



# Kindertransport

A special interest group of

**The Association of Jewish Refugees**  
SERVING HOLOCAUST REFUGEES AND SURVIVORS NATIONWIDE



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**NOVEMBER 2015**

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**Previous issues may also be viewed at:**  
[www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport.htm](http://www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport.htm)

**Dear Kinder and Friends**



***From the Editor's Desk***

**Dear Kinder and Friends**

It seems only like yesterday that the last Newsletter appeared! We have passed the Chagim, Kristallnacht, lunches and so to Chanukah and the end of the year.

On the sad side of things there have been murders in attacks on Israelis and the horrendous massacre in Paris on 13<sup>th</sup> November (Friday 13?). Finally there has been the mass refugee problem, about which Erich wrote to Mr Cameron. On this topic a short piece appears on refugees in the pages following by me as I was enabled to visit a small group of refugees while in Germany recently.

I wish you all a joyous and bright Chanukah.

*Bernd.*

Dear Kinder

Chanukah and winter is upon us so I sincerely hope you all keep warm over the next few months but at the same time enjoy the lights of Chanukah and all the other festivals going on about the same time.

The refugee problem seems to be never ending and obviously despite the differences surely reminds us of our plight just before the Second World War not to speak of what happened during that terrible time. However I do feel we ought to have a lot of sympathy and any help we can give to those refugees who are trying to get away from destitution and death.

By the time the next letter appears Kristallnacht anniversary will have come and gone. So let us remember all those people who lost their lives just because they were Jews!!

I wish you all the best of health and a wonderful Chanukah with your families,

*Erich*

### **September Lunch**

We have had a variety of interesting speakers at recent lunches including Carl Davis, composer and conductor of *Last Train to tomorrow* and Barbara Winton.

Barbara has spoken all over the country about her father Sir Nicholas. Her enthralling talk at the New North London Synagogue to a very attentive audience achieved two objectives. In the first place she gave a potted history of her father and how he was able to rescue 669 ('Winton –as they call themselves) children from Prague. The other objective was to counter the mythology that surrounds the figure of her father, e.g. regarding the 'discovery' of his papers by chance when in fact they were known earlier in a limited way.

An enraptured audience, which included Year 6 pupils from the neighbouring Akiva School, could have listened much longer than the time allowed. Her talk was accompanied by the availability at the luncheon of her book *If it's not possible*, her biography of her father.



It was fitting also that Erich presented Andrea Goodmaker with some flowers to express our collective thanks for her work at the AJR over many years.

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## CHANUKAH LUNCH – WEDNESDAY 9th DECEMBER

Venue: NW Reform Synagogue, Allyth Gardens Time:12.30

Remember to book with Susan Harrod at AJR

[susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk) 020 8385 3078



### Candles and Masks

We celebrate two minor Festivals, Chanukah and Purim, which each in their own way seem to have grown with additional festivities beyond the original intention. Purim has the reading of the *Megillah* (Book of Esther) plus charitable giving of food and money as well as feasting. According to an opinion the Purim carnival spirit was taken on board through the pre-Lenten carnival spirit (Cecil Roth). Chanukah was basically the kindling of lights with some additional prayers (*Al hanissim* and *Hallel*) and the later additions of the dreidel, games, oily foods, etc.) In the course of time, both Festivals have become commercialised.

What do they really commemorate? Purim recalls the attempted 'genocide' of the Jews in the whole empire of King Ahasuerus because their laws are different and they do not obey the King's laws. (See Esther 3 ) The actions of one man, Mordechai, refused to bow to Haman, a Hershel Grynzpan leading to Kristallnacht? To genocide? To the Holocaust? However Haman's plan was thwarted by Esther and Mordechai unlike the Shoah.

Chanukah's story has very brief mention in the Talmud, though the lighting of lights is greatly detailed and the additional prayers are mentioned. The full historical account is found in the Books of Maccabees (in the Apocrypha and some other works). The *Edict of Intolerance* issued by Antiochus IV forbade the observance of basic Jewish practices. However, becoming Hellenised and accepting e.g. Zeus might have allowed survival. It was the inspiring appeal of one man, Mattathias that kindle the fire of the Maccabean Revolt, eventually led by Judah and later his brothers. But at a cost, Antiochus' decrees led to martyrdom foreshadowed in the Book of Daniel, and exemplified in the Books of Maccabees by the brave women who circumcised their sons and were executed, of Eleazar the Priest who was killed for refusing to eat *terefah* as well as the mother and her seven sons who were martyred for refusing to obey the royal demand for worship in a manner alien to their beliefs.

Whereas Purim cost no Jewish lives, Chanukah did: martyrdom, death in battle and the dangers of observing Jewish practices while hidden in caves and the desert. This

somehow also foreshadows the Shoah: the deaths of the 6 million, the fighters with partisans and those with the Allied forces who lost their lives, as well as observing Jewish practices in secret in the camps, e.g. lighting a light for Chanukah, some form of Matzah for Pesach or reciting the *Megillah* or *Haggadah* by heart in some form of service.

The shade of Antiochus still hangs over us as it has for millennia. The spirit of the Edict of Intolerance is still darkening our lives in present times. May the light of the burning chanukiah dispel that darkness, be it the darkness of wanting Israel to vanish, of the intolerance of BDS or the physical as well as the verbal attacks on us wherever we might be.

*Al hanssim...* We thank the Lord for the miracles He wrought to our fathers. May He work these miracles once again in our time.

BK

### Frank Meisler



As a Kinder. I extend our most heartfelt wishes to Frank Meisler on his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I feel certain that all Kinder will join in these wishes.

He was born in Gdansk (formerly Danzig) and came on the Kindertransport to England via The Hook and Harwich to live with his grandmother; she lived in London. He was educated in Harrow, served on the RAF, after which he studied architecture at Manchester University. Eventually he settled in Jaffa where he set up his workshop.

To us Kinder his work is well known through the sculptures relating to the Transport; in London his statue at London's Liverpool Street Station is seen by the passing passengers. But more than that, it has become a focal point to visit especially by schoolchildren as part of their course on Holocaust studies.

His artistic work has been widely recognised and he has received many awards for it. So once again HAPPY BIRTHDAY and good health – bis 120!

BK

## **The Pianist of Willesden Lane**

**A true story of family, hope and survival told through the world's most beautiful music.**

Set in Vienna in 1938 and in London during the Blitz, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* tells the true story of Lisa Jura, a young Jewish pianist who is dreaming about her concert debut at Vienna's storied Musikverein concert hall. But with the issuing of new ordinances under the Nazi regime, everything for Lisa changes, except for her love of music and the pursuit of her dream – as she is torn from her family and set onto the Kindertransport to London.

Featuring some of the world's most beloved piano music played live, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* is performer Mona Golabek's true family story. The production makes its UK premiere at the St. James Theatre after critically acclaimed, sold out runs in New York, Chicago, Boston, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Based on the book *The Children of Willesden Lane: Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love, and Survival* by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen.

**AJR has obtained a block booking for the matinee at 2.30pm on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2016.**

**For booking details please call**

**Susan Harrod 020 8385 3070 or email: [susan@ajr.org.uk](mailto:susan@ajr.org.uk)**



**Pastor Hermann Ludwig Maas** (1877-1970) helped hundreds of Jewish people escape from Germany during his years at Heidelberg's Holy Spirit Church. In recognition, the State of Israel invited him for a state visit in 1950, making him the first non-Jewish German to officially visit the new country. Yad Vashem recognized him as Righteous among the Nations in 1965.

Hermann Maas stood closer to the Jewish community of his city than any other Protestant pastor during the Nazi period. A Lutheran cleric, he was also a shekel-paying, tree-planting Zionist. He read Hebrew and spoke Ivrit. He attended the Heidelberg synagogue so often that when Rabbi Fritz Pinkuss (1905-1994) had to be away, he called upon his friend Hermann Maas to lead the services. Maas did so, one member of the congregation commented, "with more *schwung* than our own rabbi!" Maas's frequent synagogue attendance became dangerous. His friend Pinkuss forbade him to come. Maas instead prayed in the nearby Mannheim synagogues. When Pinkuss fled to Brasil in 1936, he left his congregation in the hands of his

Lutheran friend, "the *de facto* rabbi of Heidelberg" - Pinkuss's words. Nazi Party officials in Heidelberg agreed. They called him "der *Judenpfarrer*" – the Jew Pastor.

Undeterred, Maas found ways to help Jewish people until 1943. He found jobs for them and got them visas, distributed groceries and shared his own food ration card. He visited the sick in the Jewish hospital. He intervened with local Gestapo officials. After Reichspogromnacht he helped get men out of Dachau and Buchenwald. After the October 1940 deportation of 364 Heidelberg Jews to Gurs, France, Maas provided food for the internees, and worked with offices in Switzerland and France to get people out of the camp. And he helped families put their children on the Kindertransport trains.

We know the details of a few of the families he helped. Walter and Julius Durlacher, Rolf and Ernst Kaufmann-Bühler, and Hedwig Bazniski were children of Heidelberg school teachers. Maas also helped Martha Rosenzweig from Altleiningen, and Ursula Michel of Ludwigshafen. He certainly helped more Kinder, but any records were purposely destroyed, so historians are dependent on memoirs of the survivors themselves. Maas was the southwest German representative for Büro Heinrich Grüber in Berlin; many of the 900 Kindertransport children from Baden, Württemberg, and the Palatinate made it onto the trains because of his work behind the scenes.

The Gestapo forced his retirement in 1943, and made him dig ditches in France in 1944, but he survived, and lived twenty-five more years. An unofficial ambassador between Israel and West Germany until the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1965, he persuaded Germany to invest in Israel's infrastructure and make financial compensation for illegally confiscated property.

Hermann Maas died in his sleep September 27, 1970.

Anyone with a personal story to tell about Hermann Maas may send it to Prof. Theodore N. Thomas, [tnthomas@milligan.edu](mailto:tnthomas@milligan.edu), who will pass it on to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Professor Ted Thomas

## **The Haven, the Kindertransport and J. Lyons**

By Thomas Harding

In December 1938 the first Kindertransport children arrived in London from Germany and Austria. Many ended up living with individual families, some in London, others across Britain.

Twenty of these children were housed in a small flat in Kentish Town in north London above a Lyons teashop. This home became known to its young residents as "The Haven".

The Haven had been set up by the Salmon & Gluckstein families who were concerned about the plight of these children. The Salmon and Glucksteins were the owners of Britain's largest catering company, J. Lyons & Co., famous for their tea shops, corner houses, tea brands and baked goods.

Upon arrival at the Haven, each child was shown to their dormitory. There a basket of clothes was waiting for them, along with an eiderdown and a stuffed dog. That

none of the caretakers spoke German proved hard for the children. Breakfast consisted of kippers and porridge. The boys and girls were sent to separate schools, with many soon anglicising their names. Every few weeks they were taken for a haircut at Cadby Hall, the Lyons headquarters in Hammersmith.

I am currently researching The Haven and the role of the Salmon and Gluckstein families. I am fortunate to have spoken to one of The Haven children who now lives in Milan, Italy, but I am very keen to talk to others. I would also greatly appreciate seeing any photographs, letters, diaries, or recorded interviews about The Haven.

If you can help, please send me a message c/o [Patrick@convilleandwalsh.com](mailto:Patrick@convilleandwalsh.com)

Thank you in advance.

Thomas Harding

Author of HANNS AND RUDOLF and THE HOUSE BY THE LAKE



### **The fictionalisation of the Kindertransport: A conventional or an unconventional narrative?**

Are traditional British narratives of World War Two being challenged? This is certainly the case if we consider the narrative of the Kindertransport because novelists have reflected upon the Kindertransportees struggles to adapt to life in a new land, while at the same time desperately trying to hold onto their memories of the old world that they left behind. The fictionalisation of the Kindertransport therefore reveals a more unconventional story when compared to the traditional British narrative because it sheds light onto previously glossed over and even marginalised episodes. However, these literary works do not totally abandon the traditional British narrative, rather they also preserve some of the more conventional themes. For example, the figure of the child with a label around their neck waiting on a platform and the desire to become as "English" as possible are themes that are presented. On the other hand, one common strand that is depicted throughout the various novels, based on the Kindertransport, reveals how the protagonists are continuously grappling to discover who they are, evoking a loss of the self. These similarities between how the various authors construct the identities

of their characters discloses how the Kinders' separation from their homelands, their journey to Britain with all the ensuing effects of transplantation to a strange land, and their individual experiences of creating new lives for themselves within Britain suggest that some part of the self is lost along the way. Therefore, the novels problematize the narrative of the Kindertransport because when the reader turns the last page and completes their reading of the novel they do not fully come to know who the character of the Kindertransportee really is. Rather we are left with a complexity as there is an overwhelming sense of loss and erasure within the novels but there is also a sense of rediscovery and desire to pass this memory onto the next generation.

So far I have discussed general themes within Kindertransport fiction however it is the intention now to look more specifically at children's literature, adult literature and the authors themselves. Children's literature of the Kindertransport is more conventional than adult literature but that is not to say that it does not challenge our assumptions. This is quite the opposite, as it does not conform to an unproblematic account that everything was rosy when the Kindertransportees reached the safety of Britain. While it mirrors the same chronological structure of the traditional British narrative it departs from this story because the characters' identities are shown to be complex even before they leave their homelands. Within the novels the Kinder are presented as the "Other" first within their homelands and then in Britain. Children's novels also question the British comparison made between the Kindertransportee and the evacuee child revealing how the British narrative is too simplistic. Moreover, although children's literature creates an image of Britain as a haven the reader is left wondering where the Kinder feel at home. Adult literature on the other hand is more unconventional because it reveals a retrospective relationship with the past. For example, time leaps within the narration suggest a character's memory loss but also the rediscovery of their hidden pasts. There is even one character who is not a Jewish boy but is instead an Aryan boy who tried to save his Jewish friend but who ends up travelling to Britain to escape his father. Then the boy lives with this stolen identity and only on his deathbed does he reveal who he really is. This renaming of the self both creates a loss and a discovery, as the identity of his Jewish friend is not forgotten. Finally, it is striking that not all of these authors are British who write about the Kindertransport to Britain. For example, there are also texts written by German, American, Canadian and Swedish authors. Therefore, are these authors providing their own readings about the narrative of the Kindertransport and if so does this mean that there is a global process of questioning different national stereotypes at work? It is also interesting to consider why they have chosen to write about Britain and not for example America. If we focus on the Swedish novel *Faraway Home* there are both similarities and differences to be made because images of Big Ben are replaced by pastel shaded houses. However, although this environment is different the battle to learn another language is similar because both Kindertransportee characters who travel to Britain and Sweden share the same thoughts as they feel alone, abandoned, misunderstood but also thankful and willing to adapt to this new culture in which they find themselves in.

Traditionally the British narrative of the Kindertransport has remembered the positives of this rescue operation more so than the negatives. However, the fiction that represents this event has shed new light onto previously marginalised and less focal themes such as the rediscovery of the parents' identities, the loss of the childhood self, the strained relationships between the Kinder and their foster parents

and the Kinders' shifting identities within their native lands and then in their host nation. Perhaps, there is a national and international re-examination of traditional assumptions and stereotypes at work because more unconventional narratives are being discussed within this literature.

Amy Williams –studying for a PhD  
(The above article is a summary of her MA Dissertation)

## Reviews



### **In my hands –Memories of a Holocaust rescuer**

Irene Gut Opdyke - Corgi 2001

This book does not deal with the Kindertransport, but is one that tells the poignant story of a Polish young lady saving Jewish lives. I could not put the book down. Irene, the author, was a 17 year-old training as a nurse when Poland was invaded and changed her life. Nothing prepared her for the horrors to come. Instinctively she felt that she had to do something to resist the evil in whatever way she could. After joining the partisans, she was eventually captured by the Germans. Her youth seemed to have saved her. She was made to work for the Germans in a factory, but eventually landed a job as a housekeeper to a German officer. The plight of the Jews in the Ghetto stirred her and she began to leave food secretly under the fence. Eventually the officer moved to a house which she ran. Unbeknown to him she hid Jews in the cellar and looked after them. She was in contact with the local partisans all the time. Eventually she took her Jewish friends from the house into the forests. When the war finished she went back to her village and afraid of the Russians she disguised as a Jew and fled to a DP Camp in Germany, where she met her future husband, an official in the camp. In later years she was recognised as a Righteous Gentile by *Yad Vashem*.

BK

### **The Rabbi in the Green Jacket**

Vivien and Deborah Samson

This volume arrived just as I was preparing the Newsletter. It is a fascinating account of Jewish Buckinghamshire during the war 1939-45. A full review will appear in the next Newsletter.

The reviewer lived in Buckinghamshire during this period.

## **Alexander von Humboldt Gymnasium - Bornheim**

I was unable to be at the AJR Kristallnacht commemoration as I was in Germany for the occasion. I was invited to Bornheim, near Bonn, by a teacher at the Gymnasium, whom I had met a couple of time here in London and he and his wife (Mr and Mrs Dopstadt) were our wonderful hosts. The school made me very welcome, as also my friend Michelle Goldberg and made feel like I was back again as a teacher in school 20 years ago. My task was to speak to various classes about Kindertransport and its background, as well as to a group of adults. The last few talks were highly coloured by the refugee issue in Germany. We received permission to visit a refugee 'reception centre,' where we spoke to some of them in German and saw their living conditions. Not a pleasant sight. I spent a lesson in an International Class at the school and was enabled to speak to two brothers and their sisters from Aleppo and Damascus. We also attended a Kristallnacht commemoration in the town which started with a walk from a *Stolperstein* marking the house and the adjoining shop (which the SA smashed) to a nearby Church for the full event. A trip through the town took us to a shop over which a plaque marked the destroyed Synagogue

All in all it was an exhausting three days but memorable and well worthwhile.

BK

## **Berlin to the USA via Kindertransport**

In an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal, a Kind, John Lang, describes the horror of Kristallnacht in Berlin as he saw it as an 8 year- old boy and the terror he felt. He comments on the lack of action by the nations, except for the United Kingdom who allowed 10 000 children to enter the country. His attempt to get to the USA was foiled by the American embassy as his quota number would not be reached for years. Thus he came on the Kindertransport in January 1939; where he stayed he does not mention. Suddenly in 1940 he was advised by the USA embassy his quota number had come up. He sailed to America and has lived there since. His parents escaped. But no mention is made how and to where.

*(Based on an article in the WS Journal 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015)*