



Kindertransport

A special interest group of
The Association of Jewish Refugees



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MARCH 2017

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Previous issues at:
www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport



From the Editor's Desk

Dear Kinder and Friends

This edition has again a wide variety of contribution including one held over from Chanukah. There is a welcome article from Michael Newman as well as a variety of letters including two from California. The previous edition receives a couple of pats on the back.

Chag sameach to all Kinder, friends and your families.

חג שמח

Bernd.

My dear fellow Kinder

Thank God winter is slowly receding and we can begin to look forward to a little warmer sunshine. In most parks the crocuses are blooming in their various colours. Furthermore we are nearing what I would call the festival of freedom, Pesach. I am sure most of us will be with our families as the youngest starts the five Kushiots.

I use this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful and happy Chag. Sameach

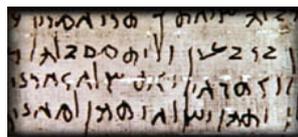
Erich Reich

From then to now

The Exodus from Egypt and events related to it feature frequently in our prayers and literature. It marked the point at which the Israelites became a nation in their own right. It marks the concept of freedom, freedom from slavery and subjugation. It further marks a celebration of Harvest and the beginning of the Omer period. All this underlies Pesach, *zeman cheuteinu* (the season, time of our freedom).

Freedom as a people from slavery to go to the land promised to our Patriarchs. However that freedom was marred by the pursuing Egyptians and a little later by the attack of the Amalekites. Having crossed the Red Sea, Israel were not entirely 'freed' from their past experiences, as lack of food and water made them complain that perhaps life in Egypt was a little better as there was all kinds of food. They were free, but with a 'cost'.

With Pesach over the millennia, the Festival of Freedom, together with the Omer period and just past, we enter a very 'historical' period. Erev (the eve of) the Festival marks the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; its fate is commemorated just after Pesach with Yom *Hashoah U'gevurah* (30th April). The day is our Jewish 'portmanteau' commemoration of the Shoah [Holocaust]. Two other happenings need mentioning. The Omer period is one of partial mourning recalling the deaths of the pupils of Rabbi Akiva from croup; scholars consider this as a coded record of the Bar Kochba revolt (132-135 CE) and the loss of Jewish lives as casualties of war together with the subsequent post-war persecution by the Roman Emperor Hadrian.



Fragment of a letter written by Bar Kochba found in the 'cave of letters'

Part of a letter from Bar Kochba

Then there is another happening to affect our calendar of our tragedies was the First Crusade (1096) which decimated the Rhineland communities. This is commemorated by a special prayer recited on some Sabbaths. It also memorialises similar happenings since. Pesach time particularly was also a dangerous time for Jews as it was near or on Easter.



Away with sadness and let us turn to joy. 5th/6th Iyyar (1st/2nd May) is Israel Independence Day. In his book *Bar Kochba*, Yigael Yadin (a former C-in-C of the early Israel Defence Forces and renowned archaeologist) discloses his Bar Kochba findings to Ytzchak Ben-Zvi (President of Israel) with these words: "Your Excellency, I am honoured to be able to tell you that we have discovered 15 dispatches written or dictated by the last President (i.e. Simon bar Kochba) of Israel 2800 years ago."



Then we have Lag B'omer (33rd day of the Omer period – 14th May). Linked with the end of the deaths of the students of Rabbi Akiba/soldiers of Bar Kochba, the mystical story of the ascent of the soul of R. Simeon ben Yochai which was to be celebrated – mystic concept and midrashically this day Manna descended. In our times it is the scholars' holiday, a day for school outings and fun.



The bow and arrow is the symbol for Lag B'omer

The last major celebration is Yom Yerushalayim (Wednesday 24th May) – the 50th anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem during the 6 Day War of 1967. That day in 1967 fulfilled our age-long dream. As we say for example in Grace after Meals "Rebuild Jerusalem the Holy City speedily in our days."

Indeed the account above is on a historical note. But according to the Hagadah here is more to it: "In every single generation it is a man's (person's) duty to regard as if he (she) had gone forth from Egypt". We are all part of our long history which has brought us to where we are now. We must rehearse our past to see what we learn from it – if at all? Our present and future is hilt on it.

Have a thoughtful and enjoyable Seder and Pesach.



Am Yisrael Chai

עם ישראל חי

Western Wall

BK

The ongoing crisis

"I beg to move, that this House notes with profound concern the deplorable treatment suffered by certain racial, religious and political minorities [in Europe], and, in view of the growing gravity of the refugee problem would welcome an immediate concerted effort amongst the nations, including the United States of America, to secure a common policy."

Although the circumstances surrounding the current refugee crisis are notably different to the persecution the Jewish people of Europe endured under the Nazis before and during the Holocaust, the words of British Parliamentarian Philip Noel Baker echo loudly from the debate he instigated in Parliament in November 1938 in response to the barbarism of Kristallnacht.

The debate in Parliament led to the creation of the Kindertransport, which saved the lives of some 10,000 children, many of whom have today been urging the British government to intervene to offer sanctuary to the youngest and most vulnerable victims of war.

The persecution and displacement of people - regardless of their ethnicity or religion, and because of them - weighs heavily with those who similarly endured oppression.

As Erich Reich wrote in a letter to former UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, last May:

"The echoes of the past haunt many of my fellow Kinder and I whose fate similarly rested with members of the British Parliament and I feel it is incumbent on us to once again demonstrate our compassion and human-kindness to provide sanctuary to those in need."

Just as at Evian in 1938, today the world seemingly wrings its hands while a tyrant pursues their ideological aims. But equally it has brought a response from the UK Jewish community.

The Support Refugees website www.supportrefugees.org.uk was borne against the backdrop of a refugee situation reaching crisis point. As the media and politicians turned their back on the biggest displacement of human beings since WWII, at a Jewish Social Action Forum, the idea to start a project for the Jewish community to support refugees was kindled.

Developed by JCORE - The Jewish Council For Racial Equality, together with the West London Synagogue and JLGB, Support Refugees became a one-stop resource for the Jewish community on how to volunteer and donate to organisations providing direct support to refugees and asylum seekers throughout Europe.

Updating volunteering opportunities, pointing people towards drop-in centres and publishing monthly newsletters, Support Refugees grew hugely in a constituency keen to engage in social action. It was during this period, that the tragic image of Syrian Toddler Aylan Kurdi washed up on a beach hit the front pages and news channels.

Immediately the bubble burst. David Cameron launched the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees over five years; the Dubs Amendment to the Immigration Act - proposed by Kindertransport survivor Lord Dubs, to be a modern form of the Kindertransport, passed through parliament; and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme to rescue 3,000 children with their families from conflict areas in North Africa was approved. Attitudes were starting to shift, and the Jewish community was at the forefront of it all campaigning tirelessly to give back decades after the Kindertransport saved countless Jewish lives. In just over a year, Support Refugees became a leading hub of direction for the Jewish community and wider world to help refugees in the UK, Northern France and around wider Europe. Nearly 200,000 pages have been viewed by over 90,000 individual visitors. 15,000 visited the Support Refugees website in November 2016 to find out what was happening in Calais, as the camp was undergoing its evacuation and demolition.

Our challenge going forward is to sustain interest, both from Jewish and wider communities in supporting refugees. Attitudes towards refugees are hardening, no doubt due to narratives of immigration in the EU referendum campaign and the American Presidential election. Whilst pictures of dying toddlers are not in our front pages anymore, tens of people are dying in the Mediterranean every day for the chance of safe life in Europe - with five thousand dead or missing in 2016 alone. 2016 migration flows into Europe. Over 350,000 arrived by sea in Europe, 5,079 died on their journey.

Fewer people are seeking out ways to Support Refugees. Since the demolition of Calais refugee camp, Support Refugees is being visited less frequently. Is this because Calais was a symbol on our doorstep of the refugee crisis? Do people feel we have done enough? Are Greece, Italy, Serbia and Albania too far away for us to care?

We need to continue to run effective campaigns to alter the narrative about refugees in Britain, and to bring attention to the refugee crisis in Greece to the forefront of British thought. Bringing Greece closer to Britain should be a priority for us in 2017. It is worth remembering, that as we honour the impact of the Kindertransport today, that the 10,000 saved by the Kindertransport could easily have been 20,000 or 50,000 if attitudes towards immigration were more receptive. We owe so much to those who saved so many of us, now is our chance to give something back. We should all do what we can to help those who need it. Support Refugees is run by JCORE on behalf of the UK Jewish community.

The above appeared on website of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) written by guest authors: Michael Newman, AJR Chief Executive, and Adam Isaacs, Campaigns & Communications, The Jewish Council for Racial Equality. Michael is also Chair of the IHRA Communications Working Group.

SEARCHES



Where are you?

Dear Bernd

I am a licensed clinical social worker and have a client who was on the original Kindertransport from Vienna which arrived in London on 10/12/38. Her name is Susanne Weiss, or Susi Weiss, and her birthdate is 2/3/31. She traveled with her brother, Peter Weiss and his birthdate was 4/28/28. Both of them were born in Vienna. When they arrived in London, they were taken in by a foster family named Max & Sylvia Stone along with 8 other children. They lived there with these children until they all moved together to Cogenho, England after which time they were reunited with their parents. The Stone's formally adopted one of the 10 children and his name was Frances Tetzner and later Frances Tetzner Stone. Susi is greatly interested in finding the records of their arrival yet mostly would love to see if she can reconnect with any of the other 8 children if they are still living.

There was also a cousin named Thomas Feuer, date of birth 5/30/30, who also came from Vienna and was also fostered by the Stone family in London before moving to Cogenho. Susi cannot remember if Thomas was on the Kindertransport train or not with them but vaguely remembers that he was fostered to this same family. Susi also mentioned the British Quakers having an important role.

If you are able to find something, or have any other suggestions, please don't hesitate to reply to this inquiry. She is most interested in obtaining any information that might be possible.

Denise Robinson, LCSW, CASWCM, CDWF - *all the way from California!*

Tel: 001 562 537 2646 and email den.rob@verizon.net

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## OBITUARY

### Otto Deutsch

The death of Otto came too late to include anything in the last Newsletter. Otto, born in Vienna and came to England on a Kindertransport. His parents and sister did not survive. . He became a tour guide, eventually settling in Westcliff-on-Sea. He was active in the general Jewish and local community. He was a very sought after speaker on matters relating to the Holocaust and Kindertransport to schools, adults and clubs. He was regularly seen at Shoah and Kindertransport events. My first meeting was pure chance. My late wife and I had been invited to Westcliff's Cheder Prize. Walking along the street made us stop and talk to a person, Otto, who was also going to the same event. We soon discovered that he and I had much in common.

BK

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The Little Suitcase” – talking to schools in Germany and England about Kindertransport and the Holocaust



My mother Ursula Rhodes (geb. Michel) was born in Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein in 1923. In early 1939, in the aftermath of *Kristallnacht/ Reichspogromnacht*, the family moved to Mannheim, and from there in August 1939 my mother left her home on one of the last Kindertransports. She never saw her parents and younger sister again, for they were murdered in the Holocaust; and she never returned to Ludwigshafen. But she kept all her family's letters and many, many other reminders of her old life.

Over 70 years later, my first encounter with Holocaust education came through the Stolpersteine team in Ludwigshafen. I kept in contact with them after the laying of Stolpersteine for my family in 2010, and when my mother died the following year I offered them a donation in her memory. They used this to develop a pack of source material for schools: based on my family photos and documents, it related my mother's experiences and her family's fate. A year or so later, on the initiative of one of the Ludwigshafen team, a short film on same theme was produced. Professionally made, it lasts just under 20 minutes – and it is with this film, and my mother's little Kindertransport suitcase, that I now visit schools in both Germany and England.

In Germany I am accorded the status of witness (although, born in 1953, I am not of course a direct witness of the events of the Holocaust) , and I have spoken to a variety of High Schools in Rheinland-Pfalz and elsewhere. (My German is poor, so I speak in English – and most German teenagers speak English quite well). The students, generally aged between 15 and 19, are in the main very responsive. They are interested in my mother's story, astounded by the small size of her suitcase (32 x 20 x 3.5 cm – smaller than their school bags) and fascinated by its contents. But they are also very aware of the way this story resonates with current events, and there are always questions about world politics and today's refugees. Indeed, sometimes the students themselves are today's refugees.

I am delighted to have started visiting schools in Leeds, where I live. So far I have talked to primary school children, but I do now have some high schools in my diary.

Of course, talking to 10-11 year old English children is a very different matter from talking to the much older German students, whose national history this is. The emphasis in the questions is more often on the gas chambers or Hitler's racial views than on 21st century politics. But I have also been surprised and moved by the engagement, empathy and emotional maturity of so many of these children. I feel that it bodes well for the future.

I find my school visits, both in Germany and in England, to be extremely rewarding. Sharing my family's story means that their memory lives on, and for me this has a particular significance when I visit schools in the city which rejected them. And if this story helps to inform and educate today's young people, and to engage their interest and sympathy, it is the best memorial my family could have.

Judith Rhodes

Kindertransport Memorial Quilts Traveling Exhibition

Northwest Surrey Synagogue is thrilled to announce that we will be hosting the Kindertransport Quilt Traveling Exhibition at our shul in April, 2017, as part of our Yom HaShoah Commemoration. Our Yom HaShoah Service will be on Sunday, April 23 at 7:30 PM.

The Quilts will arrive from the United States on 4 April. We would be pleased to have an Open Day or days for viewing the exhibition and wondered if you could help us with whom we need to contact from the Kindertransport Association in the UK to discuss this and, hopefully, plan some events.

According to the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Michigan, this will be the first time that the Traveling Exhibition will be on display in the UK. Certainly this is an opportunity not to be missed!



Open Day

- Sunday, April 30, 2017
- 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm
- North West Surrey Synagogue, Weybridge, Surrey

The Kindertransport Memorial Quilts Traveling Exhibition will be on display for the first time in the UK. On loan from the

Part of one of the quilts

Holocaust Memorial Centre Zekelman Family Campus of Farmington Hills, Michigan

Please contact: Jean Cohen at: pressofficer@nwss.org.uk if you would like to attend. Tel: 01932 854693 Mobile: 07795257710



Reviews

SURVIVOR

Harry Borden, *SURVIVOR*- Portrait of the survivors of the Holocaust, Cassell Illustrated, 2017,
ISBN ISB978-1-84403-906-6

This Magnificent book is a significant contribution to the whole field of Holocaust study as well as being an outstanding book of portraits *per se*. The full-page portrait of a survivor, including Kinder, is accompanied on the facing page by a short message in the survivor's own handwriting. These few words of each individual set out the person's mind-set briefly of their experiences. Some examples of brief messages: "I am glad to be an optimist because that's what kept me alive." (Fred Knoller) Or, "I think of myself as a person, a wife and as a mother first and as a survivor last." (The late Miriam Finkelstein) Or, "In my heart I always felt my parents would survive," (Debora Brenner). Each person portrayed has also a short biography in a separate section. The photograph in time now, the short message and biography combine to tell one person's experience during the Holocaust, short but tellingly. It states as it were "I have survived and am here now." The component parts thus explore a kaleidoscopic view of the Shoah. This makes the book a disturbing and moving work, yet containing some optimism for the present and perhaps for the future. The book draws one to read and read it over and over again by also just dipping in here and there.

Harry Borden is a highly skilled professional portrait photographer with many famous people to his credit. But what stirred him to produce this volume? He explains in his introduction. His father is described as an atheist Jew and yet felt his heritage was 'punishable by death.' That view motivated the author coupled with seeing survivors present at a presentation of his work at JW3. The work spread over some 5 years, photographing in the UK and abroad and specially in Australia. Howard Jacobson's Foreword is also a powerful piece in his overview of the Shoah in which he takes deniers to task. "*Holocaust denial, Holocaust sceptics, Holocaust justification, Holocaust ridicule..... is as though the dead are murdered a second time.*"

Harry, we are friends, you have made an invaluable contribution in a specific way in trying to understand the Holocaust through the lens of your camera and the accompanying texts. Quite apart from the Holocaust, the collection of portraits is a masterpiece of photographic art and a study as such in its own right. Friends who have seen the book could hardly put it down as they

were so taken and moved by it. *Survivor* should find a place on bookshelves everywhere.

BK



Dear Editor

Re: Kindertransports from Vienna, Austria, beginning November/December 1938

I am now 92 years old and I can remember in great detail leaving Vienna on 12/13 December 1938 from an obscure suburban station, leaving close to midnight.

As far as I know a Jewish committee in London (known to me as Bloomsbury House,(centre for Refugee matters, editor) and the UK Society of Friends (The Quakers) organised the Special Train arrangement and the fact that we children could travel to the UK without passports.

Was the British Government involved at an official level? My recollection is that the Home Secretary, Samuel Hoare, and the Universities MP, Eleanor Rathbone, were both involved. As far as the British Government was concerned, there was a precedent insofar as 3,000 Basque children had been admitted on a similar scheme around 1936. (From Spain, editor)

Lastly, on my train from Vienna about one third of the children disembarked in Holland and the name Gildemeester comes to mind as the Dutch organisation which presumably had co-sponsored the Kindertransport train.

Is there any information in the AJR archives or any other public or quasi-public records which would supplement my recollections?

Harry Stevens, Tel: 07775 651 027 (daily between 1pm - 2.30pm)

Dear Editor

Your supplement made interesting reading under the headline "Kosher Evacuation", where you published the story of three small Jewish children evacuated just before the outbreak of war.

I was living in a strictly Jewish orthodox hostel in Kilburn at the time and we were told that we might not return to our hostel on leaving school but be evacuated instead. So one day we were marched off to West Hampstead station from where we were transported into the country and on arrival at our destination were distributed to any person willing to give a home to unaccompanied children.

Being billeted with non-Jews was an extra trauma for us, young Jews who were refugees and German so both with limited knowledge of English in a completely strange environment. It is only now that when we have all but disappeared any interest has been shown in our plight at the time. For many of us a normal or near normal childhood never existed. Without parents who would have loved and cared for us we were often left to our own devices. The Jewish community while saving our necks failed us with a lack of compassion, care and love, it has left a sense of bitterness in me to this day.

Yours sincerely

E. G. Kolman

Dear Susan (at AJR)

This is really a message to KT people originating in Frankfurt. They should firstly look at the following website: www.juedisches-leben-frankfurt.de The people who run this website are keen to make contact with KT survivors coming from Frankfurt. Among other things, they want to create a KT memorial in the main railway station. The person with whom I spoke and who was introduced to me by the B'nai B'rith President in Frankfurt is called Angelika. Unfortunately I did not get her surname. Her phone number is 00491751656250. I think that it would be interesting to contact her.

Regards

Ernest

Simonernest7@gmail.com

Dear Bernd

Title: Invitation to Kinder from Professor Eva Thüne (University of Bologna, Italy)

I am currently Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall Cambridge and would be very interested in meeting those who would like to share their experience of the "Kindertransport". My main interest is how your individual attitudes to the German language and German/Austrian culture have developed over the years since your arrival in UK. I have already done considerable research into the experiences of those who travelled to Israel on the Jugendalija and my

hope is to gather some accounts from those who travelled to the UK, and try to compare the experiences.

Please contact me via email: evamaria.thune@unibo.it or writing to me at Clare Hall, Herschel Road, Cambridge, CB3 9AL, United Kingdom

Eva

Dear Bernd,

We are acting on behalf of Pauline, daughter of Ben and Ann Myers, she is enquiringly about any boys who arrived at her parents' hotel in Margate, who had come on the kinder transport in 1939 there were 47 boys aged between 7 and 17.

This lady, Pauline, remembers the following boys, wolf Schatberger and Walter Yellenic who was an amazing pianist, and a young man called Eric who was 17 and helped Mr Myers prepare meals.

Mr Myers stripped one of the rooms, and made a stage, while his wife made curtains for it from bedspreads. There was two shows performed, one of which ended in rule Britannia.

Ray and Jacky Arnold

Does this letter bring back memories? Let me know please. Editor

Dear Editor

I receive the AAJR Journal and the Kindertransport supplement which I enjoy reading and keeping in touch with Jewish life in the UK. In the recent edition of the Newsletter on the top of page 4, Peter Hedderly writes about the transport which arrived in Southampton on 14th June `1939. I was also on this transport (SS Bremen. Ed) Harry Kornhauser is number 7 on the passenger list and I am number 100 under my former name Alfred Baumwollspinner, now known as Alfred Cotton and live in Oakland, California.

Shalom. Alfred Cotton

From the Media

Like yet unlike

~ The outcry against the government allowing just 350 Syrian refugee children into the UK has led to a comparison with Kindertransport. Mr Michael Fabricant MP raised this matter recently in the commons. He found it "distasteful" when commentators made this comparison. In the 1930's there was no opportunity to go into Germany or the Axis countries and assist the children facing death in concentration camps. He asked the Home Secretary whether she would condemn those people – none were MP's – who make this comparison. Amber Rudd agreed.

He then went on to describe the parents' concern to send them to safety. He then referred to the conditions by which we could come: age limit, guarantor, temporary travel visa which implied that that we emigrate "when the crisis is over" and children would be reunited abroad with their families. "The advent of the Holocaust put a stop to that expectation."

Unlike today, rescue teams could not attempt to ensure the children's safety. There were however, charismatic \-and determined individuals who stood between children and what would have been their sad end. Examples are Rabbi Sr Solomon Schonfeld (to whom a 'yes' was a 'yes' and a 'no' also meant 'yes!'), Sir Nicholas Winton, Frank Foley (British Intelligence Officer in Berlin), the Japanese Consul in Kovno who enabled the Mir Yeshiva to reach Shanghai, the Portuguese Consul in Southern France and others. In addition of course were Jewish and non-Jewish organisations and other individuals, e.g. Noel Baker MP.

[The above is based on an article by Dina Rosell, Jewish Tribune, 16th February 2017]

~ Nick Ferrari (Sunday Express 19th February 2017) dismissed the comparison between Kindertransport and the acceptance of child refugees from Syria. He supposed the need for helping the latter. Quote: "*You would need a heart of stone not to have sympathy for the genuine child victims and there is a valid argument for helping those of a much younger age. However, using the Holocaust as a comparison demeans the millions of Nazi victims.*"

~ The *Jewish News* (2nd March) has also an article by Nick Ferrari similar to the one above. He distinguishes the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews from the pitiful effects of the civil war in Syria and the destruction of life in the surrounding areas and the refugee issues resulting.

Katie

Press Reviewer



ss Bremen

Anchors Aweigh!

In looking back over previous Newsletters the thought struck me that it might be (or not) to collate the names of ships with small details which brought us to the UK. I would be interested to hear from you, especially if there is one not mentioned.

So far I have: SS Bremen, SS Manhattan, SS Bodegraven, SS Prague and SS Warszawa



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