



## 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.

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### 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

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### 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 Fabergé** - 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

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### 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.

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## 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

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## Manufacturing

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

**Rashmi Thakrar** - a Ugandan refugee and founder of Tilda Rice

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## 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

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## 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

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## 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

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## Religion

**Moses** - fled Egypt after killing a man

**Jesus** - his family fled from Israel because of King Herod

**Muhammad** (PBUH) - fled from Mecca to Medina in 577

**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

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## 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

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## 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

**Mebrahtom 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

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## 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

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## 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](#)

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## 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'.

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