

Kosidois, Karl  
RG-50.120\*0340  
One Videotape  
In Hebrew

- Abstract: Karl Kosidois was born in Vienna in 1916 to an assimilated family. They spoke German at home and visited the synagogue once a year for the High Holidays. Karl was exposed to Zionism after he joined the organization Young Maccabee. His older brother left for Palestine in 1935. When he was 21 he joined the Austrian army but in 1938 after the Anschluss, before his tour of duty began, he was asked to leave the army. After Kristalnacht, Karl was sent to Dachau until June 6<sup>th</sup>, when he was freed under the condition that he leave Austria. He takes a sojourn in Trieste, on his way to Palestine. His brother was trying to get him a student permit. He met Menahem Pressler in Trieste. After Italy joined Germany in the war, the contingent in Trieste was sent to Naples. He experienced 'good times' in Trieste, Naples, and even in the concentration camp at Feramonti, in Calabria. His next camp was Nereto, near the Adriatic Sea. He fled this camp with his Italian girlfriend who hid him until the end of the war. He worked in Rome as a musician. Karl arrived in Palestine in 1945. In 1948, he moved from Haifa to Tel Aviv and joined the air force as a cartographer.
- 1:00:00 Karl Kosidois was born in Vienna on June 12, 1916. He had an older brother named Heinrich. They lived in a nice neighborhood. Karl completed five years of public elementary school and four years of high school. Karl was a member of Young Maccabee, before and after his Bar-mitzvah.
- 1:04:06 His father built wall moldings in private houses as a worker and his mother was a housewife. They went to synagogue only for the High Holidays.
- 1:05:07 At the age of nine or ten, while joining the Young Maccabee group, he heard about Zionism. He also played sports and was interested in music. He played the violin and learned to sing.
- 1:06:56 At home, his family only spoke German and his parent's friends were only Jewish. His maternal grandmother was from Russia or Poland and lived with them. She was more observant (with a kosher 'corner' for herself).
- 1:10:27 Karl's father was a freethinker. After school, Karl took many courses in music, interior decorating etc.
- 1:12:35 In 1933, they heard Hitler's speeches on the radio but did not pay much attention to them. Every year Karl and his friends visited Herzl's tomb without any problems.
- 1:13:56 At age 21 he enrolled in the Austrian army. It was obligatory to serve for one year. The army was very liberal then and there was another Jew in his unit.

- 1:17:32 He talks about his training in the infantry.
- 1:18:09 After March 1938, with the entrance of Hitler to Austria, Karl and the other Jews in the army were asked to leave.
- 1:19:51 After his expulsion from the army, Karl experienced anti-Semitism. His older brother had already left for Palestine in 1935.
- 1:22:16 He talks about Kristallnacht. Austrian police took Karl and his father out of the house. They were surrounded by anti-Semitic neighbors. After some time, they released his father (since he was over 60) but Karl and the others were taken to Dachau in cattle cars.
- 1:24:31 Karl describes his arrival in Dachau and being processed into the camp. He talks about the daily routine.
- 1:27:26 Karl describes the camp.
- 1:28:56 Karl and all the prisoners received punishment for one prisoner's failed escape attempt.
- 1:30:14 He describes the manager of his barracks. The SS guarded the camp.
- 1:31:27 Karl's main job was cleaning.
- 1:32:17 It was possible to get money from home and there was a canteen where he could buy products.
- 1:33:16 Karl stayed there until June 6<sup>th</sup>, when he was liberated only under the condition that he leave the country.
- 2:00:00 He found some of his uncles at Dachau. He would write home. Karl received postcards and packages almost weekly.
- 2:04:57 Anyone could leave Dachau if family had given money to 'purchase' a ticket out of Austria/Germany. (But it wasn't a real ticket.) Due to the world's outcry after Kristallnacht, the Germans gave an order not to free anyone with a blemish on his body and if a blemish was present to wait for it to heal until the prisoner was released.
- 2:08:01 Karl was freed on June 6<sup>th</sup> after his parents bought a fictitious ticket. He needed to leave Austria within three weeks. His brother managed to get permission for Karl to study in Jerusalem. Italy was the only country that allowed passage to Jews with a passport and 5 pounds sterling in a bank in Palestine.
- 2:10:20 Karl's parents did not have any plans to leave Austria.

- 2:11:46 He talks about going to Trieste on the way to Palestine, after staying with his parents for a month.
- 2:13:31 Karl arrived in Trieste where he could stay for three months until, hopefully, he would get a certificate for Palestine. The certificate never came. Among those waiting in Trieste was a little blond boy, the one-day-famous Menahem Pressler.
- 2:14:57 Italians gave them 7 liras a day and a place to sleep in a rented room (his brother paid for it). It was a nice period in Karl's life.
- 2:16:59 Since the certificate did not arrive, Karl and others decided to go to Palestine illegally. They did so through Libya while they waited for another ship.
- 2:18:34 When Italy joined Germany in the war, they were forced to return to Naples and sent to jail for 20 days. An officer informed them they would not be returned to Austria or Germany. Karl was taken to Feramonti in Calabria, an Italian concentration camp. It was pleasant. They even had dances and each night many celebrities displayed their various talents. They played soccer every day.
- 2:22:01 Karl was later taken to Nereto, near the Adriatic Sea. They did what they wanted and could even leave every day for an hour or so to walk to town. Karl was there almost to the end of the war.
- One day, they were tricked into going to a location which was quickly surrounded by fascist policemen. They were taken to a Nazi detachment that made them work in construction. Karl's job was easy: to alert the Germans if he spotted English planes. One night he fled and returned to Nereto where his Italian girlfriend hid him almost to the end of the war.
- 2:27:41 Italians were very friendly and helpful to the Jews.
- 2:29:43 After a while Karl traveled to Rome where he made some money playing jazz on the guitar. He arrived in Palestine in 1945 with a legal certificate to Haifa (where he had Austrian friends).
- 2:31:00 During the day he worked for the British and in the evening he worked as a guitar player in the casino of Bat-Galim.
- 2:31:55 In 1948 he moved to Tel Aviv and enrolled in the air force as a cartographer. No one in his family survived in Europe.