



Your Letters

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Failure to rescue more 'Kinder' not Otto's fault

IT was disappointing to read about columnist Geoffrey Alderman's "outrage" regarding Otto Schiff and the recognition he has received for his role in helping to save Jewish refugees.

Schiff ran the Jewish Refugees Committee, which was established in 1933 under the auspices of the Central British Fund for German Jewry (later renamed World Jewish Relief).

In his role, he was able to assist in the rescue of tens of thousands of Jews before and after the Holocaust, ensuring they could enter the country, and that they received financial support and help in finding accommodation and employment.

However, he was not responsible for the admission criteria for Jewish children coming to Britain on the Kindertransport trains.

That was the responsibility of a separate agency, the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany (later the Refugee Children's Movement), set up shortly after Kristallnacht.

As Professor Paul Weindling's research, presented last month at the AJR's conference on the Kindertransport, has shown, it was the RCM which set the criteria for deciding which children were accepted or rejected for places on the Kindertransport.

As such, it is unfair to level these charges against Schiff, but it is also worth pointing out that the RCM's work was made more difficult due to the shortage of foster homes for the Kinder.

It is vitally important that rigorous academic research helps us to better understand the traumatic experience of refugees who escaped Nazi Europe to come to the safety of Britain.

We, of course, wish the CBF could have done more and have always sought to describe the Kindertransport as a desperate rescue mission that — despite saving thousands of children

Pick of the pix



Pharaoh beer is recreated

L'CHAIM: Researchers at some of Israel's top universities raise a glass after making a first-quenching discovery.

They examined deposits of yeast found in 5,000-year-old pottery.

And from it they recreated the type of beer that was drunk by the pharaohs of ancient Egypt.

"The greatest wonder is that the yeast survived within the vessel for thousands of years," said Dr Ronen Hazan, of the Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Dental Medicine.

"And by the way, the beer isn't bad."

from almost certain death — was unable to save millions of other children and their families.

There were many agencies involved in the operation and the CBF was operating under severe restrictions of time, money and resources.

It is inappropriate to lay blame for any failures squarely on Otto Schiff or dismiss the substantial contribution he was able to make, using his relationship with the government to ensure as many Jews as possible could be rescued.

The Jewish refugees who were able to come to Britain faced a multitude of struggles in their early years, much of which is documented in the archives held

by World Jewish Relief.

These rich archives now help families and academics understand the story of the thousands of Jewish refugees on the Kindertransport and the trials and tribulations which they endured.

Schiff was an integral part in helping these refugees achieve entry into Britain and adjusting to their new lives and his memory deserves better than ill-informed smears.

PAUL ANTICONI,

Chief executive, World Jewish Relief.

MICHAEL NEWMAN,

Chief executive, AJR.

DANIEL CARMEL-BROWN,

Chief executive, Jewish Care.

CHAZANIM NEEDED

WE note with interest the Chief Rabbi's remarks that "we must adapt in order to entice millennials back to shul".

The Chief Rabbi is, of course, right to say that many millennials don't want to "attend a performance given by the chazan or cantor in shul".

Many want to be active "self-service" participants rather than "be serviced at".

We must also regard the needs of all the older people, however, who now make up the bulk of our smaller-attended services.

Many continue to go to shul

because they appreciate the art of the chazan they grew up with.

And even in those services without a chazan, they want to hear a pleasant service leader who ensures the correct *nusach* (mode of prayer) for the occasion.

At ECA we ensure that the art of the cantor, which has been handed down from generation to generation, continues to burn brightly in contributing to the rich diversity of services which now cater across the generations.

And we know from our own well-attended activities that some millennials still like a chazan.

ALEX KLEIN,

Convenor,

European Cantors' Association.



A NEW LIFE BECKONS: Children rescued on the Kindertransport

Is BBC guilty of inciting hate crime?

THE *Jewish Telegraph* reported that the BBC had been condemned after the Arabic word for "Jew" was mistranslated as "Israeli" in the subtitles for the *One Day in Gaza* documentary.

Perhaps it feared that translating accurately what Palestinian protester Bader Saleh said in Arabic as "they encourage you to rip a Jew's head off" might have been deemed Islamophobic — something the BBC would want to avoid at all costs.

Its spokesman's claim that "we believe the translation of 'Yahud' as 'Israeli' in this documentary is both accurate and true to the speaker's intentions"

demonstrates quite clearly that it finds the distinction between Jews and Israelis too recondite to be of any significance.

This attitude would appear to come under the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

Should this therefore be referred to the Crown Prosecution Service for consideration as constituting incitement to commit a hate crime?

MARTIN STERN,

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