



Famous Refugees

As the title suggests, here's a list of famous people who are or were refugees (it also includes the children of refugees).

If you know of any person that you think should be included in this section please [contact us](#).

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Advertising

Lord Maurice Saatchi and Charles Saatchi - founders of Saatchi and Saatchi advertising agency. Their father was an Iraqi Jewish refugee.

Architecture

Richard Rogers - designer of the Centre Pompidou and the Millennium Dome. His mother was a refugee from Trieste

Eva Jiricna - a refugee, she designed the Faith Zone in the Millennium Dome.

Daniel Marot - a refugee. He designed Hampton Court Palace

Art

Anish Kapoor - won the 1991 Turner Prize. His parents were refugees who fled Iraq.

Piet Mondrian - a refugee

Marc Chagall - a Russian-born Jewish refugee

Jacob Epstein - son of Polish-Jewish refugees

Lucien Freud - a well known British painter, he is a German-Jewish refugee

Peter Carl Faberg - Russian jeweller, fled Russia via Finland, Germany to Switzerland.

Mona Hatoum - a well known British painter, she is a Palestinian-Lebanese refugee

Camille Pissarro - a French-Jewish refugee

Sir John Tenniel - a cartoonist and book illustrator - descended from Huguenot refugees

Alfred Wolmark - painter, a Polish-Jewish refugee

Business

Michael Marks - one of the founders of Marks and Spencer. He was a Russian refugee.

Sir Montague Burton - A refugee from Lithuania, he founded Burton retail.

Manubhai Madhvani - expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin

Sieng van Trang - founder of the educational website www.iLearn.to. He is a Vietnamese refugee

Sir John Houbton - grandson of refugees. He was the first Governor of the Bank of England

Ismail Kadare - He fled Albania in 1990 for political reasons.

George Weidenfeld, publisher - Jew who fled the Nazis.

Fashion and Design

Alek Wek - a supermodel, she fled Sudan with her family

Tanya Sarne - fashion designer and creator of the Ghost label. Her father was a Russian refugee.

Lewis de Teissier - founder of Tessier's jewellers, and the grandson of a refugee Jacques de Teissier

Sir Alec Issigonis - designer of the Mini, he was a refugee

Manufacturing

Lakshmibhai Pathak - founder of Patak's. He was a Kenyan refugee

Rashmi Thakrar - a Ugandan refugee and founder of Tilda Rice

Music and Dance

Regina Spektor - singer, songwriter and pianist. Originally fled Soviet Russia at the age of nine and now based in New York.

Shingai Shoniwa - lead singer of the Noisettes. British-born daughter of Zimbabwean refugees.

Carlos Acosta - ballet dancer with the Royal Ballet, London and a Cuban refugee

Norbert Brainin - Austrian-Jewish violinist and refugee

Gloria Estefan - her father was a Cuban refugee

Justine Frischmann - lead singer of Elastica. Her father was a Hungarian refugee.

Mika -famous singer who fled from Beirut Lebanon .

Wyclef Jean - Haitian refugee. Named group Fugees (short for refugee).

M.I.A. - English-born singer. Part of a Tamil Sri Lankan refugee family

Bob Marley - Fled Jamaica to Miami after being shot during political violence.

Fritzi Massary - Austrian-Jewish operetta singer and refugee.

Olivia Newton-John - singer and actress - granddaughter of refugee Max Born.

Arnold Schoenberg - composer

Claude-Michel Schonberg - composer whose works include Les Misérables and Miss Saigon. He is the son of refugees.

Gene Simmons - Member of Kiss. His mother was a Holocaust survivor.

Sir Georg Solti - conductor and refugee

Oscar Straus - Austrian-Jewish composer and refugee

Robert Stolz - Austrian composer/conductor and refugee

Richard Tauber - Austrian-Jewish singer, composer and refugee

Georg Ritter von Trapp - father of the Trapp family, whose story inspired The Sound of Music after fleeing Nazi occupied Austria

Maria von Trapp - autobiography, The Story of the Trapp Family Singers, inspired The Sound of Music

K'Naan - Somali "The Dusty Foot Philosopher" Hip Hop Artist now living in Toronto, Canada

Politics

David Miliband - British MP and Foreign Secretary. Son of a Belgian Jewish refugee

Ed Miliband - British MP and Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. Son of a Belgian Jewish refugee

Madeleine Albright - former U. S. Secretary of State

Ayaan Hirsi Ali - Dutch politician, who fled from Somalia

Lord Alf Dubs - politician and a refugee from Prague

Sir Clement Freud - British MP and TV personality and Austrian-Jewish refugee

Margaret Hodge - British MP and Minister for Children. Her parents were refugees from Germany

Michaëlle Jean - Haitian- The current Governor-General of Canada

Henry Kissinger - U. S. State secretary, fled from Germany to USA in 1938

Vladimir Lenin - Soviet leader and a refugee who fled to Switzerland

Friedrick Lessner - founder member of the Independent Labour Party.

Karl Marx - political theorist and German refugee

Sitting Bull - Sioux chief. He left America for Canada

Leon Trotsky - Marxist theorist, and former member of the Soviet Politburo

Psychology and Philosophy

Michael Balint - Hungarian Jew, psychoanalyst, he fled from Nazism

Sigmund Freud - Austrian Jew, founded psychoanalysis, he fled from Nazism in Austria

Anna Freud - daughter of Sigmund, also a psychoanalyst, she fled with him

Ernest Gellner - Czech-Jewish philosopher. He fled from the Nazis.

Stephan Korner - Czech-Jewish philosopher. He fled from the Nazis.

Claude Lévi-Strauss - French-Jewish philosopher and anthropologist. He was a French refugee

Karl Popper - Austrian-Jewish philosopher; fled from Nazism to New Zealand

Religion

Moses - fled Egypt after killing a man [subject to belief and historical record]

Jesus - his family fled from Israel because of King Herod [subject to belief and historical record]

Muhammad (PBUH) - fled from Mecca to Medina in 577 [subject to belief and historical record]

Isaac Abravanel - Rabbi and politician - fled from Portugal to Spain

Rabbi Leo Baeck - Reform rabbi and holocaust survivor

Rabbi Hugo Gryn - Reform rabbi and holocaust survivor

Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits - Chief rabbi of Great Britain - fled from the Nazis to Britain

Paul Kahle - Christian Hebraist. fled from the Nazis to Britain

Current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso - a refugee, he fled Tibet when China invaded

Mullah Krekar - Iraqi Kurdish mullah, lives in Norway

Science

Gustav Victor Rudolf Born - pharmacologist - German-Jewish refugee

Max Born - Nobel Prize for physics - German-Jewish refugee

Edith Bulbring - pharmacologist - German-Jewish refugee

Carl Djerassi - the inventor of the first contraceptive pill. He is an Austrian refugee

John Dollond - inventor of the achromatic lens. He founded Dollond and Aitchison; descended from Huguenot refugees

Albert Einstein - one of the world's most famous scientists - German-Jewish refugee

Alexander Grothendieck - mathematician - German-Jewish refugee

Robert Fano - physicist - Italian-Jewish refugee

Ugo Fano - physicist - Italian-Jewish refugee

Bernard Katz - Nobel Prize-winning biophysicist - German-Jewish refugee

Sir Hans Krebs - Nobel Prize-winning scientist - German-Jewish refugee

Sir John Krebs - zoologist - son of Sir Hans Krebs

Liviu Librescu - physicist; fled from Romania to Israel [1]

Lord (Claus) Moser - British professor of statistics and head of the Government Statistical Service - Austrian-Jewish refugee

Sport

Alexander Alekhine - chess World Champion, who moved from Communistic Russia to France.

Ossip Bernstein - chess grandmaster, who escape from Communistic Ukraine to France.

Efim Bogoljubow - chess grandmaster, who moved from the Soviet Union to Germany.

Fedor Bohatirchuk - chess grandmaster, who moved from Ukraine to Canada.

Jelena Dokic - tennis player and Serbian refugee

Mebratom Keflezighi - Olympic marathon silver medallist, Eritrean refugee to U. S. (via Italy)

Mario Stanic - former footballer with Chelsea. He used to play for Sarajevo F.C. who were targeted during the Bosnian War

Christopher Wreh - former Arsenal footballer and Liberian refugee

Lomana LuaLua - Football player who has played for

Colchester United, Newcastle United and Portsmouth was a refugee

TV and Film

Omid Djalili - comedian and actor. He and his family are Iranian refugees

Jackie Chan - Fled to the United States from Hong Kong after being threatened with death by the Triads.

Marlene Dietrich - actress and refugee from Nazi Germany

Ben Elton - comedian and grandson of a Czechoslovakian refugee.

Baron Lew Grade - television mogul and uncle of Michael Grade. He was a Russian refugee

Fritz Lang - film director, and a half-Jewish refugee

Jerry Springer - Talk show host. His parents were German refugees

Rachel Weisz - actress. Both her parents are Jewish refugees

Billy Wilder - film director and writer, and a Jewish refugee

Zohra Daoud - former Afghani actress and model, now settled in Malibu, California

Writing and Publishing

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown - journalist and author, and a Ugandan refugee

Isabel Allende - author of *The House of Spirits*. She is a Chilean refugee who fled after receiving death threats following the overthrow of her father's cousin, Salvador Allende

Elias Canetti - a Bulgarian refugee, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1981.

Joseph Conrad - author of *Heart of Darkness* and a refugee.

Anne Frank - as a child she fled from Nazi Germany to the Netherlands.

Karen Gershon - as a child she fled from Nazi Germany to Great Britain.

Michael Hamburger - as a child he fled from Nazi Germany to London.

Lord Paul Hamlyn CBE - a Jewish refugee from Germany. He was the founder of Octopus Publishing Group

Victor Hugo - author of *Les Misérables* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Due to his political beliefs, he was forced to flee France several times.

Ruth Praver Jhabvala - novelist and film screenwriter - German-Jewish refugee

Judith Kerr - children's writer - German-Jewish refugee

Thomas Mann - winner of the 1929 Nobel Prize in Literature. He moved from Germany to Switzerland and from there to the USA.

Rigoberta Menchú - an author and Guatemalan refugee. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992

Vladimir Nabokov - Russian author and lepidopterist. Escaped to Europe from the Russian Civil War and then to the United States from the advance of Nazi Germany.

Ursula Owen - editor of *Index on Censorship*. She was a German refugee as a baby.

John O'Donnell-Rosales - Cuban author, poet and journalist, escaped from Cuba with the remnants of his family after years of persecution for their political and religious views.

Reinaldo Arenas - Cuban novelist. Became a refugee in the USA after years of persecution for his sexuality and political ideas. His autobiography, *Before Night Falls*, was on the *New York Times* list of the ten best books of the year 1993 and was made into a film in 2000.

Felix Salten - author of *Bambi* - Hungarian-born Jewish refugee from Nazis

Samuel Ullman - German-born poet

Loung Ung - a survivor of the Killing Fields of Cambodia, is an activist and author of the books, *First They Killed My Father* and *Lucky Child*.

[See our Literature section for a comprehensive list of refugee authors](#)

Miscellaneous

Ossip Bernstein - chess player - fled from Russia to France

Alina Fernandez - daughter of Fidel Castro, fled Cuba to Spain, now lives in the United States. Former model, now hosts a talkshow.

Otto Kahn-Freund - lawyer - German Jew who fled Nazi Germany to the United Kingdom

Christoph Meili - whistleblower - fled from Switzerland to the United States, because an arrest warrant was issued against him.

Merhan Karimi Nasseri - is an Iranian refugee who has been living in the departure lounge of Terminal One in Charles de Gaulle Airport since August 8, 1988. Subject of the Steven Spielberg film 'The Terminal'.
