



Kindertransport

A special interest group of
The Association of Jewish Refugees



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



From the Editor's Desk

Dear Kinder and Friends

This edition covers a variety of topics, many pertaining to refugees, and draws attention to a letter on this topic. An appeal is made to 2nd and 3rd generation of 'Kinder' to join our organising committee. While working at the Royal Free \hospital. I spoke to a Jewish volunteer who mentioned a friend of his was making a sculpture about the Kindertransport. I asked who he was and the volunteer rang and let me speak to him. The sculptor, Maurice Blik, said it was about evacuees. I asked for an article which he wrote and you can read in this issue. The picture he sent is copyright and published with permission. After all many of us Kinder were also evacuees. I wish you a very happy Chanukah.

Bernd.

The summer is over and the High Holidays have passed. I hope you all had a good summer and were with your families over the holidays. Now we are heading for winter, Chanukah and Xmas both at the same time. 2017 promises to be an interesting year what with Brexit and Trump let's hope it won't be earth shattering.

Dec 2018 will be our 80th anniversary any bright ideas for those who are still around! We are in need of younger blood in our management committee. It would be wonderful if any of your offspring would like to join us!





7=8?

No, I didn't fail maths at school! What is the 7? This number occurs many times in biblical and later times: days of the week, according to the Torah 7 days of Pesach, etc. One particular 7 is the 7 branched candelabrum of the Tabernacle and the one in the first Temple. The one from the second Temple features on the Arch of Titus in Rome (See picture below) as part of the booty captured at the destruction of the second Temple. The Menorah became the symbol of Jews as can be seen in the inscriptions of the ancient catacomb in Rome. As a symbol it was in time replaced by the Magen David which stands alongside the 7 branched Menorah the emblem of *Medinat Israel* the State of Israel.



But 7 did become 8! When Judah the Maccabees retook Jerusalem, entered the Temple and rededicated it. He lit a temporary DIY Menorah – 7 branched (as in the Temple) and lit it with oil from the only jar – a one day supply - still intact with the seal of the High Priest. The oil, as is well known, lasted for eight days. According to the Book of Maccabees, 8 also recalled the Festival of the 8 days of Sukkot, as the Jews could only celebrate it in hiding in caves because of the Edict of Intolerance* of Antiochus IV Epiphanes which proscribed Jewish practices. *“They (the people) recalled how only a short time before, they had kept that feast (Tabernacles) while they were living like wild animals in the mountain and caves.....”* (2 Maccabees 10:7 - 8)

The celebration of Sukkot had possibly a deeper significance. After all it is celebrated just under two months before Chanukah in Tishri. Yes, its observance at that time marked freedom of Jewish worship. I feel that the underlying observance of the *Lulav* of Sukkot also represented a military victory and freedom of religious worship. The palm branch was a symbol of victory among Greeks and . Coins of Johan Hyrcanus*, a descendant of the Maccabees, and of Herod*, have the *Lulav - a palm branch-*



*Lulav on a coin of John Hyrcanus***

as a symbol; of victory. Thus Judah Maccabeus seeing the *Lulav* as a religious ritual (Leviticus 23.40) he possibly regarded it also a symbol of victory over the Syrian armies even though the garlanded palm was Hellenistic.[p

Thus the Festival of Chanukah's three symbols represent the fight to practice our faith (represented by the Menorah of 7 branches, putting that into practice in the right

place (the Temple) or wherever the 8 branched *Chanukiah*) is lit. Finally the (Sukkot celebrated for 8 days according to the Torah) which recalled ultimate victory but also recalls the celebration of this Festival and Judaism as a whole under horrendous persecution, be it in the time of Antiochus IV or any age to our own times. Lamps decorated from 1st century CE after the destruction of the Temple” *express the national Jewish aspirations and hopes for the restoration of the Temple which lay in ruins....”* (Wachsmann , *The Sea of Galilee Boat* p240) Aspirations which we express in our daily prayers and will usher in a world-wide messianic peace.



The Menorah on the Arch of Titus in Rome

* The Edict was to ensure Hellenistic worship amongst his subjects and thus prohibited Jewish practises, e.g. Shabbat, circumcision, etc.; Disobedience meant the death penalty.

** John Hyrcanus, Ruler of Judea, 134-104 BCE. Herod King of Judea 37-4 BCE

Bernd

CALLING 2nd AND 3rd GENERATION KINDER

The Kindertransport is a Special Interest Group of the AJR and is headed up by a Committee that discusses issues of interest to the Kinder and organises events and speakers for the monthly lunches

It would be beneficial for us to have some 2nd and 3rd Generation (children and grandchildren) Kinder to help us with various projects and also to sit on the Committee and introduce new ideas.

If you are interested please send, in confidence, a brief CV and some background to susan@jr.org.uk setting out how you could help.

Regrettably, we will be unable to accept all approaches and the Committee reserves the right to appoint their preferred candidates.

Evacuation WW2

[Maurice Bilk, a well-known sculptor, was born in Amsterdam in 1939/ After being liberated from Bergen-Belsen he came to England. His career was in Aer Education at all levels and turned eventually to sculpting. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors and one time President. He has exhibited extensively, nationally and internationally, where his works can also be seen]

A curious coincidence. In London I was waiting to board a flight to New York when a young lady, also waiting, asked me to look after her luggage whilst she went to buy some coffee. I naturally refused on security grounds but then after some persuasion relented. By coincidence again, she had the seat next to me on the flight and in conversation I mentioned that I was a sculptor. It then transpired that a relation of hers was a trustee of the British Evacuees Association [BEA] and they were looking for a sculptor to make a sculpture to memorialise the Evacuation. What followed was my meeting with some members of the BEA and hearing some of their experiences of the time. They also showed me some ideas that had been presented to them.

Having heard their stories and seen what they had been shown, I felt that I could not go along with the cute 'chocolate box' images of children they had in mind. My concept was of bewildered confused children taken from their home and familiar surroundings, to live, who knows where and with who knows whom. After contemplating this for a while, I presented the BEA with my maquette, (scale model). It was a row of children of various ages, holding hands and laden with their luggage. To the casual glance they appear to be just that, a row of children about to embark on a trip, a vacation or similar journey. A closer look revealed some anomalies. Some had their hands the wrong way round, here and there the torso was 180 degrees round, feet on the wrong side, subtle but nevertheless one could see it with a little concentration. When one of the trustees saw it he got the idea immediately, "you have got it exactly" he said **"we were going every which way"**. Thus the title for the memorial.

This was 12 years ago and the BEA have been fundraising ever since. About 6 months ago, funds in place, I started making the memorial. It is now at the foundry being moulded to cast into bronze by the 'lost wax' process. It is the traditional way of making bronze sculpture and has been in use for 5000 years. Many sculptures made this way have survived in pristine condition. It is a very labour intensive procedure but the best way of making fine high quality bronzes.

In 2017 the finished sculpture will be sited at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, a beautiful purpose built site and the national location for civil and military war memorials. It is visited by countless school parties as well as the general public and tourists from overseas. The memorial will be an enduring reminder of the history of the single biggest evacuation in British history. And the anxiety, confusion and bewilderment that on lookers feel when they experience the memorial, will echo the feelings of the children at the time.

Maurice Bilk

The Evacuees ©



Dear Bernd,

Many thanks for sending me this, very nice to read the coverage.

As well as many 2nd, 3rd and even one 4th generation family we had 24 Kinder on board including one - Harry Kornhauser - who, like yourself arrived at Southampton, in his case on 14th June 1939 by the SS Bremen from Bremerhaven. 80 Kinder arrived on the SS *Manhattan* March 1939. I wonder how many came on the SS *Bremen*?

Peter Hedderly

(This letter was a reply to one sent by me -BK re the SS *Bodegraven*, which featured in a previous Newsletter [Pesach 2013] as did Tante Truus, Sept 2011 & Pesach 2013)

Dear Bernd,

The next big trip planned is to Liverpool in May 2017 to commemorate the anniversary of the arrival of the SS *Bodegraven*. This arrived in Liverpool on 14th May 1940 from IJmuiden, Amsterdam, in the wake of the Nazi invasion, with 75 unaccompanied children, mostly from the Burgerweeshuis (Amsterdam Civic Orphanage) on board, some of whom should be with us on the day we hope. This voyage has been described by the AJR as "the last Kindertransport" although technically it wasn't as it wasn't pre-arranged with foster families, etc. (it was technically just a refugee transport) but as it was so clearly a "hangover" from the KT and organised by one of the KT's leading lights - Tante Truus - I think it is fair to consider it as such. The actual anniversary of the ship's arrival is Friday 19th May with the children disembarking on 20th, so as this coincides with Shabbat we will probably have the main commemoration immediately following this, starting on Sunday 21st May. AJR are also running their annual trip to Liverpool starting on this day (Sun 21st May) so it is highly likely we will link up!

Peter Hedderly



SS Bremen launched 1928

Reviews



Gaby Weiner, *Tales of Loving and Leaving*. Author House 2016

I used rabbinic interpretation methodology where one word or phrase gives rise to many laws. I review this book because p 98 mentions Kindertransport in a passing reference. More seriously, while the book traces the history of the author's family to the present day. It contains much useful and easily readable history. This is especially so of the late 1930's so relevant to our lives as Kinder. The conditions which the author's families experienced, under the heel of the Nazis, were the same as those of Kinder and their families in Austria or Germany. Reference is made for example to the 'seizure' of businesses, declaration of the individual's finances, bureaucracy to obtain travel permits, £50 guarantee to come to the UK for individuals, adults in this instance, and so on. The adults could also have been our parents, siblings or relatives.

The introduction traces the research undertaken, as already stated, is into the individual person's life but also the general historical background, for example chapter 3 which gives a good bird's eye view of the history of the town of Brody, a deeply religious community *'in the far eastern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.'* Gaby Weiner points outright at the beginning of the introduction that *'historians take their topics from society's main actors... but usually ignore the landscape of ordinary lives.'* Thus Kinder who speak or write about their lives have a vital role in the overall picture of the Shoah. Another push to write the book was, as she states *'is to give voice to people like my mother....who were harassed and maltreated during their lifetime and who may at last be granted dignity and affirmation.'* (p.xvi)

Fascinating are the accounts of the individual lives against the political and social backgrounds and their reactions. AS it comes to the 1930's one can almost live alongside the family, as Kinder went through similar experiences, of the horrors Nazi dominated Germany and especially Austria, both with endemic anti-Semitism. Borders were closed to Jewish refugees. How history has repeated itself in this day and age! Chapter 12 is intriguing. Whilst many refugees obtained UK citizenship, Steffi (the author's mother) came to the attention of MI5 and was regarded as a Communist sympathiser, allegations which eventually were untrue and after some years she was naturalised.

I thoroughly enjoyed the book and see a family come to 'life'. The skill of the author, as far as I am concerned, made me feel close to the people as if I had known them personally. It is an excellent read.

An extremely helpful family tree at the beginning enables the reader to follow more easily the stories of the individual persons mentioned. E.g. her mother Steffi. Also valuable is the bibliography.

About the Author Gaby Weiner has worked at universities in the USA, UK and Sweden and currently is Visiting Research Professor at Sussex University and Research Fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University. Apart from academic writings, *'this book is for her children. Grandchildren, extended family members and the wider reading public.'*

MIK

Ely - Kosher Evacuation?

Dr Enoch Bernstein, Head t of the Boys' Graded Primary school [pre-war JFS], wrote poignantly in his memoirs of 70 Kinder who went with the evacuated pupils of the JFS to Ely.

I lived in the vicar's house.... One (Kind) was showing signs of insanity. As his father had shot himself in his presence...The vicar's wife (Mrs Knowles) announced that the emergency powers granted by the Government, and a large empty house had been requisitioned.... I was asked if I would undertake to furnish it as a home so that the house could serve as a home for our 70 refugee boys.. [With help Dr Bernstein did so.]

Three Orphans

A cottager in one of the nine villages sent three boys to her car as they had refused either to eat or to sleep in their billet. In

Fact they had even refused to enter the house, and they had slept on the doorstep the previous night. She wanted to put them up in the vicarage, after serving them food. Would I try to persuade them? I found three little boys in the car sobbing as if their hearts would break. Two were quite young, possibly five to six years old, their brother was older, quite possibly twelve. I hurriedly collected together my scraps of Yiddish. I asked them why they had refused to eat or sleep in their billet. They answered very emphatically "It isn't kosher." I told them we'd try find a kosher billet, but while we were busy on this job, they would have to bed in a nearby house. Thereafter the driver proceeded to move towards the church. As soon as the boys made out the outline of the church they burst out sobbing again, calling out in their sobs: "*Keine Kirche keine Kirche...*" [Not (to) a church]

(They were driven to the vicarage where) I persuaded them to enter the kitchen. Here Mrs Knowles had put out a big camp bed, but she wanted them to eat first, as they had np food since leaving London forty hours earlier. The maid poured out three cups pf tea. The boys would not touch it. The milk wasn't kosher. So three cups were poured without milk. Still very dubious the oldest boy began to sip and his brothers followed suit. I then handed them a plate of bread and butter. They vigorously rejected this. "The butter isn't kosher." I asked the maid to cut some fresh bread but not to butter it. I placed the plate before them and get started. They cleared the plate quickly. [Several plates further the last with some butter and several cups of tea also with some milk]Forty hours is quite a long time for young children to fast. I drew

Mrs Knowles attention to the eldest boy. He had taken only a sip or two of his tea and a nibble at a slice of bread. The food was still not kosher but he wished to encourage his younger brothers to eat.

Extracted from JFS Alumni, October 2005 published by JFS Compressive School at which I taught 1954-1988. BK

- **Does the above article ring a bell with anyone?**

SEARCH – Can you help?

I am trying to find information on my husband's birth mother. She was Ellen Eugene Friedlander, born on November 13, 1925 in Germany, possibly Berlin or Rodenberg. Her parents were Adolf Friedlander and Ida Bonwitt. I would be interested in knowing about Ellen's life in Germany and how and where she came to Britain and what her life was like on arrival. She was later a nurse in St. Andrew's Hospital in Northampton, England. It is possible she was part of the Kindertransport. Can you help me to find out anything about her? Any information you can provide will be gratefully received. Maggie Jacobs Maggie.jacobs@orange.fr

A New Narrative for Europe: A Europe of Diaspora, an ongoing project.

The project "A Europe of Diaspora" was launched at a three-day conference in Paris in June 2015, followed by two more conferences in Budapest and Sofia and a presentation to the European Parliament in Brussels in May 2016 of its findings and a Charter for Diasporas.

Supported by a number of organisations (mainly JJS, AGBU, and ERGO) with extra finance from Brussels, the project started in Paris with 38 participants including equal numbers of Roma, Armenians and Jews from a wide range of countries and equal numbers of women and men. A core group continued with some new members joining at each conference.

For the purposes of this project, a diaspora is a transnational community, comprising a number of communities in different nation-states, sharing the same basic cultural heritage transmitted through many generations and with no plans to return to the homeland from which they originated (Jews that have relocated to Israel are no longer part of the Jewish Diaspora). Cultural heritage includes language, self-identification, stories of origins and handed-down traditions around food, music, family life and beliefs. A fuller definition of diaspora was developed during the project and is on the website: europeofdiasporas.eu that has details of the project and information gathered through it, particularly about educational material and venues of cultural sites and archives.

Armenians, Roma and Jews were chosen for the project as they are three peoples that existed as distinct diaspora long before the emergence of nation-states. All three have made positive contributions to humanity in spite of hostility towards them; and they have survived repeated pogroms, including genocide. Through this, they have developed valuable forms of adaptability in the face of religious intolerance and the racist persecution that is currently still toxic. Diaspora are a valuable asset in a world in which increasing globalisation (of communications, new developments, markets, travel and migration) ignores nation-state borders. An Assyrian joined in the third conference. Further diaspora may apply to join as the project continues and defines the terms under which each diaspora is committed to working with the others.

The basic aims of the project were to foster awareness, understanding and links between three 'core diaspora' and the general public, to encourage development within each diaspora, to form links between the three to enhance this and to provide solidarity to drive a positive role for diaspora.

The conference in Warsaw in September 2016 focused on the achievements so far (including the website, Charter, presentation in Brussels, contacts and networks established) and how outreaching the project should now be promoted. Seven sub-projects were formed by those present and will function as independent networks, using the diaspora website to circulate information:

1. **Policy for Diaspora:** negotiating with authorities over such things as promoting diaspora in education, cultural events and exchanges, tackling injustice and racist abuse.
2. **Communication:** better contact and relations with organisations and media, focusing on the positive, making better use of the website.
3. **Academic Network:** models of integration, organising a conference in Spain.
4. **Gender Issues:** promoting solidarity and leadership among women, mentoring, raising self-confidence, intergenerational and cross-community workshops, online and technology learning, LGBT issues.
5. **Best Practice Models:** DG Justice, academics working with community partners.
6. **Awareness Raising Campaign:** researching personal stories to make 2 minute film clips for U-tube, social media etc.
7. **Limmud for Diaspora:** joint interactive learning events on the pattern of Jewish Limmud, either organised between the three diasporas or as part of established Jewish Limmudim.

If funding can be raised, periodic conferences will be organised for up-dating and interaction between the seven (or more may be added) projects. All are welcome to use the website of europeofdiasporas.eu and to contact me for further information: rutheclb@gmail.com

Ruth Barnett, September 2016

The latest conference of A Europe of Diasporas, Warsaw Sept 23 -26th 2016

30 participants from 10 different European countries met for three days in Warsaw. Some had been to the four previous conferences, or some of them, and some were new to the project. The organisation of this conference seemed to run most smoothly as the seminars were in the same hotel as the accommodation – a huge building in the former ghetto with an exterior typical of post-war communist rule but creatively refurbished inside for purpose and comfort and very friendly helpful management. Just opposite and visible from most windows was a large memorial for the ghetto uprising. The once large and vibrant Jewish Community of Warsaw was very much present by the eerie silence of its absence.

The venue of the first session was the Austrian Cultural Centre that had kindly offered its premises, where we were welcomed and addressed by the director of the department for national and ethnic minorities and representatives of the three diaspora in Warsaw. This was followed by musical entertainment – mainly Jewish songs – a legacy amplifying the absence of the lost third of the Warsaw community, and supper in an open-air restaurant in the former ghetto. The following day work began in earnest: taking stock of the results of previous conferences, assessing the value of the project so far and exploring proposals for how it should be carried forward and by whom. The morning session of the third day finalised this with the members present committing to seven sub-projects that will go ahead independently but connected via the website.

Saturday evening included a two-hour walk around Warsaw's Jewish and Armenian heritage before a meal in Warsaw's lively eating hub on the edge of the Old City. Sunday afternoon started with a visit to the tiny museum and archive of Armenian Heritage and ended in the very large Polin Museum of Jewish Heritage. With state-of-the-art technology, the latter focused on a thousand years of Jewish history followed by a smaller section on WWII and the Holocaust and a very small gallery for the post-war history. The Jewish guide did her best to make it 'come alive' but she was clearly anxious and limited by the time available. Some of us continued to peruse the galleries after she left. It was striking that the responsibility of the invading Germans and Russians and that of the Jews themselves (organising the ghetto and transports etc.) was greatly emphasised with little emphasis on the role of non-Jewish neighbours. The atrocity of Jedwabne* was mentioned on one panel and indication made that there were other such events. The Warsaw community is clearly not yet ready to embrace the full reality.

This conference generated a different, more intimate and work-focused atmosphere than the previous four, with an unspoken determination that past achievements were to be built on through the seven continuing sub-projects on Policy, Improving Communication, Raising Awareness of Diaspora, Gender Issues, *Limmud* for Diaspora, Academic Networking and Best Practice Models. Anyone interested in more

Information on the projects should be at www.europeofdiasporas.eu

Ruth Barnett, who was at the conference

*NE Poland; pogrom took place on 10th July 1941 perpetrated by the Germans and local police

SHELTER - for Refugees

The word refugee is one heard and seen daily in and on the media. The end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries saw Jews arriving in the UK from East Europe. Others fled from Germany and parts of Europe in the 1930's including us Kinder. Post war saw the resettlement of Shoah survivors and 1956 from Hungary. Lastly the flight of Jews from Arab Countries after the establishment of Israel. The list given is not exclusive but samples of Jews arriving in the UK. The current currency of the word refugee focuses on the mass migration from the Middle East and Africa.

A late friend of mine who came on a Kindertransport in his teens together with some others turned to the Jews' Temporary Shelter (JTS) for help but were not admitted because the Shelter was full. Instead they were put into general hostel in East London which was not really suitable. Possibly other Kinder passed through the Shelter.

What was this Shelter? Jews were arriving from Eastern Europe and needed help. Simon Cohen (AKA Shimon Becker – i.e. a baker) opened his premises as a crude shelter for Jews he met at the docks in London in 1885. The premises were inspected by Jewish Worthies who found the premises unsuitable, Hermann Landau, a stockbroker and immigrant. Opened a building in Great Garden Street, East End, despite opposition from Board of Guardians (now known as Jewish Care) and Jewish opposition to immigrants. It was known as the Poor Jews' Temporary Shelter – Poor dropped some years later (now known as JTS). After some years it moved to a purpose-built Shelter in Mansell Street also in the East E. Staff would like Shimon Becker go to the docks to assist immigrants and bring them to the Shelter and so prevent people falling into the hands of Missionaries and girls from the white slave traffic. The people would be housed for a short time before moving on. Mansell Street operated till a few years after the war; during the war it was used by American forces. In the end it was felt the Victorian premises no longer served its purpose and they were sold and a new Shelter set up in Willesden in NW London. There it also served as a centre for the local Jewish community. Finally, the Shelter was hardly used for its rightful purpose – some used it as a cheap hotel! In the 1990's after long debate it was rented at a pepper corn rent to Hillel House. When Hillel no longer needed it, the Shelter was sold.

However, JTS still exists. It lives on the income from investment and a few bequests and donations; no appeal for funds has been made since about 1985. Funds are dispersed from investment income by a grants committee that meets weekly by conference call. We do not deal with a client personally, only through an application on behalf of the client from a recognised organisation, such as Jewish Care, Norwood and Local Authorities. Grants are given solely for housing and accommodation needs, e.g. furniture and the like. We have a part-time Administrator and a Council of which the grants committee is part. A Trustee of the JTS



Cover of 1985 Annual
Report of JTS by
Phineas May



Hermann Landau, initiator of the Jews' Temporary Shelter

Valediction Memorial 'To the parents who let their children go ...'

'Goodbye, be good, look after your brother/sister, be polite to your English guardians – and write often ...'

These are the last words the Kindertransport children would hear from their parents, most of whom perished in the Holocaust.

As a permanent reminder of the courage of the parents who let their children go, it is planned to erect a memorial in Prague's main railway station, Hlavni Nadrazi, from which most of the 'Winton trains' departed. The memorial, which will be mounted on a plinth, is to be made mainly in bronze and glass. Hands modelled in the glass have been cast using the hands of descendants of children put onto the train. It is planned to have the memorial in place by March 2017 to mark the day the first train left Prague.

Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines MBE, 87, who arrived in the UK in August 1939, says: 'This means so much for our children and grandchildren. By involving the younger generations, we want to show the sacrifice our parents made so that their families would live. Lady Grenfell-Baines is working with fellow *Kinder* Zuzana Maresova and Tomas Kraus, Chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities, to raise the £100,000 needed to build and maintain the bronze and glass memorial.

Milena Green

