



Kindertransport

A special interest group of

The Association of Jewish Refugees
SERVING HOLOCAUST REFUGEES AND SURVIVORS NATIONWIDE



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

Dear Kinder and Friends

From the Editor's Desk

Normally this edition would have appeared for Pesach, but I felt it would have come to quickly after the last one for January. But then, while mulling over this thought, negotiations were going on to invite a most notable guest. Then came the confirmation - HRH Prince Charles is hosting Kinder the day after the reunion at St James's Palace. This will be the third time that we shall be honoured by His Royal Highness. You will also find news of other events to mark this 75th anniversary of the start of Kindertransport.

On more 'mundane?' matters please keep items and comments coming in for the next edition. Your items become in every sense part of the records to be preserved of the Kindertransport. Also it would be interesting to have your comments on the reunion, the visit to St. James's Palace, the symposium for the next edition in September. Material must be in by mid-Jul.

Kindertransport has become quite a frequent subject of university dissertations. I have received quite a number of requests for help and answering them is most interesting and demanding. Queries cover many angles, personal recollections, books and media information, contrast between Kindertransport and evacuation as regards finding homes and how individuals were treated, how far is Kindertransport known generally and so on.

Enjoy this commemorative year!

Bernd.



From your Chairman

Dear Kinder

Despite the awful return of winter weather spring is, hopefully, just around the corner. A few wonderful holidays were also upon us Pesach, Yom Atzmauth etc. Let us not though forget Yom Hashoah that dreadful period in our history. We remembered the Holocaust when we meet for our monthly luncheon on the 9th April. Meanwhile I hope you are all looking forward to the 75th Anniversary celebrations of that unique decision by the British Parliament to allow us in to this country. This will take place at the Jews' Free School on Sunday the 23rd June.

Great Honour

The AJR-Kindertransport committee is thrilled to announce that His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales has kindly offered to host a reception for the Kinder at St James's Palace on Monday 24 June from 12pm - 2pm as part of our events to mark the 75th anniversary of the Kindertransport.

Spaces are limited and will be offered initially to those Kinder coming to the Kindertransport reunion on 23 June at JFS. Application forms to attend the reception at St James's Palace and the reunion at JFS have been sent to you and are also available by emailing kt@ajr.org.uk

It is a great honour to be invited by His Royal Highness and a wonderful recognition of the high esteem in which he holds the Kinder. The reception at St James's Palace will be part of an historic three days of events for the Kinder and our families from around the world to socialise, renew acquaintances and share their experiences.

All the very best and Shalom

SYMPOSIUM

The symposium on the Kindertransport, being organised by the Leo Baeck Institute London (LBI) in cooperation with the German Historical Institute London (GHIL), the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies and with Aberystwyth University (School of European Languages), will now be held on Tuesday 25 June at the GHIL. Details on how to book will be circulated in due course but in the meantime questions can be emailed to info@leobaeck.co.uk

Moses, Pesach and Jellies

“Hi Moses, G-d here. Instruct the people regarding eating Matzah for seven days and ensure that neither Chametz be found in their tents, nor the sand-which-is there, nor anywhere in their possession.”

“Thanks, Lord. I know what matzah is, but what else can they eat? Seven days of matzah is boring. What is chametz? Give me the details as I only will be asked for them.”

“ I’ll provide; don’t worry. There’s manna and quails also. Have faith. chametz...Ah... you’ll find the details in the Talmud, Maimonides, Shulchan A.....”

“Hold on, Lord! Are the words you just used some kind of food? I’ve never heard of them.”

“ Oh, I forgot, Moses. Israel, being human, they are tied to the times they live in. They are books explaining what chametz is, but they will only appear millennia after you. Don’t panic. Do the best you can, Moses. Over and out.”

Moses reflects sadly and regretfully on having accepted the job at the burning bush.

Over the centuries, Pesach developed in many ways: spiritually, ritually, foodwise and so on. Many will recall the days of parents and grand- parents or even great-grandparents, working hard to make a kosher Pesach. Mothers cooked and baked with whatever was available, sugar and salt from the sacks, milk in cans filled by the Tevye’s of the day and the rest.

Now imagine Moses returning once again. His questions would be answered and without doubt would be able to understand them. But he would also be puzzled by the weeks of planning and preparations in the home, partly Pesach partly spring-cleaning activities. As recipient of also the Oral Law, he could follow the talks, lectures and shiurim on the subject of Pesach. But for him, the matzah was the *lechem oni*, ‘the bread of affliction or poor bread’. How would he regard the 20-odd different cheeses, pesachdike ‘rolls and cereals’, shops stacked (and larders) with all kinds and varieties of food – but no manna or quails. Could he understand housewives buying a dozen jellies – in case.... in case of what? Mother rarely makes jellies! And so, one can go on and on.

Have we actually lost the true spirit of the Festival? Has it become a ‘*feastival*’ (sic!) in the main? There are so many aspects of Pesach, aspects which should have a deep spiritual meaning for us.

Pesach recalls freedom, a concept which is also repeated frequently in our daily prayers. Freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom from war, and, yes, even freedom from slavery in some parts of the world. But what in reality do we understand by Freedom?

While freedom is an undying hope, the Seder is a practical expression of teaching and education for young and old and, possibly, the vehicle for attaining Freedom. By linking Pesach with Shavuot, the festival of receiving the Torah, we link freedom with the concept of Law and Order to preserve that precious possession, freedom.

Against this is the sad period of persecution hovering in the background of festive joy, the blood libels and their consequences, where our freedom was curbed and persecution set in. There were occasions where Jews were forbidden to leave their

homes as Easter brought in restrictions and deaths of Jews. In the dark hours of the Shoah, Holocaust, many a time Pesach was somehow observed if not in reality then virtually, to use modern jargon, in spirit, where our brothers and sisters looked to their freedom, which for many never came.

As the rejoicing of Pesach finishes, we look with sadness to commemorate the Holocaust on *Yom Hashoah Vehagvurah*, recalling the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. Then we move on to celebrate in joy the freedom of a Jewish State, the State of Israel, established so shortly after the Festival of Freedom.

Bernd Koschland

KINDERTRANSPORT SURVIVOR'S BELATED CELEBRATION

Some years ago an intrepid Israeli tourist to Rome took a crayon and wrote on the Arch of Titus "Am Yisrael Chai"

An extraordinary and historic celebration took place on Thursday 3rd June 2004 at Stanmore Synagogue, in the presence of the Worshipful, the Mayor of Harrow, Member of Parliament Tony McNulty, Lady Jakobovits*, Rabbanim and a full congregation. The occasion was in honour of 18 special persons. Eight young Bar Mitzvah "boys", all in their seventies and eighties, and ten young Bat Mitzvah "girls", similarly not in the flush of their youth. They came to England sixty-five years ago, with Kindertransport, as unaccompanied refugees.

It is a sad reflection of this unique act of rescue, that ninety percent of those children never saw their parents again. They came alone. They owe their lives to the decency of the government of the day, to the refugee committees of 1938/1939 and to the Central British Fund of World Jewish Relief who were the principal motivators of that historic life-saving operation. But mostly they owe their lives to the selfless sacrifice made by their parents, whose tears at the tragic departure of their dear ones to an uncertain future can only be imagined and whose heroism must be remembered forever.

This was the day of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, an event which, in the turbulence of those years, was missing from their lives. Shacharith was read, Hallel was sung and the Torah was taken out with great solemnity. The eight Benei Mitzvah recited the Brachah together, some with knowledge of Hebrew from their childhood days, others for the first time. To make the moment even more poignant, the Torah was read by Rev. Bernd Koschland, himself a Kind (child) of eight in 1939.

There followed the sermon by Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen, who dedicated his words of congratulation to the 18 celebrants, to their courage, to their steadfastness and the ultimate devotion to their religion. The Rabbi reviewed the historic events leading to this extraordinary day, with a mastery of oratory this special congregation had rarely experienced. This was a Simcha, which was an historic first in Anglo Jewry.

After the morning service came the turn of the Benoth Mitzvah reciting a prayer especially composed by the Rabbi for this unusual celebration. One of the B'nei

Mitzvah* spoke briefly. He was blessed to have his mother, 100 years old, sitting in the synagogue. A Bat Mitzvah followed. Then came Adon Olam and the Hatikvah. Tears welled in many eyes. Sadness and joy mingled in the hearts of the congregation in a moment of high emotion.

This was followed by a reception. There was much to talk about. Some met friends and acquaintances after decades. Ghosts of the past walked in front of you.

Before lunch, there were presentations to all the celebrants. The B'nei Mitzvah received a silver Kiddush cup with plate, as well as a beautiful Tallith, while the Benoth Mitzvah were given a lovely set of candlesticks, specially obtained from Israel. World Jewish Relief presented each with a framed certificate.

A very tasty lunch was served. Lady Jakobovits spoke, the Chesed, which was Lady J., requires no elaboration. The mayor, Lerline Champanie, expressed her unstinted admiration for the Jewish Community.

What did 18 ex-refugees do that day? They came forward to celebrate that which they missed long ago, a celebration suggested by Bertha Leverton, who herself was one of the B'noth Mitzvah. They commemorated their survival, in the company of their children and grandchildren and their friends. They said the Brachah over the Torah; they recited their special prayer. They stood up to be counted. They acknowledged where they belong, 65 years after the 20th century tyrant killed most European Jews, but by no means all. They wrote on the arch of history. They inscribed on the stone of truth. "The Jewish People lives" "Am Yisrael Chai".

Hermann Hirschberger- former Chairman KT- AJR

* Sadly neither Lady J nor Sigi Faith are with us and are very much missed.

[This report has been included, as an outstanding milestone among the various reunions and other events over the years of Kindertransport. Editor]



Dear Mrs Goodmaker,

You might recall that we've been in touch some years ago when I asked you for help for my research project about refugee children from the Third Reich, who came to the Netherlands. I am still working on it and have by now started to put all the puzzle pieces of 5 years research together. I am hoping that in the foreseeable future my book will be finished, with a movie as a possible spin-off. On my website www.dokin.nl you can find more information, including an article I wrote about Mrs. Wijsmuller. (Soon the website will be updated and there will be more information there, right now it isn't all that much).

Last week I got a call from Erich B. Cohen. He informed me about the plans for (a last) Kindertransport commemoration, and about the fact that he thinks Mrs Wijsmuller-Meijer should be given more credit at this occasion than she has gotten since 1945. I could not agree with him more. It actually bothers me that Mrs Wijsmuller never really got the world-wide recognition that she deserves. This woman had worked so hard for the children and saved so many lives, thousands I'm sure, in all the years that she was involved. So I fully endorse Mr. Cohen's intention. In a way the circle would come to a close like this, because Mrs. Wijsmuller was one of the first to start the Kindertransports, and if she would finally get the recognition she deserves at the last Kindertransport commemoration that would be very fitting. Better late than never, I would say.

A fellow historian in this country is busy writing a biography about Mrs. Wijsmuller, and Dutch movie producer Burnie Bos wants to make a movie about her.

With kind regards,

Miriam Keesing, Heemstede, the Netherlands

Dear "Kinder" and friends,

Together with our Dutch partners in the Hoek of Holland we will connect the rescue operation of the Kinder, 75 years ago, with the major Dutch national holiday held on the 4th and 5th of May.

I have worked with the artist Karin van Paasen and the author Ed van Berkel and will personally take part in these festivities.

Our Kindertransport Project is part of the annual "Kustplaats in Hoek van Holland" in which about 60 artists participate in different locations of the town. Large flags will fly (1 metre by 1.5 metres) with your photos displayed on them. For this purpose please send me your current pictures, family photos with your names and your age when you left your families.

Please send to my e-mail address: asil-6@web.de , or my address:

Lisa Bechner
Müggelstrasse 14
Berlin 10247
Germany

From April 2013 , there will be a monthly city tour to the historic locations of the Kindertransports in Berlin. These will include the locations in which Wilfrid Israel was active. A true hero! .

On June 1st , 2013 we will commemorate the 70th anniversary of his death with a function and will also remember the British officer Frank Foley with whom Wilfrid Israel collaborated.

I look forward to your support on this occasion (30.11.2013) in Berlin where we will also display the flags .

Warm greetings.

Lisa

Dear Sir Erich Reich,

first of all I would like to thank you for the nice phone conversation on the 23th of December, 2012.

As I have told you, you were recommended me by Frank Meisler as an excellent partner to help us with contacts and necessary materials concerning "Kindertransport".

Since 2006 I`ve being organizing an international educational youth camp "Jewish Arteck" for Jewish children and teenagers from Germany, Israel and Russia. The main point of the project is to acquaint the participants with some periods from Jewish History in Europe through the creative activities of the participants. So, the theme of the "Jewish Arteck"-2012 was "In the Footsteps of Yeckes", where the participants learned the background of the Yeckes' story, the Jewish life in Germany in the 20th – 30th years of the 20th century, the reasons the Jewish families had to leave their country, the individual fates of Yeckes and their contribution into the cultural life of Israel.

The subject of the "Jewish Arteck"-2013 is the history of Kindertransport. The Youth camp with the name "RESCUING the CHILDREN EQUELS SAVING the FUTURE. The 75th Anniversary of Kindertransport" will take place in Germany, Land Brandenburg, from 08th till 18th of July. Sixty young Jews from Israel, Germany and Russia will participate and learn about the Kindertransport action of 1938-1939, its different aspects and personal stories of some "children" of the Kindertransport through diverse artistic activities as music, handicrafts and paintings as well as through media activities as film making, radio programs, photos and newspaper. Learning the history, biographies and events and then creating their own works in different genres of arts the young people can pass the history through their imagination, realize it and express their feelings. We are going to exhibit the works, made at the camp, at the memorial ceremony to the 75th anniversary of Kindertransport.

I am convinced and my experience from the last year confirms my convincement once more, that the live meeting with the survivors, conversations and interviews with them is the best learning material and know-how for our future generation.

We would like to invite three or four "children" from Kindertransport, especially with those who became artists, musicians or writers for some days to the "Jewish Arteck" to acquaint the camps' participants with them, with their personal stories and with their oeuvres.

Herewith I address to you, dear Sir Erich Reich, to help us in contacting to such persons, able to come to Berlin for 3-5 days and to share their remembrance with us, to participate with us at Shabbat celebration and at Memorial Ceremony at the sculpture to Kindertransport by Frank Meisler, as well as to give interviews to our young journalists.

I can't but mention that Mr. Frank Meisler has already accepted our invitation.

We would be very grateful to you for any other kind of help like learning and descriptive materials, video materials, etc. and important contacts.

With best regards,

Ella Nilova, Project coordinator

Together with European Janusz Korczak Academy e, V.

Tel.: +49 30 45 310155 Mobile: +49 1636765109

Ella Nilova Genter Str.41 13353 Berlin Germany

Dear Andrea

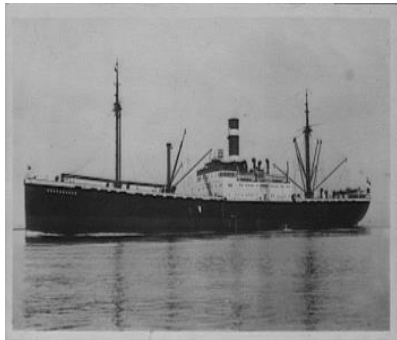
In the latest children's book about the Kindertransport by the Canadian authoress Deborah Hodge - Rescuing the Children, published 2012 –she mentioned Margot Stern. I am trying to contact her; Deborah Hodge has never met her or been in contact with her and therefore is unable to help me.

I went to Holland with the Kindertransport in January 1939 and when Holland capitulated to the German army, I escaped and was a passenger on the SS Bodegraven* with 80 other children from the Burgerweeshuis in Amsterdam (already a well-known story).

At the time of our departure from Germany, we lived in a small village Herzebrock(Westfalia), the birthplace of my mother. In 1938 at the time of Kristallnacht, 8 Jewish families lived in Herzebrock. Margot Stern and her family lived there too. Her parents Clara and Harry Stern owned a small clothing shop. Margot was about 10 years old and her sister Lore was a year or two younger. Once I left Germany, I have never heard from them again until I saw her name in this latest book.

Hans (Levy)

hanslevy@tesco.net



SS Bodegraven

* On 14 May 1940 an hour before capitulation, Truus Wijsmuller Meier brought 'her' children to IJmuiden to board the boat. Initially the passengers were not allowed to land in the UK. After diversion to Belfast, the boat was eventually allowed to dock in Liverpool where the youngsters disembarked.

(for further details google SS Bodengraven, , Children of Tante Truus)

Reviews



PROFESSOR PETER MITTLER, THINKING GLOBALLY ACTING GLOBALLY, Authorhouse 2010

Professor Mittler sent an extract of his book describing his early life in Vienna, then aged 10 came to England with Kindertransport. He was taken in by family Jelinek, with whom his mother had been in contact. His parents arrived in England in 1939 to be reunited with their son, one of the minority of Kinder who was reunited, put at 10% by the author. Evacuation with his school to a place near Cheltenham followed; this was an unhappy time as he learned little at the new school. His parents found employment in Ewell (Surrey), attended Sutton Grammar School and had his Bar mitzvah in Epsom.

In the section entitled 'Confronting the Past,' Peter Mittler considers the question of 'If' – if only he had asked his parents questions about life in Vienna, especially after the *Anschluss*. Why did it take so long for him, and likewise for many others, to think and reflect on the past, the Kindertransport and subsequent life. He found this silence interesting, especially "(in) my later work as a psychologist interested in the impact of deprivation and disadvantage on children." How could an Italian publisher initially reject Primo Levi's *If this is Man?* He points to the breach in the silence regarding the Shoah, as partly due to the Eichmann trial and films like *Schindler's List*.

After finishing school, he was conscripted into National service and ended up as Officer material, at one point becoming officer in charge of mangles at a laundry camp! At Cambridge he graduated in Psychology, thinking of becoming a clinical psychologist if possible. After an interlude as a trainee manager in the shoe business, his wish was fulfilled. Eventually he entered Academia at Birkbeck College and on into Governmental, national and international areas of his expertise, with particular reference to persons with intellectual disability.

As a retired teacher, I found the chapters relating to education fascinating and stimulating, but then once a teacher one always retains that interest in education as a whole, significantly his words and involvement in the formation of the National Curriculum, which is under so much scrutiny currently. The journey through life of an 8 year old boy in Vienna 1938 to national and international acclaim, with his influence in many fields, is a journey well worth reading.

GERDA HOFREITER, YOU MUST GO ALONE (translated from German); illustrated.

The book is an MA history thesis presented to the University of Innsbruck in

2007. The study is concerned with the Kindertransportes from Vienna, to England, France and with particular emphasis on transports to America. Included are biographies of individuals who act as witness to the transports, especially to the United States.

The author describes the background to events in Austria and steps taken to allow children to leave. Events in Britain are carefully recorded, but accurately; it must be remembered this is a thesis not a large book. Four short biographies are presented of Kinder in England. A short section follows of Kinder being moved to France; some eventually reach America others, sadly, did not survive. The final section, the largest, is concerned with America. A useful account is given of the difficulties of getting there initially, because of the legislation regarding immigration and granting of a limited quota of visas. Several transports, of varying sizes reached America after the outbreak of war, originating from Vienna and also France.

In her conclusion, Gerda Hofreiter contrasts Britain, France and the USA. Britain allowed some 9000-10 000 Kinder who were placed in foster homes, Jewish and non-Jewish or with relatives, in France they were placed in Hostels, while in the USA they were placed with Jewish foster parents only as the only method permitted by American law. Moreover children who were to be admitted to the USA had to be healthy and not suffer from any disability; Britain made no such conditions.

The work is well researched and a useful addition to the literature on the Kindertransport. The only drawback is that it has been privately printed, though - copies can be ordered through email

SS Struma – Murder on the High Sea

Douglas Frantz & Catherine Collins, *Death in the Black Sea*, ECCO (HarperCollins) 2003

"This is death, death, death of innocent people with no other guilt than that of being Jewish."

"How often were these words said to children and never fulfilled? Father's final words to his son."

How often have these words been said, quoted or written! I came across these words in a book about the *SS Struma*, but they apply or applied equally to Kinder of Kindertransport. You may recall that boat. It was a converted cattle barge, carrying nearly 800 men, women and children from the terrors of Romania in 1941 with the hope of reaching Palestine and safety. After being stuck in Istanbul for many weeks, it was finally towed into the Black Sea where it was sunk by a torpedo from a Russian submarine, with the loss of 791 persons, including the crew of 10. Only one person survived, though a few had got off in Istanbul and went on into Palestine. In reading the well-crafted work about the *Struma (Death on the Black Sea)*, there were many emotional similarities with Kinder leaving their parents and families, the reaction of the

leavers and those of the parents. Another similar feature is the reference to the closure of countries to the refugees from Romania, much as major powers closed their doors after the Evian Conference on Refugees in July 1938. Again, David Soliar the sole survivor of the sinking and one or two others who disembarked, like Kinder, joined the British Army to fight Nazism. Many of us Kinder refused (and possibly some still refuse) to think about the past and talk about it to others, family or strangers (e.g. schools), so likewise did the survivors of the affair. For them, like for us, the curtain lifted.

I highly recommend the book as a most informative work, not just on the *Struma*, but also on the light thrown on the politics of Turkey and Britain.

In a charity shop I came across a biography of Sir Nicholas Winton in German called *Nicholas Winton – Lotterie des Lebens* written by Matej Minác, 2005. It was written for use in schools in conjunction with a film about Sir Nicholas. The book features many interesting photographs, including receiving his Knighthood from the Queen.



*Photo of Sir Nicholas Winton by Dr Arnold Phelops BEM on the arrival of the Winton Train
(Reviews by BK)*

PRISM

The Spring 2013 edition of Prism, published by the Azrieli Graduate School, explores the Kindertransport and other attempts at large-scale rescue of Jewish children.

Among the unique and classroom-ready pieces within are a Readers' Theater piece on the Kindertransport, along with the background on its original production in England; an introduction to the Centropa website, highlighting the story of Lily Tauber, a Kindertransport survivor; and narrative and poetic testimony from two Kinder saved by Nicholas Winton.

Also included is a piece written from a British perspective, by Kay Andrews of the Holocaust Education Development Programme, part of the Institute of Education. To read the magazine visit the website <http://yu.edu/azrieli/research/prism-journal/>



The Old Un's diary

All the news that matters. And some that doesn't

Stellar oldie

At 103 Sir Nicholas Winton is still working as president of his local Mencap in Maidenhead.

He was awarded an MBE in 1983 for his work establishing the Abbeyfield homes for the elderly, but is most famous for Operation Kindertransport. In 1938, Sir Nicholas used his own money and connections to rescue 669 children from the Holocaust. During the nine months before the outbreak of war, he managed to organise a safe path for mainly Jewish children from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia to England. They were placed in British foster homes, hostels and farms.

How had Sir Nicholas anticipated the conflagration? 'My father was fairly left-wing and politically aware, and it was clear to him that Hitler's foreign policy was aggressively expansionist.'

What does he most regret? 'Our ninth and fullest train fell victim to war and was prevented from leaving the station on September 3rd 1939. Few, if any, of the 250 children aboard survived.'

Despite the importance of his humanitarian work, it went unrecognised for more than fifty years as Sir Nicholas never told anyone what he had done. Most of the

children didn't know to whom they owed their lives. His role only came to light in 1988 when Greta, his wife, found an old briefcase in an attic containing lists of children's names, letters from their parents and copies of official documents.

Stargazers can now glimpse '19384 Winton', a minor planet named in his

honour by Czech astronomers. He was nominated for the 2008 Nobel peace prize by the Czech government.

He marked his 100th birthday by taking a trip in a microlight piloted by a daughter of one of the boys he saved.

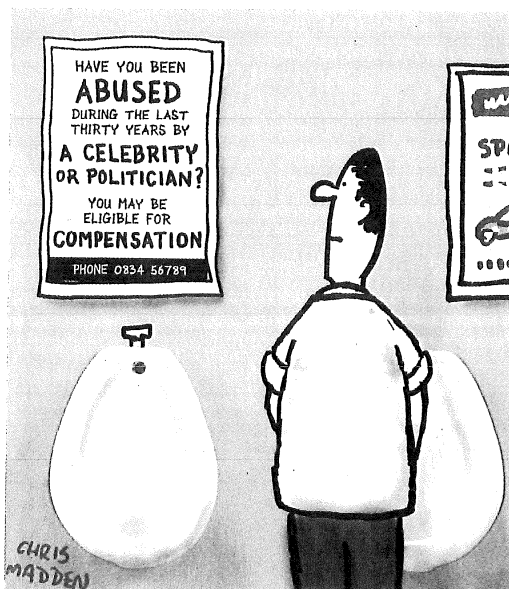
If you happen to alight at Maidenhead station in Sir Nicholas's home town, do visit platform 3 to see the

statue of Sir Nicholas relaxing on a bench while perusing a book containing images of children he saved. He still wears a ring given to him inscribed with a line from the Talmud: 'Save one life, save the world'.



A model humanitarian

Stargazers can now glimpse '19384 Winton', a minor planet named in Sir Nicholas's honour by Czech astronomers



Abusing the law

How is it possible that a 73-year-old owner of an £800,000 flat can face destitution and homelessness over a disputed £7,500 in apartment block service charges? This was what happened to retired photographer Dennis Jackson, who, in February, came within 36 hours of losing everything he had.

Jackson's nightmare began four years ago when he and his neighbour Rosemary Irving refused to pay service charges for works to their block which were never completed. The freeholder, Plantation Wharf Management Ltd, took them to the county court and the case was referred to the LVT (Lease-

SEARCHES



Where are you?

The story of Margot Aufrecht is a very sad one and I am trying to get to the bottom of what happened to her once she left Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1946/7. Whilst there have been some dramatic developments in regard to this query, if anyone has any information, please contact me.

Leslie Baruch Brent

lesliebrent@waitrose.com

`Winton

Children`

I wish to trace two people who were both on the Winton list as child refugees coming to the UK from Czechoslovakia in 1939. One is Ralf Ewald Kovanic from Hradec Kralove, born in 1934. The other is Mita Hoenig from Prague II, Vladislavova St, born in 1927. Please contact Hana Kleiner on c-inky@hotmail.com. Thank you.

I came on the last Kindertransport from Danzig, 1 or 2 months before war broke out (1939). I know the late Ernest Jaffe was in the small group which travelled via Hilversum. Somewhat late in the day I wonder whether anyone else is still around from that particular Kindertransport?

Kind regards,

Manya Igel (nee DOBKIN) Manya Igel Fine Arts
020 7229 1669/8429

<http://www.manyaigelfinearts.com/>

Dear Michael,

We have just spoken on the phone about my late parents, Louis and Renee CROSSLEY (originally PLOFSKY) who sponsored a child coming over on the Kindertransport. I do not know whether this sponsorship was to look after a child or merely to finance the arrival and care of a child. They might have sponsored the child individually in which case the names were Louis Crossley (Plofsky) and Renee Shenker. They lived in Clapton, east London. I think they were already married – October 1938 - when the transport ceased. Unfortunately these connections are obviously very tenuous and a long way along the time line, but hope springs eternal! I am compiling a family tree and it would be nice to know if whoever was brought over by my parents fared well and had a successful and peaceful life.

David [W. Crossley <mailto:crobat@dircon.co.uk>]

My name is Karl-Heinz Nieren and 70 years old. I have been a teacher at Anita-Lichtenstein-Gesamtschule of Geilenkirchen – and remember a Jewish child that

was born in in Geilenkirchen in 1933 and murdered in Majdanek in 1942. I am a member of the INITIATIVE ERINNERN GEILENKIRCHEN. We set ourselves to remember our former Jewish citizens, to call back their lives and to give them back faces and significance. On March 5th we placed the first 27 „Stolpersteine“ (of about a hundred in the end) into the pavements of city of Geilenkirchen in order to remember our former Jewish citizens, who lived with us in Geilenkirchen for several centuries, certainly since the beginning of the 18th century. For information look our website www.erinnerung-geilenkirchen.de. Some Jewish people of Geilenkirchen reached GB with Kindertransport, while others fled to the UK.

I am looking for **Hilde Dahl born on Nov. 5th 1941 in Hünshoven (now: Geilenkirchen)** who lived according my information in Finchley Road, London NW2. Can you help me to find information on her? Have you or anybody else information about other Jewish citizens of Geilenkirchen who came to the UK and later emigrated to USA, Canada or elsewhere? It would be important for me/for us to get more information in order to complete the history of our former Jewish citizens. Pupils of Anita-Lichtenstein-Gesamtschule are working out a little book about our former Jewish citizens and it will also be basis of a "Walk of Memory" in Geilenkirchen.

Karl-Heinz Nieren, Lessingstr. 9, D-52511 Geilenkirchen

Email: karl-heinz.nieren@gmx.de

Two German writers are looking to find original letters, postcards or diaries written by "Kinder" and their families during the time of the transports and later for a book project aimed at young adults. If you have documents of this time that you can share, please contact Elisabeth or Julia on julialbrecht@gmail.com or elisabeth@esbphotography.com

Elisabeth Scheder-Bieschin

Jewish Artek organises Jewish learning, history and culture mainly for Russian immigrant families. Its summer camp theme this year will include the theme of the Kindertransport. Frank Meissler will be there. Ruth Barnett is going and has been asked to find another Kind to come with her. It will be travelling out Thursday July 11th for the KT theme July 12th to 14th. There is funding for travel and accommodation for three nights. Please contact Ruth Barnett on ruthclb@gmail.com if you are interested in going with her.

Ruth

**Search for Margot Stern – see letter from Hans Levy.*

'Winton Children' I wish to trace two people who were both on the Winton list as child refugees coming to the UK from Czechoslovakia in 1939. One is Ralf Ewald Kovanic from Hradec Kralove, born in 1934. The other is Mita Hoenig from Prague II, Vlodislavova St, born in 1927. Please contact Hana Kleiner on c-inky@hotmail.com Thank you.

In the January issue on page 9 'Searches' somebody is looking for information about the Whitely Bay hostel. The hostel was in Tynemouth (we used to go to the synagogue to W.B.) I was there from 27.8.1939 till we were evacuated to Windermere, both places were taken care of by the same people, one of them being David Summerfield, the great-grandfather of the person who is looking for information. I LEFT Windermere in December 1945. The person who was searching left no details how to get in touch with them. I am willing to pass on the information that they want. We can correspond by email. Lezlie@smile.net.il



The *Harrow Times* (29 November 2012 reported the visit of Mrs Benton's return to her hometown Meissen, with her family, where a plaque was put on the house where she had lived. In 1939 on returning home from school, she found that her parents had been taken to a holding camp, prior to being moved to concentration camp where they died. She fled alone and was taken on a Kindertransport, "the rescue mission that saved thousands of children, who began new lives in Britain" in the words of the reporter

Arnold Schwartzman (from LA) sent me a copy of this report from the Los Angeles Times which appeared in January

Doris Small's story, in which she escaped Nazi Germany before World War 2 thanks to the rescue mission Kindertransport, is indeed very moving and poignant But let's not forget that there was an effort by a few Americans to actually do the same thing the British Government was doing then.

It was Eleanor Roosevelt who in 1939 urged her husband to support a Bill in Congress to allow 20 000 Jewish children to come to America and to be temporarily adopted by American parents for the duration of the hostility. It was known as Wiegner-Rogers Bill.

But the American sentiment at that time was overwhelmingly isolationist and, yes, anti-Semitic. Organisations such as the American Legion and Daughters of the American Revolution opposed the Bill, which they claimed threatened American liberty.

The Bill was never put up for a vote. What a shame.



Corrections

Corrections: Francis Steiner f.steiner@btopenworld.com has pointed out that I erred in placing Bloomsbury House in Russell Square, where indeed there is a building Bloomsbury House. Our Bloomsbury House was on Bloomsbury Street, not far away.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS WRITTEN TO MARION AND HANS DANZIGER BY THEIR PARENTS.

[The dates are Berlin, December 1941, July 1942 and December 1942. These letters were apparently sent with the help of a non-Jewish neighbour. The brother and sister came over on the Kindertransport.

I have been given permission by Hans Danziger, the son, to use these letters, translated from the original German.]

December 1941

When and how this letter will reach you we do not know. But we surely hope that this will happen, because a dear friend of ours will do everything to let you...have these lines. We only hope that this is not the last sign of life from us to you, on the contrary, we firmly believe in a reunion with you, but since we do not know what the present government still has in store for us, one has to be prepared for the worst, and for this reason this letter has to be written to you.

We now my dear children, you will ask yourselves for what precise reason your parents have torn apart our lovely family life and sent you to foreign parts..... (There is then reference to Kristallnacht and its aftermath)

Now all the Jews have to wear the yellow Jewish star with the inscription JEW, including all children from the age of six onwards. The children cannot play in any parks, cannot do any sport and neither visit a cinema or theatre or go to a concert; everything is prohibited to us, and in the evening we have to be home by nine o'clock in the summer and by eight o'clock in the winter.

Housewives are only allowed to do their shop between four and five in the afternoon; at no other time are we allowed to enter a shop.....Jews who had their own businesses had to give these up...I (the father, ed.) dissolved my business and work shovelling coal at an armament establishment, Daimler-Benz...We believe that you two are doing well and have found a second home with really lovely people.

.....It has now started that all Jews are being evacuated to Poland, and this....has affected many of our friends.....After we thought about everything very carefully, we came to the conclusion to send you there (England, ed.) and so grow up in peace.....this motivated us to reach so terribly (a) difficult decision and how much Mutti and I suffer through this parting.... we did not think that our parting would be for such a long time.....

25th December 1941

...We now daily await notice to leave our flat, followed by being taken away – wherever.... {Now follows a description of packing up and entrusting things to good friends, where boxes are stored, for eventual recovery by the children. Items set aside are for a bottom drawer and documents which may be needed in the future}

...We always still have the hope that we will be united again. If that is the case, let us enjoy our lives, and if it is the other way round, always be assured that your parents ONLY had your welfare at heart and that they always acted to the best of their knowledge and conscience. Always stay together.....Give pleasure to us and your foster parents and be grateful to them....one day we hope to prove our gratefulness and pay them back. The latter will probably not be possible.....

7th July 1942

I can no longer use the typewriter; all Jews were required – by law – to hand them in so I just have to make do with the “writing machine” that nature provided us with! Since June all Jewish schools were closed....Jewish children are not allowed to be taught. Children from ten years upwards are forced to work....Jews are no longer allowed to keep animals.....

12th December 1942 (a very short letter in comparison with the earlier ones)

Now the disaster has also struck us. We must get away. We have removed the things from our flat and have – as far as all our acquaintances are concerned just vanished. We do not know how everything will turn out, but good people have helped us and will continue to do so.....You are all our happiness and all our hope which keeps us going in these hard times....I'll write to you as often as will be possible for me. Now farewell and always remember your parents who love you so ardently.

[These letters are a poignant and interesting reminder as they express the feeling of parents still in Berlin and separated already over 2 years from their children. Thanks, Hans, for allowing us to share your parents' emotions with us. Editor]

Excerpt from “THE VOW: REBUILDING THE FACHLER TRIBE AFTER THE HOLOCAUST”, edited by Yanky Fachler, based on the journals of Eli and Eva Fachler (The book is available from yanky@eircom.net)

In the early hours of 28 October, 1938, the Gestapo arrested 17,000 Polish Jews. Some managed to get away, others had been warned in advance. For some reason, the lists prepared by the Gestapo in Berlin contained only men over the age of 15. In other parts of the country, it was whole families, regardless of age or sex. So although Eli escaped the round-up (the 27th was his 15th birthday), his father Dovid Meir Fachler was arrested in what became known as the Polenaktion. Eli had slept through the night, oblivious to what was happening. When the Gestapo asked if there was anyone else in the flat, his mother said no.

From the police station, Dovid Meir was trucked to a central assembly point. Eli's mother managed to get food and clothing to him next morning at the assembly point, and she told her son Eli to go into hiding in a cousin's home. The Polish Jews were transported by the SS and police to the German-Polish border near Neu Bentschen. But when Gestapo guards arrived at the border with their cargoes of Jews, Polish border guards refused to permit entry into Poland. The Germans forced the Jews, including whole families with small children, to cross the border illegally

on foot. After several hours on the road, the Polish authorities finally allowed them into the derelict hamlet of Zbonszyn, a garrison town on the rail line between Berlin and Warsaw, in a no-man's land between the two border stations. Here the Polish Jews remained stranded, stuck between two countries vying for the honour of which was more anti-Semitic. Unable to enter Poland or return to Germany, the Jews lived in railway carriages, in barracks, or in schoolhouses. A few, with more means, could rent rooms in guesthouses or in the homes to townspeople.

Together with Dovid Meir in Zbonszyn were Sendel and Rivka Grynszpan and their children Mordechai and Berta. One member of the family was not with them. At the age of 14, Herschel Grynszpan had left Hanover for Frankfurt, where he studied in the Yeshiva of Dr. Jacob Hoffman. After a brief spell back in Hanover, he slipped illegally into France in September 1936. Two years later, the beleaguered 17-year-old Herschel was living with his aunt and uncle in Paris. His German visa and Polish passport had expired, and he was on the run from the French police who wished to deport him.

Young Herschel first read about the Polenaktion in the Paris Jewish press. On November 3, he received a postcard that his sister Berta had sent on 31 October. The postcard detailed the family's plight and asked Herschel to help get them out of the country. Determined to take revenge for the suffering of his family, Grynszpan bought a handgun, and on November 7, 1938, he went to the German Embassy in Paris and shot Ernst Von Rath, the third secretary, who died a short while later. In his pocket, Grynszpan had a letter to his parents: "My dear parents, I could not do otherwise, may God forgive me, the heart bleeds when I hear of your tragedy and that of the 12,000 Jews. I must protest so that the whole world hears my protest, and that I will do. Forgive me. Hermann.

Eli takes up the story: "If we thought that the Polenaktion and its consequences were bad enough, we were soon to experience something even worse. We knew that the assassination in Paris could not augur well for the Jews. Little did we suspect just how vicious the Nazi reaction would be. During the late evening of November 9th, we heard a commotion on the streets as well as behind our home. Truck-loads of SA brownshirts were breaking up our synagogue inside the building. This time I was fully awake and standing by the window, behind the curtains. Suddenly, we heard a loud, drunken voice yelling from downstairs: "Are there still any Jews alive upstairs?" I can tell you that this was the first time I was really scared. I was shaking. I tried not to show it, but I felt helpless with frustration. It hurt physically. On November 10th, Goebbels made a radio announcement that "a spontaneous uprising of the German people had taken place against organised Jewry, who had declared war against Germany with the assassination of Von Rath in Paris." I can still hear his voice ringing in my ears. In a cynical twist, the Jews were even

forced to pay an atonement payment for having caused the damage of Kristallnacht.

**REQUEST FROM YANKY FACHLER, CHAIRMAN OF THE JEWISH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND**

Together with the Czech Embassy in Dublin, the Jewish Historical Society of Ireland is holding a 2-day event in Dublin City Libraries on May 21 and 22, 2013, on Winton's Children. We will be screening some Czech movies on this subject, and we will have a symposium on the 22nd. I would really like one of Winton's Children – or the child of a Winton Child – to come over and speak at the symposium. Any offers? Please contact me at yanky@eircom.net, +35386 8575162. Thanks

SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION

The AJR is also encouraging the children and grandchildren of Kinder to come along to a special reception between 6:30pm-9:30pm on Monday 24 June for the Second and Third Generations. The focus of this event will be how their parents and grandparents got here, where they came from and the different ways they travelled and arrived. There will be notable guest speakers, time to socialise and network, eat, drink and to meet old and make new friends. London venue to be confirmed but please rsvp and direct any queries to events@secondgeneration.org.uk or visit the organisers' websites www.secondgeneration.org.uk and www.kindertransport.org

YOM HASHOAH VEHAGVURAH

(I was privileged to speak at this year's Yom Hashoah Vehagvurah in Hyde Park on behalf of us Kinder. Below is the substance of what I said. Bernd)

Seventy Years ago Jews once again took up arms against their oppressors – the previous time was during the battles of Bar Kochba against the might of Rome. Now it was in Warsaw; regrettably the revolt ended in tragedy, a tragedy which we commemorate today. Only Divine intervention could have averted the deaths of the gibborim, and kedoshim, the mighty warriors and martyrs. These latter giborim give full meaning to the actual name of this day, Yom Hashoah veHagvurah, of Whirlwind destruction and Might. Shoah ugevurah reflect the deeper message of the day. Within that destruction, which we also term the Holocaust, there was strength and might in the giborim, the fighters, to fight against a superior force, in a battle to survive as Jews.

Survive is the key word in this commemoration. Survive is also the motif of another commemoration. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the Kindertransport, the first of which arrived on 1st or 2nd of December 1938 from Vienna. Around 9-10 000 of us Kinder eventually arrived on these shores till the outbreak of war. We are thankful to the British Government for giving us safety and security and enable us to survive as Jews, whereas other countries did little or

nothing until it was too late. A million other children went through Hell and did not survive; may their dear souls rest in peace.

The Talmud (Meg.7a) touches on the questions voiced by some to this day: “Why commemorate the past at all? The present is the important thing! Others feel that somehow our memory should really live in that tragic past. In a conversation with the scholars of her time, Esther said that she wanted to be commemorated for future generations. The scholars replied, “You will invite the ill will of the nations against us.” She answered that she was already inscribed in the chronicles of Media and Persia.

Likewise the events we recall today are inscribed in the chronicles of time and history; they cannot be obliterated or denied. Moses said: “Remember the days of old.” Thus our duty is to recall, commemorate, consider and reflect the events of the Shoah, the Warsaw Ghetto and the traumas of the Kindertransport and the parents of Kinder. Survivors of both these happenings still bear the scars of the past, scars that will never disappear, but urge us on to, hopefully, prevent similar events – something regarded as a vain and naive hope - but a hope that should inspire the individual to do something to make this world a better place, where each can live under their vine and fig-tree without ever being made afraid again.

FESTIVE DAYS

8th May is Yom Yerushalayim, marking the 46th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem. This festive day is followed a week later by an earlier unique event, the Giving of the Torah, namely Shavuot, 15th and 16th May. We wish you chag sameach with a good bottle of Israeli wine for Yom Yerushalayim (l’chayim!) and mouth watering (but weight adding) cheesecake for Shavuot.

Stop Press

My grandfather bought a house in North London for some of the children from the Kindertransport. I believe it was 1-6 Amhurst Park Mansions London N.16. Some of his friends provided the furniture and my mother remembered her friend's mother Mrs Curland taking food to the home. Does anyone have any information about this?
Sarah Siegler ss@jbandss.co.uk

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.

