

Institution: Aberystwyth University		
Unit of Assessment: 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics		
Title of case study: The Kindertransport 1938/1939 to the UK: History Informing the Future		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Andrea Hammel	Reader	1 October 2014–present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The historical event of the Kindertransport 1938/1939 to the UK has received increasing public attention over the years. The impact of Hammel's research corrects the myths that surround the Kindertransport, and the simplistic celebratory narratives that are often used by politicians and in the media. Providing a historically accurate account of the complexity of the Kindertransport by exploring under-researched areas, such as the diverse traumas the child refugees experienced and the ways these were mitigated, allows the media and the public to gain a better understanding of historic child refugees and, in turn, allows for informed connections with the situation of present-day child refugees in the UK. It also enables policy makers to learn and encourage strategies and infrastructure for resilience.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>In the UK, it took until the last two decades of the twentieth century to establish the field of Exile Studies (the study of refugees from National Socialism). Within this field, the subject of the Kindertransport only received attention from the late 1990 onwards. Hammel has researched the Kindertransport 1938/1939 to the UK since 2000 and was the co-editor of and contributor to the first collections of peer-reviewed articles on the subject (2003 [German] 2004 [English]). Initially, the main focus was to establish the organisational structure of the Kindertransport and record personal experiences of what was perceived as a unique phenomenon of rescue and integration. However, further research uncovered the complexity of Kindertransportee history and Hammel was instrumental in opening new perspectives into the historiography and the cultural representation of the Kindertransport during the subsequent decade.</p> <p>This coincided with a proliferation of commemorative activity and of artistic, literary and popular representations. This subsequently led however to the distortion of historical facts and establishments of myths surrounding the Kindertransport [3.1, 3.3].</p> <p>When the plight of an increasing number of people seeking refuge in Europe came to the public attention in the UK in 2015, the Kindertransport was often cited as a shining example of the UK's past humanitarian attitude towards those fleeing persecution. Hammel's research challenges this view, as many Kindertransportees: (a) lost their parents because the British government was unwilling to admit whole families; (b) suffered trauma through lack of support once in the UK; and (c) received inadequate support post-1945.</p> <p>Public attention increased during the 80th commemoration of the Kindertransport in 2018 and 2019. Hammel's research is part of a paradigm shift in the field. In her work she discusses the trauma the child refugees suffered and the long-term effects and critiques the overly celebratory narratives of the past decades [3.2, 3.4]. More specifically, she explores:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Kindertransport was only partially supported by the British government, most financial and practical support was provided by private individuals and charities; 		

- It was not a solely English phenomenon, Kindertransportees also settled in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and this influenced their sense of identity and belonging [3.3];
- The paucity of research on the children's birth families has contributed to the distorting views of the Kindertransport;
- Studies of life histories of Kindertransportees show that the persecution pre-migration as well as post-migration, separation from the parents and other family members, ill-prepared fostering placements, discrimination and in some cases abuse, had a negative effect on the child refugees' mental and physical health. Adapting, coping and resilience were fostered by encouraging relationships with other refugees, a sense of belonging and purpose in the UK, and enabling the child refugees to make connections and communicate about their lives pre-and post-migration [3.2].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1** Andrea Hammel, "I remember their labels round their necks": Britain and the Kindertransport', in Tom Lawson and Andy Pearce (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook on Britain and the Holocaust* (Palgrave, 2020)
- 3.2** Andrea Hammel, Anita Grosz and Stephanie Homer, 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the Child Refugees of the 1930s in the UK: History Informing the Future' (Aberystwyth University and ACE Support Hub, 2020) [available at https://issuu.com/acesupporthub/docs/aberystwyth_aces_and_child_refugees_report_eng_fij]
- 3.3** Andrea Hammel, 'Narrating the Margins and the Centre: Kindertransportees' stories of national and religious belonging', *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2019) [Submitted to REF2]
- 3.4** Andrea Hammel, "I believe that my experience began in the womb and was later absorbed through my mother's milk": Second Generation Trauma Narratives', *German Life and Letters*, vol. 72, no. 4 (2019) [Submitted to REF2]
- 3.5** Andrea Hammel, 'Gender and Kindertransport Memoirs' in *Exile and Gender I: Literature and the Press. Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, vol. 17 (2016). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004313804_004
- 3.6** Andrea Hammel, "Liebe Eltern! - Liebes Kind!": Letters between Kindertransportees and their Parents as Everyday Life Documents' in *Everyday Life and Exile. Yearbook of the Research Centre for German and Austrian Exile Studies*, vol. 16 (2015). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004297913_010

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research has raised critical awareness of new areas of the history of the Kindertransport and, in turn, has led to a more nuanced understanding of the situation of present-day child refugees in the UK. The main impact of the research has been threefold:

In informing public understanding / shaping public awareness

By organising public talks and contributing to exhibitions, Hammel has enhanced public understanding on aspects of Kindertransport history previously overlooked. She acted as lead academic advisor to a touring open-air exhibition, which started in Berlin (between August and October 2019) and continued on to Rotenburg (from April to September 2020) and Guldental (November 2020 to May 2021), and also to a similar exhibition in London (from March to June 2017). The importance and originality of Hammel's research is evidenced by the Berlin exhibition curators' allocation of substantial physical resources in their efforts to provide public access to the body of work. 'It was Dr Hammel's original research into and detailed documentation of the story of some of the Kindertransportees', wrote the exhibition's curator, 'that proved to be the

essential ingredient for an exhibition that succeeded in bringing new perspectives to the attention of new audiences. [It was] a successful exhibition which resonated with the public and raised awareness of a number of issues relating to the Kindertransport [5.1]. Further, the Director of the Gallery noted how the exhibition had succeeded *'in reaching many people who otherwise might not have been interested or would not have gone to a museum to see it'* [5.2]. A talk by a former Kindertransportee organised by Hammel to accompany the exhibition in Berlin was considered *'especially interesting' and 'very thought provoking' with an attendee noting that they had 'learnt about new aspects [of history]'* [5.3]. Likewise, an associated panel discussion evoked similar reactions, the organiser commenting on how *'members of the public [now] feel the need to undertake further research regarding Kindertransportees that were part of the local history'* [5.1].

Hammel was invited to speak at an Imperial War Museum (IWM) *After Hours* event with Lord Alf Dubs, Sir Erich Reich and Barbara Winton in London (March 2018), which focused on narratives of the Kindertransport previously neglected, and in particular, on the history of the parents. Her contribution was described as *'critical' in 'using her vast knowledge of the subject to engage the audience who were not subject experts, and to draw them into new ways of thinking about this complex history'* [5.4]. The recording of the event continues to be viewed on IWM's website [5.5].

Hammel was also invited to write the background text for an exhibition on the work of German refugee artists at the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, London (from March to June 2017), which positioned works of art within the wider historical context of German migration to the UK. The exhibition attracted more than 2,500 visitors and the curator noted how Hammel's contribution had *'proved extremely useful for visitors.... The exhibition broke new ground by showing the varied influence of different German migrants on British society'* [5.6].

A rich programme of media appearances accompanied the exhibitions and talks. Especially significant was Hammel's contribution to two feature length radio programmes, one in Germany and one in the UK (on *rbb* in November 2018 and on BBC Radio Wales's *Eye on Wales* in February 2018), which provided new frameworks for understanding the history of the Kindertransport [5.7].

In stimulating and informing policy debate

The significance and reach of Hammel's research is also demonstrated by her engagement with key policy debates, and in providing civil servants and NGO representatives with the historical context to contemporary challenges.

Funded by the ACE Support Hub at Public Health Wales (PHW), Hammel published a report on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and child refugees in the 1930s. The report examined the lessons of the 1930s for child refugee policy today and was launched during Refugee Week 2020 to a virtual audience of 65 people consisting of health policy advisors, civil servants, Directors of Social Services and representatives of NGOs. The Chair of PHW called the research *'powerful' and 'an important use of historical research to inform policy and practice today and in the future'* [5.8]. The Director of the ACEs Support Hub at PHW also noted how:

'[t]he historical experience of children who were child refugees in the 1930s - and especially those who were part of the Kindertransport - is a vital area of work, and provides valuable learning for our developing work on trauma informed approaches to supporting refugees and asylum seekers under the Welsh Government Nation of Sanctuary Plan' [5.9].

In June 2020, Hammel presented the report to the Welsh Government Ministerial Task Force on Asylum Seekers and Refugees chaired by the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, who noted how *'[i]t is vital that we learn from the past, so that we develop trauma-informed services which support those who seek to rebuild their lives here'* [5.10]. The Director of Social Services and Housing of the Welsh Local Government Association also stated that *'there is much we can*

learn [from the report] for the challenges facing UASC [unaccompanied asylum-seeking children] today' [5.11].

Hammel also organised a key roundtable event on community sponsorship in Wales with the Home Office Wales Team (December 2017). The workshop was the first of its kind on the subject. The Head of the Home Office Wales Team noted how Hammel's research had demonstrated the similarities between the Kindertransport and the Community Sponsorship Scheme initiated in 2016. In considering the evaluation of the scheme and the further integration of Syrian refugees *'this session has played an important part in helping to shape our thinking in both areas'*. She added that Hammel's research had made *'a strong contribution to ... policy development'* [5.12].

In influencing approaches to teaching in schools

Hammel was invited to give a workshop for teachers and trainee teachers at the Holocaust Educational Trust, a national government-backed charity (February 2017). Of the 26 participants at the workshop, 25 returned a feedback questionnaire and, of those, 24 stated that Hammel's talk led them to think differently about their teaching and/or that the engagement with the research had influenced their working practices. One participant noted that the suggestion of *'teaching the Kindertransport with current newspaper headlines makes this topic extremely relevant and important to our students'* [5.13]. Another wrote that it would *'directly impact schemes of work in my school and provide more options of teaching the Holocaust to each year group'* [5.14].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Letter of corroboration from the curator, Kommunale Galerie Berlin, 17 October 2019
- 5.2 Letter of corroboration from Gallery Director, Kommunale Galerie Berlin, 14 December 2019
- 5.3 Audience feedback, August 2021
- 5.4 Letter of corroboration from Lead Curator, Holocaust Galleries, Imperial War Museum, 26 July 2018
- 5.5 Available at <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/iwm-after-hours-new-perspectives-on-the-kindertransport>
- 5.6 Letter of corroboration from the curator, Ben Uri Gallery and Museum, 19 July 2017
- 5.7 Letter of corroboration from the Producer, *rbb*, 12 November 2018
- 5.8 Online communication from the Chair of Public Health Wales, 18 June 2020
- 5.9 Letter of corroboration from Director of ACEs Support Hub, 18 June 2020
- 5.10 Official Statement by Jane Hutt MS, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip, Welsh Government, 18 June 2020
- 5.11 Email from Director of Social Services and Housing, Welsh Local Government Association, 24 June 2020
- 5.12 Letter of corroboration from the Head of the Home Office Wales Team, 1 December 2017
- 5.13 Participant feedback, 11 February 2017
- 5.14 Letter from the Head of Education, Holocaust Education Trust, 2 March 2017