



Kindertransport

A special interest group of the Association of Jewish Refugees

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**WINTER/DEC 2009
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**Previous issues may also be viewed at:
www.ajr.org.uk/kindertransport.htm**

Dear Kinder

I hope you all enjoyed celebrating the High Holidays in the warmth of your close family, a time of the year for contemplation and introspection of who we are and what we have become. Let us also hope a peaceful year lies ahead for our communities across the globe.

Despite 70 years having elapsed since the atrocities of the Holocaust the topic of the Kindertransport still seems popular with sections of the media, whether for book writing or documentaries. We have recently received several requests for help and information. I suspect many of these will not bear fruit. However those that do I believe and hope will, whilst trying to unravel some of the consequences of the Kindertransport, relate our plight to what is happening around us today.

Meantime I understand Bertha is happily settling down in Israel. She will of course be reading the newsletter so I will take this opportunity to wish her from us all a continued happy and peaceful times in the bosom of her family. I certainly miss picking her up for our monthly committee meetings

All the best and shalom

Dear Kinder/Friends

This edition shows again the wide interest that now exists in the Kindertransport; Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, also refers to it. Accounts by Kinder are also forthcoming; great to hear from and about Bertha. Also important is the current academic interest. As exemplified by

recent workshop; hopefully the 'human' side will also come through loud and clear. The Survey does just that, so chase it up through the email address given. Please continue to send in items of interest, views, reviews or whatever – it is YOUR Newsletter, the next edition of which will appear for Pesach. I wish you all a very happy Chanukah and look forward to hearing from you.

Bernd

Berthas' Letter from Israel

To all my good friends.

I'm settling down very well here and have joined in the community here and have been made very welcome everywhere.

I'm enjoying my new family life and have joined the "club" as it is called here. (meaning the oldies club) I go to a Hebrew speaking club – picking up a few words here and there and am known as Bilha rather than Bertha. I like to be called Bilha.

I also now go to an English speakers "club" part of the week. Every day there is a lecture mainly on history or bible- something I learned as a child. There is an exercise group and handicrafts (mainly weaving) and the finished articles are sold to the community to enhance the income of the club. We also have an art group which is given by my daughter – Mirry. The main part is to make social contact which I'm quite good at!

I love the hot weather and to have a relaxing sit in the garden chair and listen to the amazing variety of bird calls. I am sure that one of them says repeatedly *ye-va-re-cha-cha* which means "be blessed".

I feel that I am very blessed being here and I wish you and all your families and friends many blessings for this coming year. If any of you are on a trip to Israel you are most welcome to visit.

Shana tova and a good and happy and healthy new year to you and all of Israel with lots of nachas .

Love Bertha (Bilha)

Israel Reunion

There was a successful reunion of Kinder in Israel in Jerusalem in 1984 which lasted a whole week. This was followed by a unique reunion when Professor Kurt Overton, possibly of Glasgow, was reunited with an aunt aged about 100 years. She lived in Haifa after immigrating from Vienna years before.

[An afterthought to this reunion. I was shown the booklet of the reunion and in looking through the names of participants, apparently from other countries also, I came across a name and the place where he was currently living. Some friends and I were on a Shabbat walk, staying at a nearby hotel. I do not recall the name, but I do recall walking through a village near Herstmonceux, Sussex, really a few houses and pub, where the nameplate, showing a particular profession, of this particular Kind was on the gatepost of his house.]

Bernd Koschland

The Bronze Tennis Hero - Joe Wohlfarth

Coincidence? I received an email from Andrea regarding Joe; moments earlier I had come across his name several times in my researching into archival material relating to the Tylers Green Hostel Committee in which his

name cropped up several times in one context or another. We were both in the same hostel in Tylers Green, near High Wycombe.

Joe was always interested in football and good at it. So it was no surprise when at the age of 18 he was spotted early by a coach of the Maccabiah Committee and selected for the English Football Team for the Maccabiah in 1950 and again for the 1958 Games. He continued playing for a local team in England for some years.

Joe took up tennis only in his mid-fifties. Now in his “younger” years over 75, Joe played tennis for Israel for the over 75’s in the Games this year as a result of the urgings of his youngest son, Adrian. The outcome? He won a Bronze Medal. Joe, congratulations and well done.

His story as a Kind was told by Israel’s Prime Minister at the opening of the 18th Maccabiah. PM Netanyahu said, “.....And to Joe, the tennis player, I say: your story is a source of inspiration for every Jewish child, for every Jew, for every athlete and is a living example of the revival of our people and of the spirit raging within us.”

In an interview with the Jerusalem Post, he is quoted as joking about competing in the next Maccabiah at the age of 80. Typical of the Joe I know from many years ago, he commented, according to the Post, “When my friend and I walk off the court, we say to each other, ‘*Baruch Hashem*, we are able to do this. But what will we do when we get old?”

What I say to you, Joe, is *Yishar Kochacha*, with the *koach* (strength) to play at 80. Perhaps ‘*bis 120?*’

Joe trained and practised as an architect. Eventually he and his wife Dinah went on aliyah where they joined their children, Caron, Michael and Adrian. Dinah and Joe are now proud grand- and also great grand-parents.

Bernd Koschland

Memories of Bertha

I have been a close friend of Bertha for a long time. We lived near each other and had regular Shabbat luncheons together, either at her place or mine. Sometimes one or two more Kinder attended. I do miss that, now she has made *aliyah*. She says she is very happy in her new surroundings. She has a lovely daughter Mirry who really looks after her very well. Every day she is surrounded by a load of her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I think her family listened to G-d when He said, “Go forth and multiply.” Every time I hear some of her latest news, either someone is pregnant or another grand-daughter has delivered twins, *baruch Hashem*. She has managed to become an Israeli citizen in a matter of weeks. How did she manage that?

One day, when we really did not know each other that long, she said to me “Judy, I would love to have you on my committee.” I was so taken aback and honoured. I thought, “Well, I made it into her inner circle after such a short time.” A few weeks later, Bertha was planning a Chanukah party for 150 people and there was a lot to do. Most of the cooking was done in her tiny kitchen. She made hundreds of her famous *gefillte* fish balls. Then one day I get a call to say that as I am a valuable member of her committee, I was assigned to peel a sack of potatoes for potato salad. For this I was on the committee? Marion Marsden, another honourable member, was made in charge of a load of cucumbers. She had green fingers for many weeks. Mary, I remember, was kneeling over the bath stirring furiously and enormous amount of spaghetti until she was out of breath and needed oxygen. Bertha

knew how to get the best out of people. I must say everything went off as planned. We had a great party and worked like slaves in Egypt. I shall never forget that.

Judy Benton, an exhausted Kind.

(First time I heard of a bath being used for cooking. Did the Vim for cleaning it give vim to Mary? - Editor)

OIL TO THE RIGHT?

There is the old chestnut: “**If** Moses had turned the right way, Israel would have had oil.” **But** he didn’t. Yes, the Jews of old had a fuel problem, not of petrol but of olive oil. The solution? Look at the Chanukah story. Judah and the Maccabees found just one sealed jar of oil for the Menorah of the Temple which miraculously lasted for eight days.

History generally, as well as ours, has had many “if’s and but’s”. Had the Jews of old listened to the Prophets, there might not have been an exile to Babylon and the loss of the first Temple. Had Alexander the Great left exact instructions for a successor - but which he did not - history could have been different. But he did not leave instructions. His several successors fought for mastery, the outcome of which was that Judea eventually fell into the hands of the Hellenistic Syrians, into the hands of Antiochus IV and with it the disastrous consequences: the defilement of the second Temple and the proscription of Judaism with the threats of dire punishments for observing our basic beliefs and practices

Judah the Maccabee, his brothers and his valiant troops saved the day with a rededicated Temple and ultimately re-established independence under his brothers Jonathan and Simon; it lasted maintained for about 100 years under their descendants. If in the end the two brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus had not squabbled among themselves (but they did), then possibly Rome would not have interfered and removed independence and years later destroyed Judea and the Temple.

But let us look at the positive side to “if and but.” Despite the events described, Judaism survived and exists to this day, in spite of the many hurdles. If we pick out the heroes of the Chanukah story, we have lessons to learn. Judah as the leader boldly overcame the Syrian threat. His band of fighters small in comparison with the Syrians achieved victories over the larger enemy. This shows that whatever difficulties we Jews have faced, and are facing, we can, with God’s help overcome them – just as Judah also relied on divine help. “*Let us now cry to Heaven to favour our cause....then all the gentiles will know that there is One who saves and liberates Israel.*” (Judah to his troops before battle, 1 Maccabees 4:10-11) Some of the other figures of the whole story, such as Hannah and her seven sons, or Eleazar the Priest, would not give up their faith and suffered death instead. Judaism has survived despite multitudes facing martyrdom, be it for example Masada, York, Chmielnicki or the Shoah.

Perhaps that is one of the teachings of the one jar lasting eight days. The light from that one jar is a beacon that we shall survive, but we must do our part in helping that survival along. The view of Hillel, that we light one light the first night and increase to the full 8 is a message of optimism. Things may be small, may be difficult, but with Divine help and our efforts we can ensure the future of Judaism, so that never again will we have to search for an undefiled jar without which the Temple lights would not have been re-lit, no jar, no oil,

no survival. Each one of us is a “candle”, each one of us must cause others to “light” up and so make sure that Judaism will survive in full strength for now and the future.

BK

What Quakers did for the Jews of Nazi Europe.

You have heard of Schindler of Schindler’s Ark. Schindler saved about two thousand Jews from the gas chambers and has rightly been recognised for his wonderful achievement by having his name recorded in Yad Vashem as one of the “Righteous amongst the Nations”

Have you heard of the Society of Friends, the Quakers? Hopefully many have, regrettably very many have not. The Society of Friends enabled many thousands of Jews to escape from Nazi Europe. The Quakers have great humility and do not seek nor want publicity, so regrettably they are not mentioned in Yad Vashem leaving a whole chapter on saving Jews missing in the world’s premier Holocaust Museum. Quakers were amongst the most active group of rescuers in saving Jews in the Holocaust. This was recognised in 1949 by the award of a Nobel Prize for their humanitarian efforts.

Only if you risked your life to save a Jew do you qualify to have your name in the category of “The Righteous amongst the Nations” So why not have an additional category for the names of those who saved Jews without risking their lives? Surely only The Almighty knows who risked their life to save a Jew.

There were three main ways of Jews getting out of Nazi Europe.

1) Kindertransport 2) Having someone guarantee the Government that you would not be a financial burden on Britain. 3) Taking a job to fill a vacancy which no local person wanted, e.g. maid, butler, nurse etc.

Without the Quakers we would not have had Kindertransport, which saved 10,000 Jewish Children. On 15th November 1938, a Jewish delegation, Viscount Samuel, Lord Bearstead and Chaim Weitzman had a meeting with the P.M. Neville Chamberlain, they requested that Britain should take Jewish Children simply and quickly. Chamberlain turned down the Jewish delegation, he thought Hitler was a person with whom he could make a deal and so there would be no Jewish problem. The P.M. gave Hitler a piece of Czechoslovakia, Sudetenland, which it was not his to give. It did not save the 6,000,000 Jews who perished in Nazi Europe.

The Quakers had done tremendous welfare work in Germany after the First World War and had a group headed by Bertha Bracey who were quite clear that there was no future for Jews in Nazi Europe. Bertha Bracey persuaded a Quaker M.P. Philip Noel-Baker to see the then Home Sec. Sir Samuel Hoare, who came from a Quaker home and later in life became a Catholic, to try and get the P.M. to help the Jews.

On the 21st November Sir Samuel Hoare and Philip Noel-Baker had a meeting with Neville Chamberlain. Kristallnacht occurred on 9th & 10th November 1938; this had some softening effect on Chamberlain and the House of Commons. The outcome of this meeting was that a document was put through Parliament which permitted 10,000 Jewish children to come to Britain, without visas or passports.

When Kindertransport had been working for two months, the Nazis brought out a rule forbidding Jews from using Public Transport. (*Verbot der*

Bernützung öffentlicher Verkermittel für Juden). How do you get children on to the trains if they re not allowed to use public transport? The Quakers waited at the Railway Stations, put the children on the trains, and were on the trains ensuring the children made their connection at the Hook of Holland, and were Quakers waiting at Liverpool Street Station in London to see that there was someone to meet each child. So not only did the Quakers manage to get the bill through Parliament, but they made sure that it worked, in spite of the Nazis.

Guarantee: £50 each, £3,000 in today's money. That was just the start of the guarantors financial obligation. The Quakers gave Guarantees to the Government for about 7,000 Jews which saved that number of lives. Nine of my family were saved by Manchester with Quakers giving guarantees; in this way as they did for my family.

Work: Several thousand jobs were found by Quakers for Jews who were able to get visas and got out of Nazi Europe by having a job to go to. Quakers were amongst the most active group of rescuers involved in saving Jews from the Holocaust.

When there was a danger of Germany invading Britain, the Quakers burnt their records as they did not want to leave lists of Jews saved for the Nazis to find. This means we have no accurate records now of the names of Jews saved by the Quakers or the names of Quakers who saved them.

The British Medical Association could not decide whether to let Austrian dentists work here. My father was a dentist but would need re-training. As soon as my father realized that he would be able to earn a living in England, he found other Quakers to guarantee for the rest of the family, for my grand parents, my great grandmother who was then 91 and lived till 99. They gave my brother and myself two free years at Quaker boarding school, after which time my father could afford to pay the school fees.

As soon as my father qualified as a dentist, he took a flat round the corner from Withington Rd., Manchester, for my parents, brother and myself. The grandparents and great-grandmother, stayed elsewhere. Eighteen months later, in one and the same night both properties were bombed. We all moved to Llandudno, where my father opened his surgery for a second time and where my sister was born.

After four very successful years in Llandudno, where my brother and I had our barmitzvah, my father moved back to Manchester and opened his surgery for a third time. On the occasion of my great-grandmother's 98th birthday, my father decided he wanted to have the voices of the family recorded on a record. This was long before tape recorders. So equipment filled a room and cut a 78 gramophone record of all the family speaking. Today the record is a CD and we can hear four generations of my family speaking, including my great-grandmother born in 1848.

If anyone had any help from the Quakers please contact me as I am trying to get as full a record as possible. I have personally to date over 800 individual names of Jews saved by the Quakers. My effort is a case of better late than never. It is important that this missing chapter of Jews saved by the Quakers, is created and placed where it belongs in Yad Vashem.

Peter Kurer
(email : peter@kurer.co.uk)

A brief note on Quakers

Quakers are the followers of George Fox (1624-1691) as a distinctive group called Friends, organised in 1688. Originally they took their name Quakers from “quaking” or trembling during their meetings for worship. They are renowned for their devotion to social causes and education; their honesty has won them great universal respect.

(Based on Dictionary of Religion and Philosophy)

A Story Repeated Many Times?

Whilst much material has survived regarding the Kindertransport and Kinder themselves, without question other valuable primary sources have disappeared and are lost forever. I do not refer to the books and articles written by Kinder of their own experiences – I refer, for instance, to the wealth of information, say of hostels, which no longer exists.

In the article on Joe Wohlfarth in this edition I refer to the archival material of the hostel in which both of us found ourselves. Of additional interest is some correspondence in that material about our (then young) dear Chairman, Erich; I mention this with his permission.

There was one letter which without doubt reflects the position of many Kinder. It is a letter from the B'nai Brith Care Committee for Refugee Children, dated 4th February 1941, addressed to the Secretary of the Tylers Green Hostel Committee*. I have been reliably informed that their (B'nai B'rith) records have long gone.

“We have today received your (Hostel Secretary) letter about Menasheh (a pseudonym –Editor) , and are surprised to hear that there is somebody in this country interested in his welfare, as, since we brought him to England in March 1939, we have received no inquiries as to his well-being. We should be grateful to know who is interested in him, and wishes to place him in your hostel.

Menasheh was evacuated under the Government scheme, as were all our boys in Margate.....If Menasheh is placed with a non-Jewish family it is unfortunate, but, he shares the fate of all the English Jewish children, and we feel, that it is a matter for the Jewish Community to see that the right Jewish influence is brought into the lives of these children.....”

Whilst the contents of the letter reflect the position of many, the choice of the words italicised reflect an attitude of the time, perhaps just of B'nai Brith? Unfortunate? But what of the solution? There were Committees actively engaged in bringing Jewish influences to Kinder (and, evacuees). In the case of Menasheh and others in the same area there were Jewish activities on Shabbat. For many other ‘unfortunates’ there was probably nothing or very little, possibly leading to their disappearance as Jews.

Menasheh lost the ‘un’ and was fortunate to go to an orthodox Jewish hostel. As the minutes record (23.6.41): *“Mr KL has given the amount of £40 maintenance for one year for one boy, M, who is living with non-Jewish people, and has been chosen to come to the hostel.” B'naiBrith would only pay 6 shillings per week whilst the rest would have to come from “the friend who is interested in him.”*

Editor

*Tylers Green Hostels Committee, whose members belonged to Golders Green Beth Hamidrash (Munk’s Shul), ran this boys’ hostel and another for girls in Great Chesterford (Essex).

Search Notices

- Information sought from boys at **Rowden Hall Hostel**, Margate. Please contact Bernd Koschland.
- Seeking information of whereabouts of **Marianne Jungheim**, born 03/02/26 and Rosa Erna Jungheim, born 05/02/27. Parents Aron and Julie, transported from Zwesten, Germany to Maidanek. Please contact Alfred Younghem (formerly Jungheim) of Los Angeles at younghem@worldnet.att.net
- **Auerhahn, Franzi (Franziska)** Born April 1926. Father: Felix Auerhahn, born 21 September 1896; mother: Jolanka, born 9 August 1899. Franzi came to England on Kindertransport and lived with a Mrs Myers in Monday 14th April 2008 Lonia (?) Street, Camp Road, Leeds 7. I would like to contact her for a book I am writing about a Jewish nurse who survived the war in Vienna working for the Kultusgemeinde. Any info please to Elisabeth Fraller at aszoreps@gmail.com
- Gabriella Karin is a holocaust survivor and an artist - she is making a train sculpture as a tribute to the children survivors that were saved by the Kindertransports. We are looking to receive as many childhood photographs of survivors from the Kindertransports as possible to insert into this train sculpture. The more pictures we have the longer the train will be. We are looking to exhibit this sculpture in the new Los Angeles Holocaust Museum which is scheduled to open in May 2010. The photograph can be of any size at all, we will reduce it to the size that is needed. Please include your name, where you left from and where you arrived to. If possible the approximate date at your final destination.
Photographs and any questions whatsoever can be emailed directly to me at michelegold@covad.net

Miscellaneous

Further details to Leslie Brent's book (see last Newsletter):

Sunday's Child? A Memoir, Leslie Brent, Bankhouse Books 2009 ISBN 9781904408444.

Photographs, memories, material regarding Zbazyń are needed for a memorial book. If anyone has material please send it to Andrea at AJR.

SURVEY

The Survey is now available online at www.ajr.org.uk/kindersurvey

TRIP BACK TO MY BIRTH PLACE IN GERMANY – Ruth Heinemann

I was born the second oldest daughter: Edith the oldest, Hilde 15 months younger than me and Ilse. The daughters of Karl and Selma Simon in Cloppenburg, Germany,

about 150 miles north-west from the Dutch border. We had among the nine Jewish families our own synagogue and cemetery.

In 1936 it was no longer permitted for Jewish students to attend local schools. That meant that the nearest Jewish school was a two hour commute. Meanwhile, my mother's sister obtained affidavits for each one of her oldest siblings to immigrate to America and a family portrait was taken.

10 November 1938 due to my sister Hilde recuperating from surgery I took the train by myself to attend class. As I approached the school adjacent to the synagogue they were both in flames. I rang the doorbell of the nearby rabbi's residence and was told they were all gone. I was told to go home and hope you find your family. On the train home the Gestapo were celebrating their accomplishment.

At home all was dark. The house was plastered with swastikas. My sisters were in tears as was my mother when they told me our father was taken away. The next day my mother got word that my dad might have been left behind in a hospital and I was sent to check the hospital in the area, but to no avail.

When my mother got word she could send two of her children to England in a transport, Hilde and I were the ones to leave with 1000 children in early December. Later that month my father was released. Meanwhile in England, after a rough crossing we arrived in Harwich and were moved to a holding camp for summer campers.

As many Jewish and English people came forward to offer their homes, Hilde and I chose to go with a Jewish group of congregants offering twenty-five girls care in a hostel for religious girls in Harrogate, Yorkshire. We were fortunate with the care and education we received and later learned a trade to help support the younger girls.

In May 1939, my parents boarded the fateful trip on the St Louis to Cuba, only to be turned away. Coasting around the Caribbean and South Florida, the ship was turned away back to Europe. England, Belgium, France and Holland offered refuge to more than 900 passengers. My parents went to Holland. When Hitler invaded they were sent to Westerborg and in May 1943 succumbed in the Sobibor Concentration camp. We learned this after the war! Meanwhile my sister Edith had left Holland for America. We arrived in the USA in January 1945.

A cousin's daughter who had, with her siblings, escorted their father back to his hometown, offered to escort Hilde and me. We were receptive. My daughter Susan and Hilde's daughter Sharon set out in early October for Amsterdam. We rented a van. After seeing the Anne Frank house we took the three hour trip to Cloppenburg. This was the first time I went back in 69 years.

We met the following morning at the well cared for Cloppenburg Jewish Cemetery. We recognised the names of those that were buried – all prior to 1938. Our house was unrecognisable because it had been rebuilt. The first floor of the old synagogue remains, but it is now used as a morgue by the hospital who takes care of the cemetery in return.

The first morning Hilde surprised me by telling me she had sought permission to set a memorial for our late parents and sister Ilse. As we set out for City Hall we saw a sign posted for a speaker that afternoon from Israel, a Holocaust survivor. We attended the program sponsored by a Jewish-Christian education group. It was well

attended and the press was also present. When we introduced ourselves guests came forward to welcome us and the press requested an interview.

As a result of the newspaper interview, former classmates and families visited with us and brought picture albums of our earlier years. In an interview in German I was told that I was the first survivor returning as a witness of the burning synagogue.

On Friday night we attended services in a synagogue in Osnabruck that was built after the war. It was an orthodox synagogue with many Russian congregants. The President was the son of a survivor. It was very moving to attend services the first time I was back in Germany and to be praying with families for a better future for all.

On the Shabbat before we set out for our return home we dedicated the memorial stone with good local attendance. We set it at the foot of a 150 year old oak tree. As we recited the Kaddish, I noted to those in attendance, the press and many local people, that I was reading from the German-Hebrew prayer book that belonged to my late mother and that was found among my late sister Edith's belongings. She had taken this prayer book from Germany to America, and we were fortunate to be able to have brought it back to Germany for this occasion.

In March 2008 on a tour to Israel with members of our congregation and led by our Temple Beth Kodesh Conservative Rabbi, Michael Simon (no relative), I placed the Hebrew-German prayer book in the Yad Vashem archives.

The Kindertransport: 70 Years On: New Developments in Research

A lively and well-attended workshop outlining new developments in research took place on 17 September 2009 at the Institute for Germanic and Romance Studies, London, organised by Dr Andrea Hammel (Centre for German-Jewish Studies) and Dr Bea Lewkowicz (Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies). Over 45 participants listened to the seven presentations and engaged in lively debate.

Anthony Grenville (Consultant Editor of AJR Journal) gave a comprehensive introduction by placing the history of the Kindertransport within debates on the truth and myth of British hospitality towards refugees. Hermann Hirschberger introduced the 'Kindertransport Survey: making new lives in Britain' project. Using material from this survey, Francis Williams, a doctoral student from the University of Edinburgh, followed with a paper on the migratory patterns of Kindertransportees who initially settled in Scotland. Jana Buresova spoke on Nicholas Winton and Bea Lewkowicz introduced the audience to those interviews with former Kindertransportees, which can be found in the AJR Refugee Voices Archive. Leslie Baruch Brent, author of the recent memoir *Sunday's Child?* spoke about his own experience and the process of autobiographical writing.

After a brief talk by Andrea Hammel outlining possible new directions for research on the subject, participants offered further suggestions for new projects. A screening of the BBC documentary *Kindertransport Story*, introduced by its director Lindsay Hill, impressed the audience and concluded the workshop.

Andrea Hammel

Views expressed in the Kindertransport Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Kindertransport Special Interest Group or of the Association of Jewish Refugees and should not be regarded as such.