

Ann Kirk born in Berlin, Germany, 1928:

Well, I remember mum and dad talking to each other about it and to their friends. That for Jews, Germany was beginning to become a country not very safe to live in. I always wondered, 'Safe? What does that really mean?'

Discuss:

1. Why do you think Ann and her family started to feel unsafe?
2. What do you think it means to be safe in your home country?

Connecting Questions:

1. Why was life starting to change for Jews?
2. What does this tell us about how the Holocaust developed?

Bob Kirk, born Hamburg Germany, 1925:

We were quite a good group of friends. Probably about 3 or 4, who were quite good friends of mine. But whether it was the influence of the rest of the class or the direct instructions from their family or teachers, I don't know. But this happened almost overnight, that literally they turned their backs on me. I knew what was happening of course, by then, but it was hurtful. Certainly, one of them, was one of the leading lads in any bullying that occurred. He became a leader in his troop in the Hitler Youth.

Discuss:

1. How does Bob describe this experience?
2. What can this tell us about how life began to change/be torn apart for Jewish people?

Connecting Question:

1. Who are the main perpetrators in this extract?
2. What can this tell us about the spread of antisemitism in Nazi society?

Ann Kirk, born in Berlin, Germany, 1928:

Once the anti-Jewish laws were published ... they were known everywhere in the post boxes, in the street, on the radio, all very well-known what Hitler thought about the Jews. When that became obvious, it gave one a very uneasy feeling.... You never, never made public that you were Jewish. It was a bit scary for a child under 10, it was scary.

Discuss:

1. How was Ann, at the age of 10, impacted by Anti-Jewish laws?

Connecting Question:

1. Anti-Jewish Laws impacted Jewish people of all ages. What can this tell us about Nazi antisemitism?

Vera Schaufeld, born Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1930:

One day my parents were out of the house and my grandmother, and I were alone when suddenly there was a loud knocking on the door. My grandmother opened the door and I remember standing behind her and two German soldiers were outside, and they had guns, and I was terrified. They didn't say anything, they just marched into our house and took away our radio.

Discuss:

1. Why did the Nazis ban and take away radios?

Connecting Questions:

1. Where is Vera from?
2. What can this tell us about the spread of antisemitism and the development of the Holocaust?

Bob Kirk:

Why didn't they leave? Well, my father resisted that idea and he'd fought in the first world war, been wounded 3 times, and had a medal to show for that. You've got the Iron Cross, another medal, he could trace his family back to 1698. He saw himself as a good German who happened to be Jewish, why would he leave his homeland?

Discuss:

1. Why didn't Bob's family want to leave Germany?

Connecting Questions:

1. What can this tell us about Jewish identity in Germany?
2. Can this tell us anything about Jewish identity across Europe?

Ann Kirk:

In the morning, I dressed in warm clothes or rather, I was dressed in warm clothes, each with rucksacks on our backs, and off we went. And we walked and walked, went on the underground, went on buses, always on the move. And when I asked my father why we were always on the move because it wasn't normal, my father said, because many Jewish men were being arrested, taken, and he hoped that being constantly on the move, not just walking, but on buses, ... the underground. Keeping very close together, hoping the Nazis wouldn't come for him.

Discuss:

1. Why were Jewish men more at risk?

Connecting Questions:

1. What does this tell us about Jews' experience of displacement?
2. What did this kind of life – being constantly on the move – mean for Jewish families? (i.e. sacrifice, separation etc).

Manfred Goldberg:

We lived in an apartment in a block of six apartments. There was only one other Jewish family in the building, the rest were non-Jewish Germans. And one of these neighbours was a non-Jewish German policeman. ... And my father told me ...that prior to Kristallnacht, this policeman had met my father on the stairs, and had whispered to him that he could not go into any detail, but it would be in my father's interest to disappear for a while. And my father took the hint and disappeared.

Discuss:

1. What can this suggest about Kristallnacht?

Connecting Question:

1. Is this an example of rescue?
2. What can this tell us about the different roles people played in the Holocaust?

Vera Schaufeld:

... German soldiers were standing there and all the parents had to stand behind barriers while the children got on the train and then we crowded to the window and we waved goodbye to our parents. I remember they waved white handkerchiefs and we looked out of the window and that was the last time I and nearly all the children on the train ever saw our parents again.

Discuss:

1. What do you think were some of the challenges parents/families faced when deciding to send their children on the Kindertransport?
2. Why do you think parents had to be kept behind a barrier?

Connecting Questions:

1. Why do you think rescue efforts were so difficult to organise?