



# Kindertransport

A special interest group of the Association of Jewish Refugees

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**Contact: Andrea Goodmaker at AJR,  
Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore,  
Middlesex HA7 4RL  
Tel : 44 (0) 20 8385 3070  
Fax : 44 (0) 20 8385 3080  
e-mail: [andrea@ajr.org.uk](mailto:andrea@ajr.org.uk)**

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Editor: Bertha Leverton**

**Chairman:  
Erich Reich**

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

Dear Kinder and Friends,

The 70<sup>th</sup> Reunion of Kindertransport to be held Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008 at the JFS School, Kenton, Middlesex is almost upon us so if you have not booked please do so with the enclosed application form. The closing date is the **1 November 2008**.

I am going to Israel after Yom Kippur and will be back at the end of October, and wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Best wishes from our committee and Andrea.

**This Newsletter is shorter than usual as we are all busy putting the final touches to our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.**

**Most importantly this will probably be the last Celebration/Reunion of its kind, so do invite your offspring and close family to celebrate together with us this very unique occasion.**

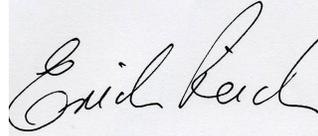
We have had several enquiries regarding arrangements for the 70<sup>th</sup> Kindertransport Celebrations whilst the detailed information will be sent to you nearer the date please take note of the following:

- 1) Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances the House of Lords visit will not take place
- 2) The visit to Bevis Marks and Liverpool Street Station is now full
- 3) There are a few places still for the Imperial War Museum
- 4) The only transport we are able to arrange is a shuttle from Kingsbury Underground Station to JFS and back in the evening

From 9.00 in the morning from Kingsbury -17.30 to 18.30 in the evening from JFS

## A WONDERFUL CELEBRATION OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT

I wish you all *Shana Tovah*.



### Three Influential Words

Both on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we recite during Musaf that emotive prayer, *untinah tokef*, those final heartrending words of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz. The text was communicated by him in a dream to Kalonymos ben Meshullam. As the words move from the Divine judgement and our possible fate, the clarion call of *teshuvah*, *tefillah u'zedakah* (repentance, prayer and charity) rings out as the means of averting the evil decree that might be the lot of the individual. Much has been written about the importance of these three elements in our lives – ignore them at our peril. *Teshuvah* (repentance) – literally means “return,” to return to the path that G-d advised us to choose in the first place and from which we may have strayed. “*I have set before you the blessing and the curse, now choose life that you and your children may live.*” (Deuteronomy 30:19) Choose life, the right way, if not your fate is in your own hands. True *teshuvah* involves G-d and our fellows. We can only hope that we can appease G-d with our return to Him and that He hears our pleas. What may not be so easy is to appease our fellows and ask for their forgiveness; shame, embarrassment and hurt may make the attempt difficult. The rabbis point out, unless we make peace with our fellows, we cannot expect Divine forgiveness.

Prayer, *tefillah*, occupies much of our time during the High Holydays, particularly on Yom Kippur. Whether we understand every word, whether we concentrate on every prayer, whether we, as individuals, say every word, these prayer periods give us time for reflection and introspection, of making the prayers make **us** the better person that we should be. If we are honest with ourselves, we must acknowledge that we **can** be a better person to improve, as King Solomon said, “For there is no man who does not sin...” (1Kings 8:46)

Charity, *zedakah*, makes even heavier demands on us. Repentance and prayer are ways to help ourselves and demands our all, *zedakah* is the way we help others and, likewise, demands our all. An act of giving is not a means of self-aggrandisement; true *zedakah* is an anonymous affair. Charity is not just a matter of money, but also of gifts in kind and gifts of time.

Finally, these three words characterise the three Festivals of Tishri. Repentance is the reflective period of Rosh Hashanah, prayer is the keynote of Yom Kippur and *zedakah* underpins Sukkot with its concept of hospitality. This is exemplified by the symbolic welcome to the seven guests into the *sukkah* (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David) as well of course real live people. The solemnity of the High Holydays ends with the sounds of joy and happiness, that, perhaps, we have achieved bettering ourselves a little.

*Shanah Tovah and a happy, healthy and peaceful year.*

Bernd Koschland

### Berlin Monument

A new children's monument by Frank Meisler will be unveiled outside the Friedrichstrasse Bahnhoff on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

The monument depicts seven children five of whom are facing away from the station wearing the yellow Magen David. Only two 'Kinder' are facing the station in hope of leaving. There will be a plaque beside the monument explaining the story

The event commences on Sunday at Noon probably at the Berlin Town hall with the mayor or deputy mayor attending. The unveiling will take place at Friedrichstrasse between 14.30 and 15.30

Our contact in Berlin Lisa Schaeffer is organising special prices for accommodation and flights as well as the possibility of attending synagogue for those who wish to come for the week end.

If you require further detailed information please contact Lisa direct at

Mobile 0049(0)1733905855

Tel 0049(0)3060401021

e-mail [schaeffer.lisa@berlin.de](mailto:schaeffer.lisa@berlin.de)

Address Muglestraase 14 10247 Berlin Germany

### **SUITCASE: KINDERTRANSPORT 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENT AT LIVERPOOL STREET STATION**

In early December 2008, Liverpool Street Station will come alive with the stories and memories of children who arrived on the Kindertransport in a new and exciting piece of theatre, "Suitcase". The play is being devised by Dr Ros Merkin, Reader in Drama at Liverpool John Moores University, who is looking for the memories of the children, waiting foster parents and those who were involved in organising the Kindertransport. The play focuses on the moment of arrival at the station and Ros is very keen to hear from anyone who came through Liverpool Street and has specific memories of it, particularly:

What did you bring with? What did you have to leave behind? What clothes were you wearing? What was the thing that struck you the most when you got to the station? Who was the first person that you saw? Were you given anything to eat at the station and if so, what? And what did you think of it? Was anyone there to meet you? If so, who and what happened when you met? How did you leave the station?

If you would like to share your memories of this, you can contact us by email: [jane@khpl.co.uk](mailto:jane@khpl.co.uk) or telephone: 020 7503 1640 or write to Jane Merkin, KHPL, 1 Foskett Mews, Shacklewell Lane, London E8 2BZ. I am collating all the stories for Ros and will pass everything on to her. I will also be attending the Kindertransport lunch on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and would be delighted to hear your memories then if you prefer.

This is a project that is very close to our hearts – our mother, Johanna Hacker came from Vienna on the Kindertransport, together with her two sisters. We hope that "Suitcase" will publicise the history of the Kindertransport and all the children who survived because of it. And a final request – we are desperately looking for funding for this project, and if anyone has any suggestions or would be interested in making a donation, however small, we would love to hear from you!

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### **Kindertransport pensions**

After a long campaign spearheaded by former KT Chairman Hermann Hirschberger, certain Kindertransport refugees who fled to Britain, and whose parents were of German nationality, may be entitled to an increase in their German retirement pensions following a change in British pension law announced by the Minister for Pensions Reform, Mike O'Brien.

Following a ruling at the European Court of Human Rights, in the 1990s the German state pension system was opened up to Kindertransport survivors, enabling those without pre-war German insurance contributions to 'buy in' to the German system provided they applied for, and were granted, German nationality.

However, the contributions they had made to the British social insurance system before 1948 had the effect of reducing the value of the German pension. Owing to pan-European rules on how periods of insurance in different countries affect each other, the German retirement pensions were reduced for every year of contribution made in Britain between 1939 and 1948. Kinder who began making contributions in 1939, until 1948, therefore received no German retirement pension, whereas someone who began paying contributions in 1943 would receive approximately 4/9 of the retirement pension.

The amendment now tabled by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will enable Kinder who wish to apply to have their UK pre-1948 credits removed from national insurance records. In most cases, this is likely to boost the value of their German pensions. The change could affect Kinder who entered employment between 1939 and 1948 in Britain.

Around 150 Kinder affected by the present rules are said to be known to the DWP and it is anticipated that others will come forward once the amendment becomes law. When applying for the proposed increase in their pensions, it is envisaged that Kinder will also be able to claim for up to four years back-pay.

It is expected that the Pensions Bill including the proposed amendment will receive Royal Assent in late autumn and further information will be published in the Journal when it is available.

Kinder wishing to enquire about the possibility of receiving an increase in their pensions are advised to contact the DWP International Pension Centre on 0191 218 7777 and ask to be referred to the claims department. A case worker will then make contact to advise the next steps, which will include having the claim transferred to Germany for processing.

*Enquiries concerning advice on Holocaust restitution and compensation matters should continue to be sent to Michael Newman at Central Office for Holocaust Claims (UK), Jubilee House, Merrion Avenue, Stanmore, Middx HA7 4RL, by fax to 020 8385 3075, or by email to [mnewman@ajr.org.uk](mailto:mnewman@ajr.org.uk)*