



KINDERTRANSPORT NEWSLETTER

AJR Special Interest Section

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**SUMMER/MAY 2007
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Chairman:
Hermann Hirschberger**

Dear Kinder and Friends,

I hope you all had a pleasant Pesach. The trend of children coming to their parent for the Seder seems to be reversing with us going to them, or to hotels. But as long as we are together, or at least with friends, it's great. But I was *allowed* to peel the potatoes, carrots etc. and make knedels and other easy dishes, so I felt useful. I cannot remember how long ago I changed from wine to grape juice, but it helps to stay awake. The weather was cool, but the atmosphere warm.

Alisa, in charge of our KT project in Israel, who has done a great job and saw to printing and sending to all Kinder on her list (including non-paid-up), deserves our warmest appreciation. She has posted over 170 replies to us. Over 500 replies, not counting *memorials*, to date from Britain and still more expected, are a good result so far. Because the USA committee declined to undertake the actual work (and expense) of printing and mailing, we had to send from here. The posting cost was very high and we are grateful to AJR for their funding of the whole project. In our covering letter we stated that reply paid envelopes are enclosed. Of course this could only apply to the UK and we could not alter that letter. The US kinder surely must realise that putting a stamp on their reply is not too much to ask of them, after we spent \$4 each to post them. This project went well beyond paid up members only. We were grateful to receive at least the labels direct from the USA. With Pesach in between, we are only just continuing to register your replies. The task of entering and evaluating to give us the result will take even more time, so we have to be patient, a virtue, I myself sadly lack. Thanks to those of you who help me personally by putting their telephone numbers when writing to me, so I can keep in touch. My reading machine is indispensable and I can't recommend it highly enough to anyone with poor sight.

Please note that from the 20 May to about 10 June, I'll be out of action, getting a new knee and then recuperating, so please don't fill up my phone message box during that time. You can certainly phone me and if I'm home we'll talk, but leave the answer phone for urgent things only. Thanks.

Many, including myself, are thinking ahead to 2008 (I suppose it should be more 2009, but who can wait that long?) It's going to be our 70th Anniversary year. I've put out feelers for a trip to Israel. Eight days in a five star hotel in Jerusalem, to include Israel's 60th Anniversary celebrations for approximately £1,200. As long as we travel out together, you would be able to extend your stay. Please let Andrea know if you are interested, as arrangements have to be made well in advance. The breakdown is:- Flight including Tax £325-350, staying at the Renaissance Hotel in Jerusalem, (we need a large hotel to use their conference rooms) £85.00. per person, bed and breakfast single, £99.00. per room, bed and breakfast for two people. Kinder outside the UK would have to make their own flight and hotel arrangements. If not enough Kinder (second generation welcome) show interest, we will not pursue this further, and think of something on a smaller scale. You would also be welcome to join the flight and arrange your own Hotel, or stay with friends or relatives etc. and join outings, evening meals (I am told a four course meat meal will be approximately £10) and meetings. But to

judge by your disinterest in a Supper Quiz, which we are postponing until later in the year, I wonder if any of you are interested. Any ideas for an alternative? It would have to be a kosher venue.

Next point, the shidduch idea was not taken on board except by one grandma in Leeds who is worried about the lack of opportunities for a pretty granddaughter, of meeting eligible Jewish young men. It's about time the synagogues of all shades of religion recognise this fact and do something about it. It's all very well to cater for the youth in clubs. Not everyone goes to university and joins J Soc. In earlier days it was OK to have Saturday night dances in United type synagogues, why not now? Is there nothing in-between a *shadchen* (matchmaker) or a pub? We have a wonderful Survivors Centre in Hendon and their staff are most helpful, and if asked would probably lend their venue for second and third generation, get together. So come on, be an organiser! Every town has facilities if you look for them.

Albert Waxman has sent us a list of names of Bradford Hostel members. If you want a copy, please write to Andrea, sending a stamped addressed envelope, and you will receive one.

Many of us attended a meeting on 16 April at the Holocaust Survivors Centre, arranged by Jewish Care, to inform us about the intended flats to be built in Golders Green. Indeed, a perfect venue, these flats, about 43 will be to rent only, fair enough, they really sound great, though to my mind expensive. About 20 will be affordable (a most stupid jargon loved by developers) and the rest at market value. Some of them 2 bedroom. I would think that even a couple (who should still be together after about 50 years), could share one bedroom (if you get your snoring cured) there is a great need for such a project. One person to be available day/night (one flat gone). Affordable flats to be approximately £350 per week plus rates heat, water, telephone (we all expect to pay that) restaurant on premises, or cook your own meals.) I wonder how much the other so called market price flats are intended to go for? I would think that most people, would manage with a one bedroom flat. I saw some of the small Bnei Brith flatlets, one good sized bed sitting room, separate small kitchen, bathroom and small hall with wardrobe. If I remember right about £100 per week. Oh, I forgot, you can also pay by the hour for as much help as you need, nursing, physio, etc. Some of us might find these rates NOT affordable. With starter capital from the sale of the homes in the Bishops Avenue House. It seems that tenants through high rents, are expected to pay for the building costs of the flats on top of rental charges.

Shevouth (the festival of the giving of the Torah) is near complete with cheese cake recipes in the JC, with synagogues decked out in plants and flowers (hopefully not plastic). My best wishes to you all. Shalom. Hermann, who has only just returned from holiday, sends his best wishes also.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bertha". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'B' and 'h'.

LETTERS

Sir - My name is Vera O'Brien, née Harth; I was one of the children on the train from Prague, arriving on 30th June 1939. I was born in Vienna on 7th February 1929. My father owned a chemist shop, which he sold to Herr Willi Gerstenberger, who I believe, owned 17 pharmacies throughout Vienna. When I returned in 1953 to search for my 'roots' I discovered that not one member of my family had survived.

As I was the only child of older parents I was treasured and had a wonderful life. They taught me to ice skate when I was three years old. As a family we often went for long walks through the Vienna woods particularly in autumn when the crunchy leaves were deep on the ground. Swimming was another great source of pleasure and I was taught this by my beloved father, I think Mutti thought water was there for washing only; I cannot ever remember her being in it or even drinking it. I attended a school where the students were mostly male and I was a tomboy with plaits. I recall reading a children's comic paper in which a little black male cat and a little white female cat were in trouble at

school because the black cat dipped the white cat's tail in the inkwell, the boys in my class thought that this was a great prank and did the same to my pigtails; as a consequence, my parents removed me to another school.

One day my father came home unexpectedly and told my mother to hurry and pack clothes for us all and to bring all of her jewelry as well. Herr Gerstenberger, who had arrived with my father, bundled us into his car and we drove away from Vienna. I recall very little of this journey but I do remember that another car was following ours until we crossed the border into Slovakia.

My maternal Grandmother lived in Slovakia a small village called Vrbove where my Father thought we would be safe, which in fact we were, but only for a short time. Late one evening, there was a commotion, men were shouting and ordering my grandmother around. Fortunately she was very well known and respected, she managed to argue with these men long enough to enable my parents and I to get dressed. After giving me a quick cuddle, during which she managed to push a hair brush and an apple into my pocket, we were hustled out of the house and up the street to where a group of frightened people were being guarded before being herded on to a bus. When the bus was full it drove off to an unknown destination. We drove for what seemed a very long time. When the bus finally stopped we were rudely told to get out only to find that we were in a forest clearing. The driver of our bus now walked over to another bus which had been following ours, also full of people from Vrbove, mostly students from the local Jewish School, along with a very pregnant lady who had been hurried on to the bus without being allowed to dress herself and who was still in night attire. My father and a lady who had managed to conceal a small torch, decided to investigate our surroundings. The two buses had now driven away leaving us stranded. The tracks from the bus wheels were easily followed and we all managed to get back to the main road. A vehicle driving towards us stopped and the driver asked if we were alright, we also had two very elderly ladies with us who were being helped along. He told us that we were very close to the border and gave us directions to get back to Bratislava the Capital City of Slovakia. When we arrived most of the people in the group decided to stay at the railway station to rest. My parents though, decided to run away and hide, this we did and a little later on we looked back at the station from the top of a hill and we were saddened and frightened as we saw that the people we had left were being herded on to the buses once again. We walked on and were fortunate enough to find a Rabbi who hid us for a few days. During this time I became very unwell and had to be left behind as I was too ill to be moved. My parents made their way to Piestany a town near Vrbove. Later I was reunited with my parents and we moved to Prague the capital of Czechoslovakia as the country was then called. It was there that my father heard about Nicholas Winton and the transports that were being provided for Jewish children to take them to England. Before they took me to the station my parents told me that I was going to go on a long holiday to England with lots of other children. They made it sound very exciting, the future held no fears for me at all, as an only child I longed for the company of other children.

The organization in England that sponsored my journey and arranged for my care in the City of Sheffield was called "The Woodcraft Folk". Both Suzie Ehrman, another refugee and I, were taken there by Mr. and Mrs. Basil Rawson who were in charge of the Sheffield branch of the organisation. I was met there by Mr. and Mrs. Hull with whom I lived throughout the rest of the war until I joined the British Army in 1946. The seven and a half years in foster care were not wonderful but I will always be grateful to the Hull family for accepting the responsibility of caring for a refugee child from a very different culture and who spoke no English.

No one at that time realised that World War Two, would last five years. The consequence of this was that the children whom generous people had volunteered to sponsor for a few months, after five years of war came to be defacto members of their family.

I loved my life in the army, a lot of freedom and a fair amount of responsibility. I reached the rank of Sergeant very quickly. I became an instructor, met and married my husband John also a Sergeant Instructor at that time. We have been married for 59 years and on March 24th 2008 we will celebrate our diamond wedding. We had six children, our eldest daughter died suddenly in 2003 we now have three boys and two girls remaining. We had 16 grandchildren but one died in a motor accident leaving 15 and 7 great grandchildren. As the wife of a serving soldier my life has been very interesting and varied in different countries, living in close proximity with people of different cultures.

Vera O'Brien
ivobrien@xtra.co.nz

Sir – I finally managed to see the play *Kindertransport*, it having achieved so much publicity I was very keen to see it.

I must say, I was not too happy about it, as it gave a very extreme experience of one Kindertransportee and by no means reflects the experiences and reactions and attitudes of the majority of us. Naturally there will be as many differences in attitudes as there were individuals involved, but I think the majority of us never ceased to be grateful to our parents for having had the courage and strength to send us away into the 'arms of strangers' and to safety. That the Kindertransportee in the play should have displayed such callous hatred for her mother, who had been through hell and survived in order to fulfill her promise to her daughter to join her, is very unusual. I know that in many cases where children were re-united with parents who had survived the Holocaust there were great difficulties of adjustment, but I think Eva's reaction and attitude were extreme.

I was also surprised by her vehement rejection of her daughter's desire to learn about her mother's past.

The theatre was packed with schoolchildren who had come because they were studying the *Kindertransport* and I was afraid that they were going home with the impression that what they had witnessed was the truth about how we all felt.

Bronia Snow
Surrey

Sir - I have received the Survey addressed to Margaret Halberstadt, who has passed away.

Whilst Mrs Halberstadt was not one of the *Kindertransport* children, I know that she took a great interest in your work. One of the things she left us was your book *I Came Alone* which I found a fascinating read.

With best wishes for the continuing success of your work.

Jonathan Wolinsky
(Son-in-law)
London

Sir – We received a letter from a former *Kind* recently, enclosing a copy of the *Kindertransport* Newsletter for Spring/March 2007. Our correspondent drew our attention to the sentence on the first page, "Pity the Quakers destroyed their records..."

I wrote to her, and in my letter I said I would write to your Newsletter to try to correct this impression. Here is an extract from my letter:

"Perhaps the first thing to say is that the *Kindertransport*s and the assistance by the Society of Friends (Quakers) are two separate things. As you may know, the AJR is responsible for the archives of the World Jewish Relief Refugees Committee, which include personal records of *Kindertransport*s.

The Society of Friends in Britain (Quakers) also assisted a large number of individuals and families to emigrate from Europe before 1939, and during and after the war assisted many to settle in the UK and other countries. There are some records of this work, although a particular set of 'case files' were not kept, but destroyed about 1954. Before the files were destroyed, however, a long index was made for the names (about 14,000). This index shows date and place of birth, London address, UK Home Office number, and whether the person stayed in the UK after the war."

I attach two sheets for your interest: one about AJR *Kindertransport* records (which was written with the kind help of Lilian Levy), and the other about Quaker records of assisting refugees.

Josef Keith
Archivist, Quakers

REFUGEES

ARCHIVES: Library, Friends House: see CENTRAL ORGANIZATION files/ REFUGEES (staff copy has full list; the name index (FCRA/16) and personal case files (FSCR/20-23) are **CLOSED** except to those named in the file or their legal representatives).

There is a LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS dealing with refugees c.1938: see file FCRA/19/9: folder

Friends Germany Emergency Committee (abbreviated "GEC": renamed 1943 *Friends committee for Refugees & Aliens* ["FCRA"]) organized "Childrens' Transports" (*KINDERTRANSPORTS*), in co-operation with other relief organizations, from Europe to the UK during 1938/ 1939. A full record of the children's names does not survive in GEC/ FCRA archives held here (but see **World Jewish Relief**, next page). The Friends committee destroyed most case-files in the early 1950's after the completion of the official history of the committee, Lawrence Darton's *An Account of the work of...Friends Committee for Refugees & Aliens* (1954).

Before the GEC/FCRA files were destroyed, an alphabetical index of names (**FCRA/16**) was made. This included country of origin or citizenship at the time; date of birth; profession; UK naturalization number if applicable. This index did **not** include the names of all those arriving in the UK helped by the GEC: sometimes the wife and children of a male refugee are not named, but only referred to as "wife" and "child/children". Also, many of those travelling on Childrens' Transports (above) entered Britain on collective passports or entry documents of a different nature to adults.

Library staff at Friends House will provide details from the GEC/FCRA index to former refugees (or their immediate family) about their own entry, but the volumes are **closed** to public access.

ARCHIVES: National Archives (Public Record Office), Great Britain: does **not** seem to have records about entry into UK showing port and/or date for 1930's. Class HO 213; Aliens & General Policy 1921-1961 has few references to individuals (See Public Record office leaflets *Records Information* 111 "Prisoner of war and displaced persons 1939-1953..." and Guide leaflet WP/89 (part 6): "How to find and use denization and naturalization records after 1800") [copies at Ref. 002.1/ RECORDS/ BOX 4]

-HOME OFFICE (Great Britain): there are **no** records from this period at Immigration office, Harwich (where so many refugees arrived). Written enquiry should be sent to Home Office Nationality Division, Lunar House, Wellesley Rd, CROYDON CR9 2BY with all possible details: place of origin/ where journey started/ port of entry if known/ date of entry, etc. **BRITISH HOME OFFICE NUMBER OR NATURALIZATION CERTIFICATE NUMBER MAY BE IMPORTANT.** We cannot verify the date of UK arrival of most refugees but if there is a **naturalization certificate** number, the enquirer should be able to obtain this information from the Home Office. Enquirers should write, giving all details possible, to Nationality Division, Home Office, Lunar House, Wellesley Rd, CROYDON CR9 2BY.

If the enquirer has no naturalization information he or she could write to the Immigration Division, Home Office (also at Croydon). Replies from the Home Office may take a very long time.

ARCHIVES: WORLD JEWISH RELIEF: Kindertransporte Former Kindertransporte child refugees may contact World Jewish Relief: To apply to view Jewish Refugee Committee archives at London Metropolitan Archives, please contact in the first instance the JRC Archives at Stanmore, Middx.: see next page

Ex members of Kindertransporte may also get some information from REUNION OF KINDERTRANSPORT: records are now at the Wiener Library, 4 Devonshire St, London W1B 5BH (www.wienerlibrary.co.uk) Admission is to accredited searchers with permission

Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC) of World Jewish Relief : see next page

REFUGEES

The **Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC)** of **World Jewish Relief** assisted people fleeing Nazi persecution in the 1930s and 1940s. Today the JRC no longer exists, though World Jewish Relief still continues its international humanitarian work. Archives of the JRC (administrative files and personal refugee files 1933-45 and beyond) are now stored at **London Metropolitan Archives**, but the personal files for refugees are not available for public viewing, except by persons named on the file or by their descendants (upon proof of kinship). The personal files include registration slips and papers documenting the assistance given to individuals when they arrived in Britain, and other personal information. A considerable number of former refugees are still alive; as long as that is the case the files will not be opened.

To view personal files of refugees: for immediate relatives who wish to see these personal files (or wish the archivist to search the files), a fee is payable. Normally the charge for a copy of the registration slip and of the file is £40.00

Enquirers should apply in writing to the JRC Archives, Stanmore (see below). They should give the name as it was at the time of immigration and a date and place of birth (plus current contact details). If the person named on the file is deceased, a son/daughter can apply, giving the same information plus a copy of the death certificate and a copy of his/her birth certificate (to prove kinship).

To view JRC administrative files at London Metropolitan Archives: these are available for viewing upon presentation of a letter of authorisation from the JRC Archives. London Metropolitan Archives has a complete list of documents held for the JRC: they include minutes of committee meetings, regional refugee committee groups, accounts, information on concentration camp conditions, Central British Fund documents and many other files. Microfilm copies of these archives are held at the JRC Archives, Stanmore (address below).

To apply to view JRC archives at London Metropolitan Archives, please contact in the first instance

JRC Archives
c/o: A.J.R., Jubilee House
Merrion Avenue
Stanmore, Middx. HA7 4RL Telephone: 020 8385 3076
Fax: 020 8385 3080 e-mail: jrc@ajr.org.uk

Microfilms of the administrative archives, but not the personal files are also in the Army Zähl Gottlieb collection, University of Essex Library, Wivenhoe, Essex

this page contains information kindly supplied by the JRC archivist to the Library, 2006

SEARCHES

My mother, who was a refugee from Graz, recently asked me to help her locate her "best friend" from her days in Graz. My mother was born May 21, 1932. Her friend would be of similar age and my mother believes she was put on a kindertransport in 1938 or 1939. Her friend's name was Mira Schwartz. Can you point me in the right direction as to how I might find Mira or her descendants? My mother's name is Sylvia Mandl Cagan. Her parents were Sidy and Kurt Mandl. **Shari Cagan Lidsky, SCLDirect@att.net**

I am still looking for poetry; asking for Personal short BIOS from all KT members in England; US, Israel and around the world, that have not necessarily been published before. (I would prefer non published Bios)

Thank you all those who have already have sent me materials. Sorry that I have not written back.

Thank you for your help; e-mail; behrendtkt2@yahoo.com Adrienne Behrendt, Generations Editor. KTA USA.

In Reunion Kindertransport Brochure 1989 and in Kindertransport 60th Anniversary 1999 under the heading 'Search' I wanted to get in touch with a girl who came to the same family as I did in Edgbaston, Birmingham. That was in 1939. Her sister in California saw the second advert and that is how we met after 60 years. She lives the other side of Birmingham now. Please contact AJR, KT office. Thank you.

Searching for name Koppold from Leipzig, came when 8 years old, has no memories, replies to AJR, KT office. Thank you.

I am searching for a Czech kindertransport child, who was one of Winton's children, by the name of HENNY BARDACH. Her parents names were Rudolf and Adele Bardach, from Prague. Through Winton's site, I found documents that she was on a train, and at some time was re-united with her parents. She may have been in contact with the Jewish Refugee Committee, as noted in a column on Winton's typed list of passengers. If you have had any contact or correspondence, I would so much appreciate you forwarding anything you may have. My cousin and I have been searching for her for a long time. She is our aunt, born 1931. Thank you, Denise Branham denbranham@shaw.ca Canada.

I came to England in 1938 at the age of 16. It was a Hachsharah group from Germany. We were temporarily settled at the Thornham Fold farm in Rochdale nr. Manchester. We had a lot of contact with the Kindertransport group. I would be delighted to get in touch with anyone I remember from this ever shrinking group. Nathan Freund formerly Menschenfreund. 120 West 97 street apt 4j. New York N.Y. 10025. email freundnathan@yahoo.com.

My great aunt and uncle took two children from the Kindertransport just before the War. I would be very interested in finding their names and hopefully contacting them. All I know is there was a boy and a girl. The girl was Alice but I never knew the boy's name. They went to live with Daniel Lambert and his wife, Frances Hannah who had a big house in the Lickey Hills area of Birmingham. I believe Alice married a Solomon Gould? Doreen Medcraft, email Doreen.medcraft@btinternet.com.

NOTICES

Jewish Care are now open every Sunday for a social programme. Members of the Kindertransport group are eligible to join the Centre. Please call Rachelle Lazarus, Centre Co-ordinator for more information on 020 8202 2404.

My late uncle Charles Lyon-Maris ran a Jewish boarding school in Hove in 1938-40 and his sons think that a number of Kinder attended the school. I am endeavouring to arrange a reunion of Beaconsfield pupils, as the school was called, in 2008, and if anyone would like details by email

d.schaverien@btopenworld.com There is a reunion website brightonarea.co.uk/beacon containing photos/records etc. David Schaverien pupil 1950-53 Reunion Organiser.

Two books which we hope to review for the next Newsletter are *And then there were Four* by Lisa Klein and *Letter to Alexander* by Renata Laxova. I am still looking for Reviewers who would like to receive books and write a Review for the Newsletter. *BL*

BIRTHDAY

Fred Dunston, happy 90th birthday on the 29 May. Fred is the only person we know who, in Vienna helped to organise the processing of names to go onto the Kindertransports.

DEATHS

John Charles Zelenka Martin OBE, who came to England on a Kindertransport from Prague in 1939 passed away on 29th March.

Dr Otto Fleming dearest husband of Dorothy, a well known speaker in Sheffield, sadly died this March. Heartfelt condolences to Dorothy and family. *Bertha*

Robert Rosner (Vienna) died in April. Condolences to the family.

I am very sad to report the passing of a wonderful brilliant man **Shmuel Geller** erev *Pesach*. If you turn to the Reunion Book of 1999 the memorial pages and articles preceding them, were his painstaking work. It is this work, which will, like a *Yiskor* book, never be discarded, and will make sure he will be remembered by all of us with gratitude. May he rest peacefully. *Bertha*.

It has been brought to our attention that **Alec Berwitz** has died. His work on behalf of European Refugees in the thirties was tireless. He was closely associated with the Millisle Farm project for which many have reason to be grateful. An ardent Zionist he gave generously of his time, energy and money. His efforts on behalf of the JNF., JPA and the establishment of Nachlat Belfast ensure the everlasting association of this community, as well as of himself, with the State of Israel.

REVIEW

Kindertransportees honoured at Medway Little Theatre

The play *Kindertransport*, by Diane Samuels, which Medway Little Theatre produced between 1 and 10 February last, honoured those of our members who had experienced first hand that aspect of 20th century history, with an invitation to a performance and a buffet reception.

The play's director, Stephen Oliver, told us he had been particularly touched by the tragedy of the children fortunate enough to get a chance of life against what would have been the certainty of the gas chambers. The play draws together the lives of the many thousands of children who had to leave their homes and families and settle into a strange country and culture, being torn in loyalty and emotion.

To hate one's country and to love it at the same time; to accept and be loyal to the country of one's rescue together create a terrible dilemma, even for a child. The child Eva is transferred from a prosperous and professional family in Germany to a working-class family in Manchester. Her foster mother Lil has a big heart and has at least some imagination as to what her visitor is trying to cope with. Eva appreciates her love, and by the time war starts in September 1939 and her parents are trapped in Germany, she has become a real citizen of her new country and has assumed a new name, Evelyn.

When, by chance, her mother Helga survives the Holocaust and comes to claim Eva after the war, Evelyn rejects her mother and the chance of a 'new' life in the USA with her. Evelyn has by now had herself legally adopted and baptized. Even when she marries she keeps knowledge of her origins from her husband.

The play takes place in the spare, storage room of Evelyn's house. She wants to sell the house following her divorce, and her daughter Faith who is setting up her own home, is being offered various domestic items. The development of Eva to Evelyn is played out side by side on stage, with the foster-mother Lil being shown as the protector of the child Eva/Evelyn, even supporting her in her disputes with Faith.

Throughout the play the shadowy menace of the Ratcatcher of Hameln (perhaps better known to us as the slightly more benevolent Pied Piper of Hamelin of Browning's poem) reminds Eva of the childhood fears which still haunt her as an adult. There is no happy ending to *Kindertransport* as the differences of ages and attitudes highlight. The four of us transportees were made to feel very welcome indeed by the actors and company and we were very moved by this as we remembered...I felt frozen in time.

Edith Bown

GOLLYWOG

December 1938. The train full of Jewish children had reached Holland at daybreak. The children were given soup and a place to sleep. In the afternoon they were placed aboard a ship sailing for England.

Many of us, especially the bigger boys and girls had been crying all night. They knew that they would probably never again see their parents or return to their old homes. The smaller children, like me, were too tired to be noisy and went to sleep again.

The ship reached England late in the afternoon. We were taken to see the lady from the Jewish Relief Committee in the ship's lounge. She was an old woman sitting in a wheelchair, a crutch in one hand, she used the other hand to hold a trumpet to her ear. I was afraid of her until I saw her smile.

She talked a while to the children and gave away toys to some of the smaller ones. I, for one, received a gollywog.

A gollywog is usually a soft doll copying an ironic effigy of a minstrel. If the cartoon of such a minstrel is not attractive, how repulsive is the same thing as a toy?

The ugliest of toy monkeys is a beauty in comparison. And my Golly was, perhaps, the most hideous imaginable of all his kind.

He was made of black velvet with a huge bullet head and a limp body. Arms and legs were loosely sewn on. He had a few black lambswool curls and the face was a grotesque minstrel mask: great grinning mouth, dead black on white eyes and touch of red paint for cheeks. A creature nobody wanted! I didn't want it either, but was too polite to refuse a present outright.

Later on I pitied the gollywog. At night in bed you can't see the mask of a face. A lonely child can hug it and speak to it. Also, a gollywog doesn't mind which language a child uses.

In London the children were met by all sorts of strange English people. I remember, for one, a tall man wearing a grey raincoat and a stocky dark-haired Welsh couple. They all left for various destinations. Only I waited confidently. I was one of the few lucky children on that train which knew exactly to where it was going. My grandfather was to take me to Birmingham to live with my uncle Wolfgang Schiff.

Grandfather was an expert at keeping my thoughts away from unpleasant things. He had a painting book and water colours, and he told me such a fib about Uncle Wolf and his wife!

The first night in Uncle Wolf's house was a thoughtful one, spent in Auntie Anny's large strange spare bed.

"Do you know Golly," I was thinking more than speaking (and certainly in German) "if the Germans want to hurt us and the English are protecting us, then they cannot like each other." The gollywog was very soft and warm. It gave me a comfortable feeling of being at home.

Uncle Wolf and Aunt Anny were childless and were happy to have me live there. They bought me toys and puzzles and my very own stool to sit on in front of the fire. I felt they had taken me in, golly and all. Even now, so many years later, I still feel my mother could easily have left me there.

Mummy was surprised that Aunt Anny didn't show any sign of being sad when she came to take me to London about a month later. But I felt clearly that Auntie didn't even want me to hug her goodbye, because she had to keep such a tight hold on herself for the sake of grown-up behaviour.

Yes, both golly and I knew exactly how horribly tears can hurt when you are absolutely not allowed to cry.

In the weeks, months and years that followed no other grown-up was willing to tolerate my gollywog, just in the same way that nobody seemed to love or want me when I wasn't behaving as I ought.

Even in my own family, with whom I lived a short time in 1939 in London, I was considered cruel when, once, I pulled the cat by its fur. Even now I still believe that the animal had felt far less pain than I myself endured every day when my tight curls were brushed and combed.

It was worst at school, making music was the only time I could be normal. Everything else was wrong all the time: my English which was far from good, my clothes, the German letters I wrote, the way I held a pencil or pen, being sent out for scripture and probably even the simple fact that a little Jew had very fair curls and bright blue eyes. There were also larger boys who liked bullying defenceless little girls.

Later in 1939, I was sent to a tiny back water village to stay with an old miss, who had, or so it seemed to me, never in her life ever been young. I felt completely pushed out, unwanted and cut off from all I loved. When war was declared, I became and "enemy alien", an object of scorn and even hate if I dared to speak a single word of German.

I started wetting my bed, suffering from indigestion, fidgeting on chairs and biting nails. The miss was able to stop the bed wetting, but most of the other bad habits prevailed for years and years until I finally got rid of them as an adult (or not at all).

Of one thing, however, I was absolutely certain; as long as I was strong enough to defend my gollywog, the one creature even less welcome than I, I was strong enough to survive. And during all this time, I had somehow managed to keep my gollywog – I fetched it home from dustbins, rag bags, firewood boxes etc. and also screamed my head off if anybody threatened it.

I was totally at the mercy of a vicious circle. The older and shabbier the gollywog grew, the more people wanted to get rid of it. The more I identified with the dirty, ugly thing and felt I must take care of it for the sake of my own life. If I let golly down, then the frown-ups were bound to do the same with me.

But finally, my identification with the gollywog disappeared quite suddenly and without pain. In the late summer of 1940, Aunt Kit came and took me away from the old miss. Aunt Kit was my mother's younger sister and looked so like her that I insisted on calling her "Mummy" (very embarrassing for her) all the way to Oxford.

"I know you are not Mother", I said. I had no other expression for feeling that she represented my very own family and all the love I had been missing.

Of course it was wonderful to be with Mother again but the family in Oxford was more than just her. There was a dog that snapped at me first and then became a good friend. There was the English family with two children who defended me. There was their mum! She was far more than just mum of her own two – she was just "Mum" to all the children in our road. They ran in and out of our house and her children (with me alongside) ran in and out of many other neighbouring houses.

I, the tousle-headed foreign little girl, was completely drawn into that family the very moment I arrived. How could I ever even imagine then, that I was unwanted or not loved?

About three weeks later I noticed by accident that golly was not to be found. I wasn't upset; nothing was going to happen to him here. "He's gone back to his own country," said Mum and added "he didn't get on with our dog."

In the years that followed, as long as "Mum" lived, even when she had become a very old lady, I never caught her throwing away a single thing that could still be of any use to a child. I feel sure that she had washed golly thoroughly, sewn on a new white skin and embroidered him a nicer face. Probably the creature was very soon cuddling clean and soft in bed with another child that needed it. **Family Nash of Valentia Road, Headington, remained my family, which I visited every second or third year until my sister died a couple of years ago.**

Would the author of the above story please make themselves known.

Continuation of George Ettinger

My parents arranged to give away or "sell" for a few shillings most of the furniture in our flat and had our personal items, linen, books, typewriter and a few pictures, packed in crates and sent to New York – we never saw these things again. We moved into one room in the flat of a distant cousin in the IXth district of Vienna (Perzelsingasse). My parents registered me at the Jewish Grammar School, the Peretz Clajes Gymnasium, but I never got to attend any classes.

By now many Jewish men were being arrested and sent to concentration camps (Dachau, Mauthausen, Buchenwald). My father spent a few days hidden in the flat of cousins, where the caretaker did not know him. This saved his life. My parents arranged to have me admitted to the Jewish Community's Rothschild Hospital in Vienna, perhaps for a week, just before 10th November. My father moved from one small hotel to another every night, and so escaped being sent to a concentration camp. A miracle.

Now the highest priority was to escape, never mind where to, never mind what we could take with us. The Evian conference took place (see Golda Meir's autobiography, Reference 2). It is only just now, sixty-five years later, that I have read how it was possible that Santo Domingo, the small Dominican Republic, offered to give homes to 100,000 German and Austrian Jews. My parents obtained visas for us and we started to learn Spanish. As the Evian Conference determined my fate I shall reproduce here some paragraphs from William Libsky's article (Ref.3), which explains¹ all:

"The Evian Conference mentioned above was held in 1938. At the conference were 32 countries whose purpose was to solve the problem of Jewish refugees. Even observers from Nazi Germany were allowed to audit the proceedings. Jews, as such, were not represented because "they did not have their own state" (remember that was one of the goals of the Manifesto given to Britain as outlined above). Chaim Weizman, the leading spokesman of the Jews, was prohibited from speaking even in private at the conference because Great Britain protested against allowing him to speak. The US failed to even set a tone conducive to rescuing refugees, by stating at the outset that none of the nations would be expected to receive a greater number of immigrants than permitted by "existing legislation". The US then proceeded to "unanimously" state that it would continue with its annual quota of 27,379 immigrants from Germany and Austria. * As a result of this, none of the other conference participants with the exception of Santo Domingo offered to increase their quotas of immigrants. Santo Domingo offered to take 100,000 refugees. It was in no small measure because of the cynicism displayed at this conference that Hitler (who had previously offered to send Jews to the countries willing to accept them by means of luxury liners at government expense) realized that the world

could not see what he had done. This was probably one of the bases for his deciding on the "final solution" of the holocaust.

The British in the meantime used the Evian conference to turn the Manifesto on its head. British secretary of foreign affairs, Anthony Eden, aimed for a "plan that would not give the Jews any territory exclusively for their own use". There was no attention given to "justice" in government policy. Eden wrote to his private secretary: "If we must have preferences, let me mention in your ear that I prefer Arabs to Jews". His secretary noted in his own diary in 1943 that "Unfortunately A.E. is immovable on the subject of Palestine. He loves Arabs and hates Jews".

At the Evian conference, their last chance to perform an act of justice toward world Jewry, the government failed miserably in its fiduciary responsibility toward the Jews as a people and to their mandated responsibility under their League of Nations mandate, instead of allowing unrestricted or even increased Jewish immigration into Palestine, the designated homeland of the Jews, they slammed the doors shut, knowing full well that this would result in the destruction of the Jews of Europe. The Nazi observers to the Evian Conference, sensing that there were no defenders of the Jews, quite rightfully concluded that they had a free hand to deal with this powerless people. *

Gradually, some (but very few) of our friends and relatives were able to emigrate, a few to England on transit visas, very few – who had registered early – to the USA. See Golda Meir (Ref.2) about Evian – the joke was that the conference organisers had reversed the town's name intentionally, and that they meant "naïve". A few went to South America, some to Santo Domingo, some to Shanghai. One cousin, only one, spent years in a camp in Mauritius, after being captured at sea while trying to land in Eretz Israel. In 1948 she (Mirtha) was at last released and was able to go to Israel (before she was captured she had been a senior official in WIZO) Any enquiry to any consulate required one or more days' queuing in the street, in November/December weather. No progress for us with the USA. The guarantee from the Dixon family in Leitchworth was cancelled – perhaps understandably so. The American immigration quota was fully used up – as the letters from the consulate said: "Please don't worry. Your affidavit of support is satisfactory, you have just to wait your turn. Please don't bother us at the consulate meanwhile, we are very busy. We shall let you know when your turn has come."

* The US quota for Jews born in Poland was kept extremely low. Although many German and Austrian Jews had been born in Poland when it was part of the Austrian empire, they did not qualify for US visas.

And then another miracle to save our lives: through a distant cousin we heard of an underground route to Italy. Although it is so long ago I won't give the details - suffice it to say that, on payment, it was possible to go on a sleeping car into Italy. A valid exit permit (*Steuerliche Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung*) had to be obtained from the Austrian authorities, but no Italian visa was required.

So my parents decided to use this underground route for the three of us, to await the American visa in Italy. I was looking forward tremendously to this trip - it sounded like a permanent holiday! All was arranged, but then my parents heard about *Kindertransport*: Rabbi Schoenfeld, Nicholas Winton. They decided that they would try to get me on a *Kindertransport*, and they would go to Italy.

Through my uncle Edmund, who had obtained a transit visa to England to await an American visa, my parents had made contact with a Jewish family in North London. This couple felt so sorry for my parents and me that they agreed to sponsor me to stay with them until our US visa came. Through *B'nei B'rith* and WZO my name was added to the *Kindertransport* communal passport. My father was to go to Italy first (remember this was in December 1938!). My mother and I saw him off at the station in Vienna and the next day there was a telephone call to say that he had arrived safely in Trieste.

Then my English sponsors, changed their mind - probably it was too much responsibility to take in another child when they had three children themselves. So my name was removed from the *Kindertransport* list. At the last minute, my uncle Edmund and the *B'nei B'rith* Lodge persuaded the family to accept me after all. In just two or three days my mother arranged for me to get an individual passport and exit documents, and my name was added to the *Kindertransport* list (but not to the communal passport) for the 20th February 1939 departure.

The departures on *Kindertransport* have been described in many books. My mother took me to the Westbahn railway station, having packed all my new clothes and a wonderful suitcase full of food. The train went off, and (as I heard later) my mother fainted.

Somehow, she got to her room, finished her packing, and on 22nd February (the last day of validity of her Austrian exit permit) she went alone, I believe, to the Suedbahn station, and successfully passed on the underground route to Trieste, where my father was waiting. We three, my parents and I, had (provisionally) escaped!!!

My host family were wonderful - they treated me as their own child. I exchanged letters with my parents at least once a week. At first it was just a question of their awaiting the American visas - they already had the Lloyd Triestino steamship tickets. But then, (remember this was just before the war and Mussolini was getting closer to Hitler) the Italians started to search for, and deport, the 'illegal refugees' back to Austria or Switzerland.

The Dixons in Leichworth changed their mind. They cancelled their invitation so that my parents could not come to England to be with me and wait for the American visas. We had never met the Dixons.

So, here comes the next miracle: when my hosts read my parents' letters they decided to send me with their very presentable English clerk to see the Dixonys to persuade them to renew their sponsorship. This was just a few weeks before the war and they agreed to sponsor my parents after all! I sent a two-word telegram to my parents saying "*Dixongarantie erneuert*". The spelling was distorted by linguistic problems of transmission, but after they received the officially renewed guarantee papers by post, my parents were able to obtain an English visa at the beginning of August. On 6th August 1939 my parents arrived at Victoria railway station. My hosts arranged with their relatives to lend my parents a flat in north London.

Within three days my parents had found a room in Finsbury Park, and emigration seemed to have started, not unsuccessfully (of course, no work permits - my parents had some support from my father's sister in Poland, and some help from *B'nei B'rith*). A few days later I was evacuated with the North Western Polytechnic from Kentish Town to Luton. I communicated with my parents by post card.

The war broke out and my parents and I survived it. The few relatives and friends who got to the USA survived, but those who could not get visas and had to stay behind were murdered.

To be concluded in the next Newsletter.