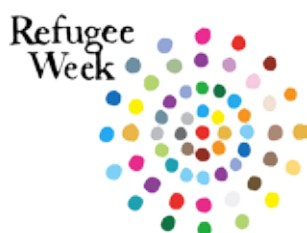


# REFUGEE WEEK

## 17-23 JUNE 2013

CELEBRATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS  
OF REFUGEES TO OUR HISTORY  
AND HERITAGE

[REFUGEEWEEK.ORG.UK](http://REFUGEEWEEK.ORG.UK)



# Foreword

Almir Koldzic  
Counterpoints Arts

Refugee Week is an annual programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contributions of refugees to British life. Established in 1998 in order to counter negative and one-dimensional representations of refugees, Refugee Week remains the only UK-wide event that highlights the rich cultural and artistic contributions of refugees in order to create a culture of welcome and recognition.

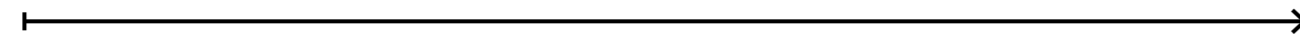
The theme of Refugee Week 2013 is Our History and Heritage. To mark the theme this year we have commissioned a survey asking people from across the country to tell us what in their opinion are the most significant contributions that refugees have made to the UK. The following report provides an overview of the survey findings and includes a few insightful responses by guest contributors. The one finding that has resonated most with us is that the huge majority of participants want our future generations to be better educated about Britain's tradition in providing sanctuary and the benefits that this has brought to both refugee and host communities.

In relation to this specific finding, this year we have launched an online interactive timeline that charts refugee movements to the UK throughout centuries. The timeline also provides examples of how refugees and their descendants have made and continue to make significant contributions to our arts, culture, science, sports, literature, business and enterprise. Hampton Court Palace, the Bank of England, Radar and the Paralympics are but a few examples of these contributions. We hope that over the next few years, the timeline will grow into a living archive, or a space where people come to learn, share and exchange memories and personal stories about refugee experiences in their families, local histories and neighborhoods. As David Aaronovitch reminds us in his contribution to this report, individual and collective experiences and contributions of refugees, 'some heroic, some pathetic, some ending in success and others in obscurity' - hold significance and importance in our shared history and heritage.

By initiating this process of gathering stories and memories relating to refugee experiences in the UK, we hope to make our small contribution to what TJ Demos\* calls the creation of 'collective counter-memory' - a practice of memory formation that 'runs counter to the official histories of governments, mainstream mass media, and the society of the spectacle'. By encouraging people to remember and share the forgotten and excluded stories of refugees in the UK, we hope to develop a space of collective re-learning, where a more inclusive vision of our history and heritage can inspire us to work actively towards creating a better society in the future.

For more information, please visit  
[www.refugeeweektimeline.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweektimeline.org.uk)

\*TJ Demos, Sites of Collective Counter-Memory, 2012  
[www.animateprojects.org/writing/essays/tj\\_demos](http://www.animateprojects.org/writing/essays/tj_demos)



## Northern Tribes People Flee to Roman Britain

A breakdown down in society in what is now modern day Scotland caused tribes people north of Hadrian's Wall to flee south seeking the protection of the Romans. Archaeologists believe they were housed in a refugee camp. The camp is located in a Roman fortress called Vindolanda and was discovered in 2011 during an archaeological dig. The director of excavations on the dig that discovered them explained: 'It would make sense to bring refugees behind the curtain of Hadrian's Wall to protect them for so long as fighting continued. They would have had real value to the Romans who always protected anyone and anything valuable to them.'



## Huguenots Arrive at English Ports

Some 100,000 French Protestants, known as Huguenots, fled to Britain and Ireland from the persecution of Louis XIV in late 17th Century. They settled in London, Bristol, Canterbury, Dover, Ipswich, Exeter, Norwich, Plymouth, Rye, Southampton, Derry and Dublin. They engaged in numerous activities: the art of silk weaving, copper engraving, hat making and bleaching, dyeing and colouring.

# The Rewards of taking in the Persecuted

David Aaronovitch

## 1880

Thousands of Russian Jews flee pogroms and seek sanctuary in Britain



During the 1880s, tens of thousands of Russian Jews fled pogroms and sought sanctuary in Britain. The influx sparked the first attempts by the UK to limit the ability of exiles to find sanctuary in the country. In 1905 the *Aliens Act* was passed marking an end to liberal acceptance of foreigners. However, an amendment to the act excluded refugees from being refused asylum on the grounds of not being able to support themselves. Jewish refugees left a legacy of economic contribution to the UK. Many became tailors or shoe-makers.

Whatever else he was Sigmund Freud was a safe bet. When the Father of Psychoanalysis arrived in London from a newly Nazi Vienna, he was 81 and world-famous. The authorities didn't have to worry about him earning his keep and his admittance to Britain was consequently no problem.

But before and after Freud came many other people seeking a place of safety, whose future contribution to the life of Britain was very uncertain. Accompanying him, for example, was his daughter Anna, then in her early 40s. Between 1938 and her death in 1982 Anna Freud was to become a pioneer in child psychoanalysis and to have an enormous influence on the practice and study of child psychology.

Karl Marx was a penurious revolutionary when he exiled himself in London and took up his famous seat at the British Library. The novelist Victor Hugo was hardly known when in 1851 he fled the new Emperor of the French, Napoleon's vainglorious nephew Louis-Napoleon, and spent the next 20 years writing great works - including *Les Miserables* - on Guernsey.

These are celebrated cases, but what about Sukhpal Singh Ahluwalia, one of the Asians forced out of Uganda in 1972 by Idi Amin. Many Britons were opposed to letting the Ugandan Asians come here, arguing that the country had no obligation to let them in. Sukhpal was 13 when he arrived and his first jobs were working on market stalls in London's East End. At 18 he bought a bankrupt car parts shop in North London, borrowing the money from his parents. Today his business has 132 branches, an annual turnover of £400 million and he himself is worth £300 million. I had never heard of him before he appeared on *The Sunday Times Rich List*.

The big success stories are easy to tell: Alec Issigonis, Greek refugee from the 20s who contributed the shape of the Mini to the streets of the world, or the Nobel Prize-winning physicist Max Born. But there are hundreds of thousands of other less well-known stories: some heroic, some pathetic, some ending in success and others in obscurity. Many refugees coming to Britain have a legacy of trauma or violence from which they have to recover. The actual escape from persecution or threat is only the first step they have to take in a long, difficult journey.

*But the rewards to the receiving country of taking in the persecuted are immeasurable. There is the knowledge of having acted morally towards other human beings, which is itself priceless. And then there are the countless other benefits - tangible and intangible - that the refugees and their children and their children's children, just by their existence, create for all of us.*



Greece and Turkey Go to War Over Territory Dispute Following the First World War

Following Turkey's defeat in the First World War Greece sought to acquire territory at its expense. An initially successful invasion was eventually repulsed with no Greek territorial gains. Hundreds of thousands of refugees were created by this conflict.

# What Britain thinks about refugees

Britain has historically enjoyed a proud tradition of welcome. For millennia, people fleeing persecution or conflict have regarded the United Kingdom as a safe haven and place of sanctuary.

To mark the 15th anniversary of Refugee Week under the theme of Our History and Heritage, a representative sample of the general public were asked about their views on the contributions that prominent refugees have made to British society over the years.

Overall, Sigmund Freud was perceived to be the most popular refugee to make a significant contribution to British life. The Viennese psychoanalyst, who came to the UK in the late 1930s to escape Nazism, was voted as the nation's favourite with half of respondents registering the father of psychology as their first preference.

Freud was followed by Max Born, the German physicist who was awarded a Nobel Prize for his contribution to the development of quantum mechanics, who polled nearly a quarter (21%) of votes in the national survey. Meanwhile, one in ten respondents cited the French refugee and writer of *Les Misérables*, Victor Hugo, who settled in the UK after fleeing persecution during the days of Napoleon as their top choice.

The survey revealed that refugee contributions to science and technology broadly received higher levels of recognition than more recent contributions made in the field of the creative industries and sport. The invention of radar during the war, developed in part by another

Viennese Jew, Hermann Bondi, was regarded as one of the greatest 20th century contributions to British life with 44 per cent share of the vote.

Not surprisingly the nation's longstanding love for fish and chips, first introduced to the UK by French protestant refugees and Jewish settlers from Portugal, received 17 per cent. The famous high street department store Marks & Spencer, co-founded by Russian refugee Michael Marks, ranked third place with 11 per cent.

Contemporary refugee figures such as Fabrice Muamba, the former Bolton Wanderers footballer who fled the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rita Ora, the Kosovan singer-songwriter who moved to the UK with her family during the Balkan conflict in the nineties, polled six and four per cent respectively.

A vast majority (94%) believe that children should be taught the important role that the UK has played in protecting refugees throughout the centuries in schools. This clearly demonstrates that public opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of celebrating Britain's tradition of welcome for generations to come.

Britain Thinks conducted the Refugee Week 2013 online poll in two waves with 2012 respondents between 26-28th April and 2053 people from 7-9th June, 2013. The results have been weighted to be representative of the national population. Percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest point for comparative purposes.

## What Britain thinks about refugees

Is it important to teach children the full history of Britain, including the role we have played in protecting refugees?



Which refugee has made the most significant contribution to British life?

50%\*\*



**Sigmund Freud**  
Founding father of psychoanalysis – fled Nazi persecution in Austria

21%\*\*



**Max Born**  
Nobel prize-winning physicist – escaped anti-semitism in Germany

10%\*\*



**Victor Hugo**  
Writer of *Les Misérables* – fled persecution in France

Which invention by a refugee in the UK has made the greatest contribution to British life?

44%\*



**Radar**  
Partly developed by Hermann Bondi – fled Nazi persecution in Austria

17%\*



**Fish & chips**  
A fusion of traditions of French Protestant and Portuguese Jewish refugees

11%\*



**Marks & Spencer**  
Co-founded by Russian refugee Michael Marks

Source: Results from an online poll conducted by Britain Thinks. The data was weighted to be representative of the national population  
\*poll of 2012 people between 26 and 28 April 2013 \*\*poll of 2053 people between 7 and 9 June 2013

# Britain's First Refugees – The Huguenots

A conversation with Huguenot expert Professor Robin Gwynn

The Huguenots have sometimes been called Britain's first refugees. It is not that they were the first people ever to flee persecution and come to England, but they were the first to come in great numbers. They also gave a name to those seeking sanctuary, les rés or refugees.

Many people in England today still bear Huguenot names. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby takes his middle name Portal, a Huguenot name, from his mother. The current Bishop of London, Richard Chartres is also of Huguenot origin as is UKIP leader Nigel Farage.

Huguenots were Protestants fleeing persecution by the Catholic kings of France. They started coming in the 1680s and under the rule of Louis XIV around 50,000 came to England. By that time Louis had set up a system of dragoons which meant that soldiers came and occupied and pillaged the houses of French Protestants and only allowed them freedom when they agreed to convert to Catholicism.

Britain of course then one of the nearest safe countries, and it was also a Protestant country and even more so after 1687 when James II issued his Declaration of Indulgence, which reassured them that the religious conditions were acceptable.

Huguenots were also skilled artisans and weavers, unlike much of the agrarian English population. They came and settled in cities, often occupying whole quarters, like Spitalfields in London. They made dresses in fashionable French styles, were silversmiths and watchmakers. Some were lawyers, doctors and clergymen with a sprinkling of nobles. Many others either joined households where they could get some menial employment or became soldiers.

Although there was some hostility to this huge influx of foreigners, and the English had never liked the French, there were also strong arguments in favour of the Huguenots. Plenty of Englishmen were prepared to make

arguments in favour of them like Sir William Petty and others who said that manpower provided by refugees was invaluable.

But the English also positively welcomed many of the French Protestants. They made generous house-to-house collections for them in every parish in the country.

Professor Robin Gwynn, the eminent historian of the subject, argues there were strong political reasons why the English welcomed Huguenots with such alacrity.

Anti-popey ran deep in the country and had been nurtured for 150 years, through the Stuarts, the gunpowder plot and Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

The English did not want to go back to a period when Protestants were persecuted. The Huguenots amongst them were a constant reminder of what militant anti-protestantism meant in France, and also a reminder to them what might happen if a Catholic monarch started persecution in England.

This didn't mean that the English welcomed all foreigners. The Huguenots' welcome was in marked contrast to the distrust towards the poorer and less educated Protestant palatines from northern Germany who also came as refugees a few decades later, but whose persecution did not seem so relevant to the political situation in Britain. Though welcomed by some as cheap labour, they were treated by others as economic migrants, especially when there were Catholics found among them. Many eventually emigrated to America.

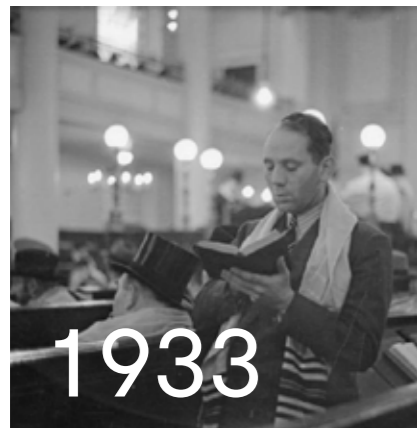
Professor Gwynn says that only the Jewish refugees of the 1930s were so welcomed and accepted and argues that this was because they were victims of a kind of persecution which the British understood and with which they in some way empathised: the British were afraid too that the Nazis would invade and persecute them similarly. Sympathy multiplies also argues Professor Gwynn when

it is evident to the host nation that those being persecuted are not only not allowed to stay without persecution, but also not allowed to leave.

And this insight might well explain why the British public today is still so positive about Austrian Jewish refugees and the contribution they have made to this country.

Today we tend to think of refugees as people who come from countries far away, who are facing political problems we do not understand. We forget often that most refugees go to the country next door to where they are being persecuted, as we are seeing in the countries surrounding Syria now who are hosting more than a million refugees.

But the Huguenot and recent European Jewish experience also demonstrates how important it is for us to comprehend and empathise with people forced to become refugees in Britain. And that it is important that their plight is defended and debated publicly and politically.



## Jews and Other Targets of the Regime flee Germany after Nazi Party Comes to Power

Many refugees from the Nazis went on to make notable contributions to British cultural and intellectual life. Such contributors include: Sigmund Freud commonly regarded as the father of psychoanalysis; Professor Max Born quantum mathematician and noble prize winner (1954); physicist Herman Bondi who improved radar; Professor Sir Ludwig Guttmann a neurologist who founded the Paralympic games in England and Judith Kerr beloved children's authors who work include, *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*, *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* and the *Mog* series.



## Basque children flee General Franco's Spain

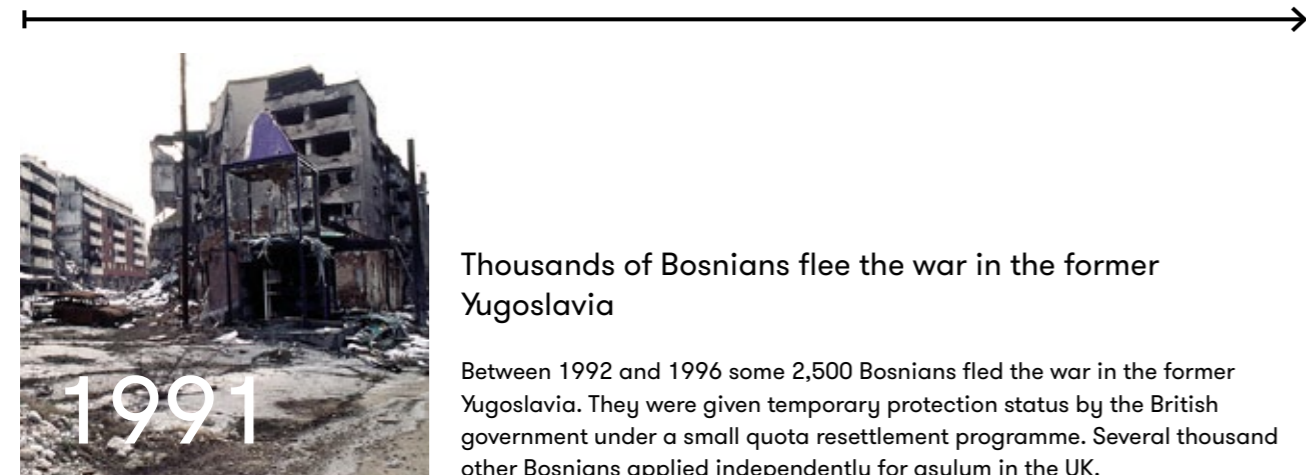
Some 4,000 Basque refugee children fleeing General Franco's fascism in the Spanish Civil War arrived in the UK. There was huge public sympathy for the children who were housed initially in the North Stoneham Camp in Eastleigh, near Southampton.

# Survey Results

Well-known refugees who have all been offered protection from persecution by Britain throughout our history. Top mention of refugees whose contribution has made the most significant impact on Britain.

- 50% Sigmund Freud  
The father of psychoanalysis who came to Britain escaping Nazi persecution.
- 21% Max Born  
Nobel prize winner and physicist, refugee from Germany.
- 10% Victor Hugo  
Writer of Les Miserables, a French refugee fleeing persecution from Napoleon.
- 5% Fabrice Muamba  
England Under 21s and Bolton Wanderers footballer, who fled persecution in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- 4% Rita Ora  
Singersongwriter managed by rapper Jay-Z, a refugee from Kosovo who moved to Britain with her family.
- 3% Judith Kerr  
Children's author, whose books include Mog and Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit, a German refugee.
- 3% Charles Angibaud  
Apothecary to Charles II, refugee from France.
- 2% M.I.A.  
Hip-hop musician and Slumdog Millionaire soundtrack singer, who is a Sri Lankan refugee
- 1% Luol Deng  
Team GB basketball player, who fled from Sudan as a child.

Source: BritainThinks polling carried out between 7 and 9 June 2013. Sample size 2053



## Thousands of Bosnians flee the war in the former Yugoslavia

Between 1992 and 1996 some 2,500 Bosnians fled the war in the former Yugoslavia. They were given temporary protection status by the British government under a small quota resettlement programme. Several thousand other Bosnians applied independently for asylum in the UK.

Inventions made by refugees who have come to Britain throughout history. Top invention which made the greatest contribution to British life.

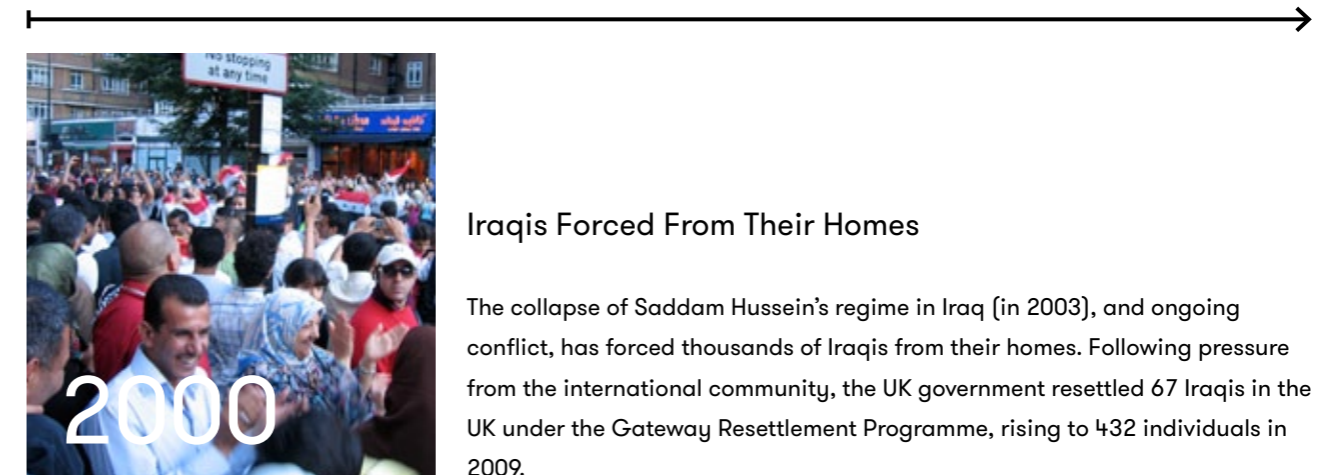
- 44% Radar, in part developed by UK chief scientist and refugee, Hermann Bondi.
- 17% Fish and chips, introduced by mixing the traditions of Protestant refugees from France and Jewish refugees from Portugal.
- 11% Marks and Spencer, department store, cofounded by Russian refugee Michael Marks.
- 9% The Paralympic Games, founded by a Jewish refugee fleeing the Nazis, Ludwig Guttman.
- 8% Travelling 'magic' stove – invented by refugee Alexis Soyer to make sure British troops in the Crimea War didn't die of malnutrition, design used up to the 20th century.
- 8% The Mini, invented by a Greek refugee Alex Issignois.

Throughout our history, Britain has offered protection to groups of refugees from around the world who have had to flee persecution in their home countries, including French protestants in the 16th Century, those fleeing Nazi persecution before the Second World War and Ugandan Asians in the 1960s.

Do you think that it is important that children in British schools are taught the full history of Britain, including the role which we have played in protecting refugees throughout the centuries?

- 94% Yes
- 6% No

Sources: BritainThinks polling carried out between 26 and 28 April 2013. Sample size 2012



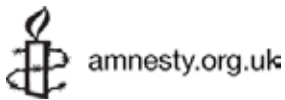
## Iraqis Forced From Their Homes

The collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq (in 2003), and ongoing conflict, has forced thousands of Iraqis from their homes. Following pressure from the international community, the UK government resettled 67 Iraqis in the UK under the Gateway Resettlement Programme, rising to 432 individuals in 2009.

Refugee Week is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events and activities that celebrates the contribution of refugees to the UK and promotes better understanding of why people seek sanctuary. Anyone can take part by organising, attending or supporting activities in their area.



Refugee Week is a multi-agency project, with representatives from the partner agencies forming the UK Steering and Operation Groups as well as funding the Refugee Week UK Central Team. The partner agencies currently include:



working with refugees to build new lives



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[www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)  
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