

Worksheet: The Holocaust and Wales: General Paper and Box Manufacturing Company at Treforest Trading Estate



Workers at the General Paper and Box Manufacturing Company reinforcing the corners of pre-folded boxes.

Image courtesy of George Schoenmann.

TASK 1

Read the information about General Paper and Box Manufacturing Company and the Schoenmann family and then listen to two oral history clips of George Schoenmann describing [his time at school](#) and [his father's factory at Treforest](#).

General Paper and Box Manufacturing Company and the Schoenmann Family.¹

George Schoenmann was born in Vienna in 1934. George's father, Paul, a prolific businessman, had owned a cigarette paper factory in Vienna but after the *Anschluss* (the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany on 12 March 1938), the Nazis confiscated all Jewish businesses in Austria. Paul received permission to set up General Paper & Box Manufacturing Company on the Treforest

¹ 'End of an era for Rizla factory', in *WalesOnline* <<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/end-era-rizla-factory-2356398>> [accessed 11 May 2022].

Trading Estate in 1938, and the family came to Wales as refugees in 1939 and moved to Whitchurch, Cardiff.

The company specialised in two areas: luxury cardboard boxes and cigarette paper. The boxes were assembled by hand in the factory. During the war, it also made tools for the Ministry of Defence.

Rizla bought the company in 1948 and Paul was forced out in 1951. He subsequently started a furniture company in Bridgend.

George attended school in Brecon and after the war worked for many of the Jewish businesses at Treforest, as well as his father's furniture company. He set up his own company selling electrical spare parts in 1979, before retiring aged 70.

Working in pairs, answer the following questions:

- Why did the other children at George's school bully him?
- How would you feel if someone bullied you for your nationality/religion?
- How might the school have made George feel more included?
- Children who came to the UK were generally only permitted to take one suitcase with them. Especially precious items were often kept in a small box inside the suitcase. If you were forced to flee from your home, what belongings would you want to take with you? Could they fit inside a suitcase? What items would you put in your small box?

TASK 2

Create your own box following the instructions below:

- Cut out the box template on the sheet of paper you have been given.
- You can decorate the box in any way you like - some possible ideas: a luxury box like those produced by General Paper & Box; pictures of the objects you would take with you on leaving your home country; important memories of home. It will be easier to decorate the box before assembling it.
- Fold along the dotted lines and glue/tape it together.

Would the belongings you listed in **Task 1** have fitted inside your box?

