



The Holocaust and Wales - Introduction

Transcript

Morris Brodie: What do we picture when we think about the Holocaust? Who do we think of? Where do we think of them? Do we think of Nazi stormtroopers barking orders at groups of defenceless Jews in German streets? Of men, women and children wearing yellow stars, being beaten, of broken glass, of Hitler, and rallies at Nuremberg. Do we think of trains, transporting victims – families – from their homes in Central Europe to concentration camps in tree-lined thickets in the East? Place names – Bergen-Belsen, Treblinka, Dachau. Auschwitz-Birkenau. Barbed wire, wooden huts and guard towers, places of death. Or do we think of heroic rescue, of escape through enemy lines, of liberation – the Resistance, the Warsaw Uprising, the Kindertransport? Do we think of Wales? Of Cardiff, or Swansea – or Abergele?

Renate Collins: I knew where I was coming to in Wales, because if you were under seven, you had to have a home to go to, and I've got pictures which I've still got of where I was going, the people, the husband and wife and the father, grand, grandfather, and they had pictures of me.

Josephine Bruegel: And then we got evacuated, and we went to Wales. While I was in Wales, in Cardiff, I went to the Medical...British Medical Association and said I was here and I could do some work, so they sent me to Llwynypia Hospital – that was up in the Rhondda Valley.

Hans Albrecht: Well, of course my auntie had a friend in Llan, we went to Llandudno, North Wales. It was a boarding house. But then we also had to leave, because Llandudno also became a protected area later on.

Morris Brodie: Those three voices you just heard were Renate Collins, Josephine Bruegel, and Hans Albrecht. All of them fled their countries of birth – Czechoslovakia and Austria – and became refugees in Wales. Each of them has a unique story, sometimes uplifting, sometimes tragic, connecting the Holocaust to Wales.

The Holocaust was one of the defining moments of the twentieth century, and its effects were felt throughout the world, including in Wales. Refugees from Central Europe fled to



Wales seeking sanctuary, as did Holocaust survivors attempting to rebuild their lives in subsequent years. Welsh soldiers and nurses were among the first to witness the horrors of the Nazi camps when they were liberated at the end of the Second World War. In this podcast, we will explore how the Holocaust impacted Wales. We will look at the stories of those who fled from Nazi tyranny to build better lives for themselves and their families and hear about the loved ones they had to leave behind. We will learn how they have contributed to Welsh life – culturally, economically, and politically. The Holocaust did not just happen to other people in another place and time – it is part of all of our history.

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