ni wedi gorfod cyfaddef i Mam ein bod ni wedi twyllo.'

Roedd y pen-blwydd cyntaf a dreuliodd Renie yn Lloegr yn un chwerw-felys, a derbyniodd llythyron gan sawl aelod o'r teulu. Ysgrifennodd ei mam:

'Fy annwyl Renie, dymuniadau gorau ar gyfer dy ben-blwydd. Boed i ti aros yn annwyl ac yn hapus a dod â llawenydd i bawb. Mae dy dad a minnau'n meddwl amdanat drwy'r amser.'

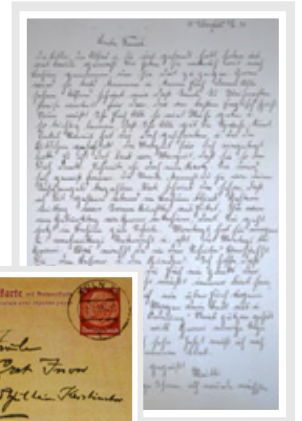
Rai misoedd ar ôl i Renie symud i Lundain, cafodd hi a llawer o blant eraill eu symud o'r ddinas i'r wlad, i ffordd oddi wrth ymosodiadau'r Natsïaid o'r awyr. Er iddi fyw'n ddiogel yn Swydd Hertford ac yna yn Swydd Gaerwrangon, roedd Renie'n dal i deimlo'n unig, ac yn teimlo nad oedd unrhyw un deall sut roedd hi'n teimlo. Mae'n cofio:

'Rwy'n cofio Mr a Mrs Barnes yn gofyn i fi a o'n i am eu galw nhw'n Mam a Dad. Cefais sioc oherwydd doeddwn i ddim yn barod i stopio meddwl am fy mam a 'nhad yn yr Almaen. Penderfynais eu galw nhw'n 'Mam a Dad' ond byddai'r geiriau'n golygu'r un fath â 'Mair a Jac' i fi. Roeddwn i'n byw mewn breuddwyd a ddim yn teimlo fy mod i'n perthyn.'

Ni chafodd Renie ragor o llythyrau gan eu rhieni ar ôl Medi 1939. Doedd hi a'i brawd a chwaer ddim yn gwybod pam. Roedd ei mam a'i thad wedi cael eu cludo i Wlad Pwyl a oedd yn nwylo'r Natsïaid. Ym 1941, cawsant eu cymryd o Geto Łódź a'u llofruddio.

Ar ôl y rhyfel, symudodd Renie yn ôl i Lundain o Swydd Gaerwrangon a chwblhaodd gwrs teilwra a dysgodd sut i wnïo dillad a chreu patrymau dillad, ond doedd hi ddim yn mwynhau'r gwaith. Daliodd i ysgrifennu at ei chwaer a'i brawd. Maes o law treuliodd amser yn Israel ac aeth yn ôl i'r dref lle'i magwyd, Wuppertal yn yr Almaen, i rannu ei hanes gyda phlant ysgol.

Mae'r llythyron rhwng Renie a'i rhieni yn ein helpu i feddwl sut beth oedd bywyd i'r plant Iddewig ddaeth i Brydain yn ystod y rhyfel a sut beth oedd bywyd i'r rheini a arhosodd yn yr Almaen ac mewn gwledydd eraill a oedd yn nwylo'r Natsïaid.



Am fwy o wybodaeth...

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enquiries@hmd.org.uk
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Dysgu gwersi o'r gorffennol er mwyn creu dyfodol gwell a mwy Diogel