

### Questions to Consider When Viewing Video

1. Where was Harold born? What was his father's occupation?
2. Why is Harold's memory of his first day at school so vivid?
3. How did Hitler's coming to power affect Harold and other Jewish children at their public schools?
4. What restrictions did Harold and other Jewish children and adults face under the Nazis?
5. Given the conditions for Jews, why didn't Harold and his family leave Germany?
6. What special restrictions were placed on Harold's father and his profession as of July, 1938?
7. How long did it take for his parents to obtain a visa? Where did they really want to go?
8. What did Harold witness on Kristallnacht? What happened to his father as a result of Kristallnacht?
9. What requirements needed to be met for his father to be allowed to leave Dachau?
10. For what country were Harold and his parents finally able to get a visa?
11. What was Harold's experience in the English schools?
12. Why was his school in England evacuated after World War II broke out?

# Holocaust Survivor

## Harold Koppel

Filed on February 7, 2006



*"We hadn't seen a friendly officer in uniform as far back as I could remember."*

*- Harold Koppel*

Face to Face  
A Holocaust Education Program at  
Congregation Shaarey Tikvah  
Beachwood, Ohio

Harold Koppel was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1927. Harold's father was a successful doctor with a busy practice, mostly treating non-Jews. The family consisted of Harold, his parents and his older sister.

On April 9, 1933, a few days after Hitler was elected, Harold started school. There were only two other Jewish children in the school and they were bullied. When his parents complained, the teacher and principal did nothing, and in the fall of 1934, Harold's parents decided to send him to a Jewish school.

In 1935 Hitler was reelected and the situation got steadily worse. Jewish children were not allowed to go to public playgrounds, and signs in many public places read, "Jews are not wanted here." Harold's parents were ostracized by their former friends. Despite all of this, Harold's father was afraid to go to a new country, where he would have to reestablish his medical practice.

In July, 1938, there was a proclamation that Jewish doctors could not treat non-Jews. This forced the issue of immigration because Harold's father could no longer earn a living. Harold's parents applied for a visa to the United States; however, because of the American immigration quota system, the visa wouldn't be valid until December 1939.

At noon on November 10, 1938, two Gestapo officers arrested Harold's father in mass arrests after Kristallnacht, a night of organized violence

against Jews, synagogues, and Jewish-owned businesses. After two days at the local police station, Harold's father was taken to Dachau.

To leave Dachau, Harold's father needed permission to go to another country. Harold's mother was able to get a temporary visa to England, a country that would take the family for a year until their American visa would become valid. With the visas, Harold's mother went to Dachau and was able to get her husband released. When Harold's father came home, Harold hardly recognized him. He had a beard and had lost about 20 pounds.

Harold's family left for England on March 19, 1939. On one of his last days in Germany, Harold saw Hitler in a parade on their street. He looked "just like anybody else."

In London the family lived in one large rented room in a house. Harold's father studied for his medical exams in English, and Harold attended a nearby Catholic school and learned to speak English. The non-Jewish students were friendly and welcoming.

That fall, Germany invaded Poland. Harold's school in London was evacuated to a nearby village for the safety of the children. By November, Harold's family was granted permission to come to the U.S. In the U.S. Harold's father studied for the medical boards, and in 1942 he opened a medical office in Cleveland, Ohio.