

Context card 5: After the War: Windermere



Jewish child Holocaust Survivors in Prague en route to the Lake District in 1945

The Second World War in Europe ended with the surrender of Nazi Germany in May 1945. From across Europe six million Jewish people had been murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators. 90% of all Jewish children in Europe had lost their lives. For the very few child survivors they would have to rebuild their lives without family, friends and the communities into which they had been born. After six years of brutal treatment and trauma they were in desperate need of care, nurture and help.

In June 1945 the British government agreed that one thousand orphans under the age of sixteen could be brought to Britain to receive the care that they so desperately needed. A Jewish organisation, the Central British Fund, were to make the arrangements and provide the necessary care. At first the British Army reported that there were no Jewish children left



alive in Europe. Eventually a UN relief organisation found a group of 300 children in Theresienstadt. On 11th August 1945 these children were taken by train to Prague, Czechoslovakia from where they would be flown to England (see image).

On the 14th August 1945, 260 boys and 40 girls would board 10 Lancaster bomber planes for their flight to England and freedom. They would be the first group of a total of 732 Jewish children who would come to Britain after the war. This first group of 300 would recuperate near Lake Windermere in the Lake District, living at the Calgarth Estate, where they stayed for around three months.

During their stay at Windermere, the children would receive the education that had been denied to them for so long. Medical treatment and physical and psychological support was available to help them to recover from the years of trauma and brutality that they had endured. By the spring of 1946 more than half of the 732 Jewish children remained in Britain. Other survivors would settle in countries such as Israel, the United States and Canada.

