

THE CHILDREN

Georges-André Kohn

Georges-André Kohn

Georges-André Kohn was born on 23 April 1932 in Paris. His father, Armand Kohn, was Secretary General of the Rothschild Foundation from 1940. This foundation funded the Jewish hospital in Paris. Georges-André's mother, Suzanne Kohn, came from the Nêtre family, a highly respected French-Jewish family. Georges-André had three older siblings: Antoinette, Philippe and Rose-Marie.

Due to Armand Kohn's prominent position, the Kohns still enjoyed some privileges after the occupation of France by the German Wehrmacht. In 1942, Suzanne Kohn and her children converted to Catholicism in the hope that this move would protect them from the increasing anti-Semitic persecution. But on 18 July 1944, the whole family was arrested and imprisoned in the Drancy internment camp near Paris. Georges-André's siblings Philippe and Rose-Marie were on the last deportation train to leave Drancy for Auschwitz on 17 August 1944. Three days after the train's departure, they managed to escape with a group of other prisoners against their father's express wishes and survived in hiding until the liberation of France. Armand Kohn was taken to Buchenwald, while Suzanne Kohn and her daughter Antoinette were taken to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they both died. Georges-André's grandmother was murdered in Auschwitz, and Georges-André himself was imprisoned in the children's camp at Auschwitz. On 28 November 1944, Georges-André Kohn was taken to the Neuengamme concentration camp, and he was murdered here on Bullenhuser Damm on 20 April 1945 aged 12.

In 1946, Armand Kohn, who survived the camps, learned from another former prisoner that Georges-André had been taken to Auschwitz. Armand died in 1962 without ever finding out the exact details of his youngest son's fate. In 1979, Georges-André's brother Philippe Kohn learned what had happened to his brother in Hamburg. Together with other relatives of the murdered children, he founded an association with the aim of keeping the memory of the Bullenhuser Damm murders alive.

A street in the Hamburg district of Burgwedel is named after Georges-André Kohn.

Georges-André Kohn

Georges-André Kohn at his First Communion
in 1944.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 1995-1128*



Georges-André Kohn

Armand and Suzanne Kohn with their children
Philippe (left), Antoinette (centre) and Rose-Marie,
circa 1931.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 2002-1195*



Georges-André Kohn

Suzanne Kohn with her son Georges-André,
circa 1933.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 1995-1076*



Georges-André Kohn

Siblings Georges-André, Rose-Marie, Philippe and Antoinette Kohn (from left), circa 1939.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 1995-1162*

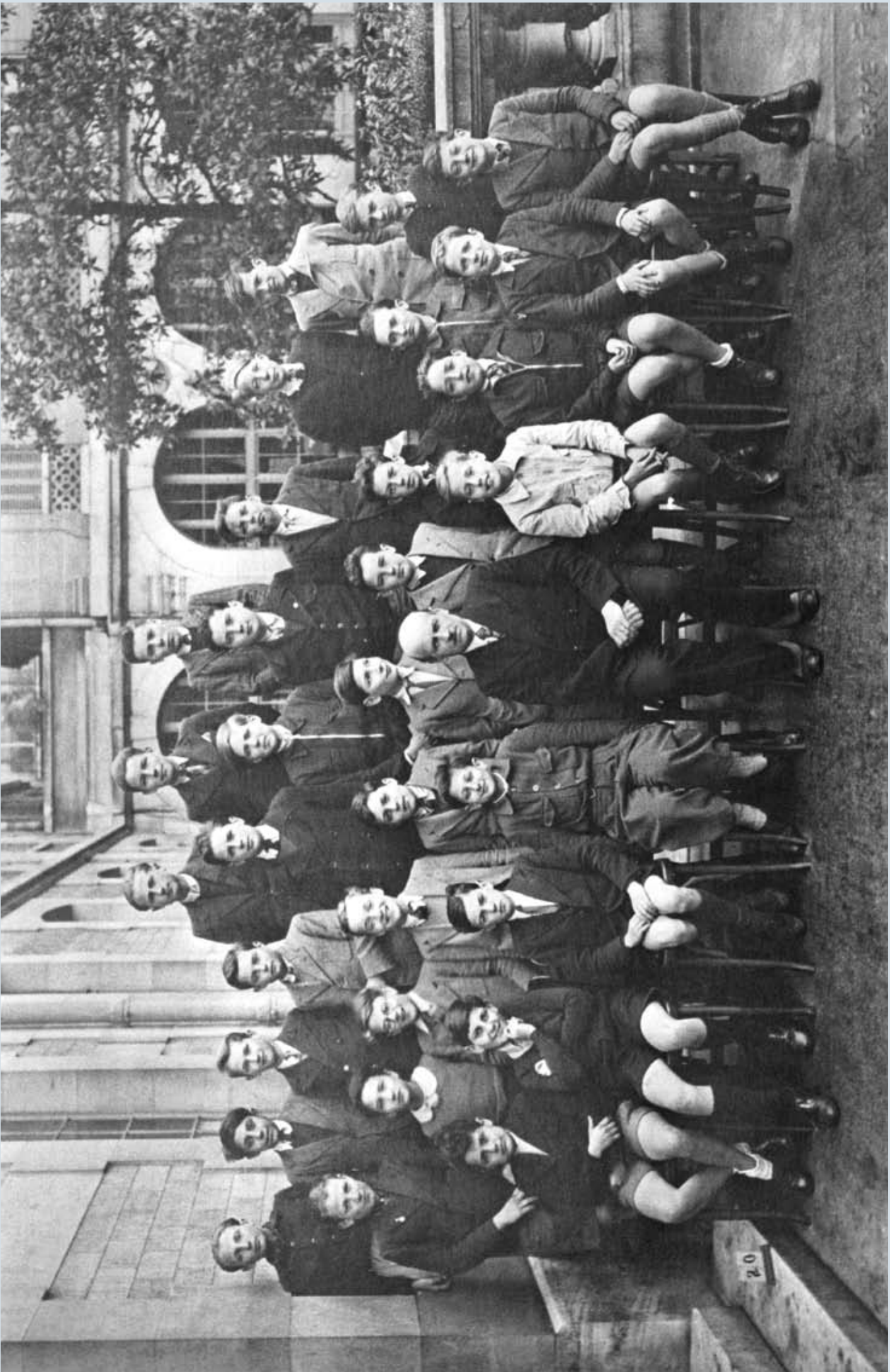


Georges-André Kohn

Georges-André Kohn in a school photograph from 1944.

Georges-André Kohn is behind the teacher to the left. Georges-André was the only boy with a Jewish background in his class at a Catholic private school. The picture was taken shortly before he was deported.

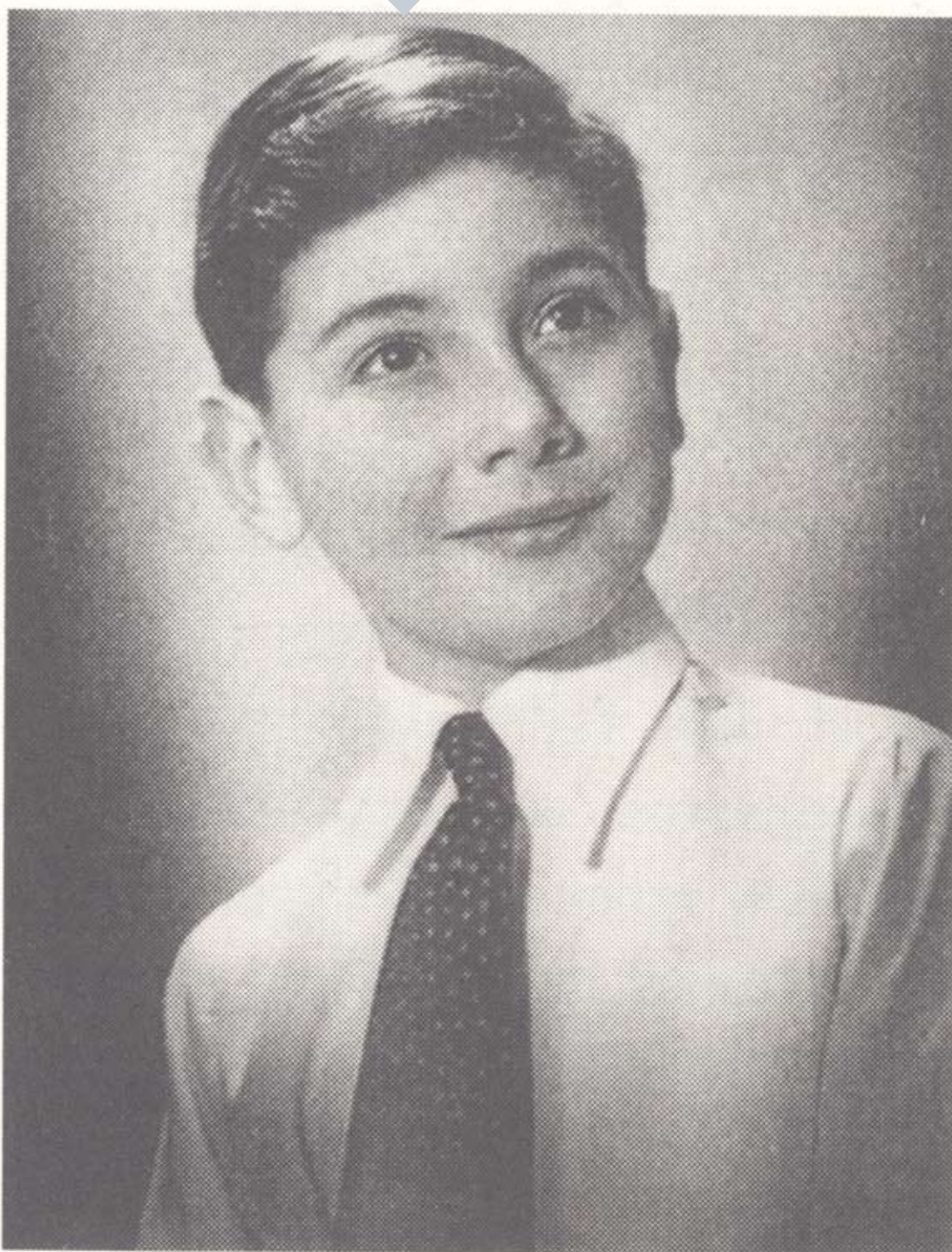
*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 2002-1196*



Georges-André Kohn

Georges-André Kohn, undated.

From a private collection



Georges-André Kohn

Letter from Armand Kohn to his secretary at the Rothschild Foundation Hospital dated 17 August 1944.

On his first day on the deportation train, Armand Kohn managed to throw a letter addressed to his secretary out of the carriage. In the letter, Kohn is asking his secretary to try and get help for him through influential organisations. The person who found the letter delivered it to Kohn's secretary. Some of the other deportees aboard the train had come from the large prison in Fresnes outside Paris, where the Nazis had imprisoned French resistance fighters.

“Dear Sir, we have all been deported. I'm sure we're being taken to Germany. We're armed with courage and trust in God. We're with the political prisoners from Fresnes – Why? Try and do something for us through the International Red Cross or the President of Paris. Good bye, see you soon. Keep us in your thoughts and inform all our friends and the company I managed.

To the person who finds this letter:
Please post it.”

From a private collection

17 VIII 44. CHER MONSIEUR
 NOUS SOMMES TOUS DÉPORTÉS
 SANS DOUTE ALLONS NOUS EN
 ALLEMAGNE. ARMÉS DE
 COURAGE ET CONFIANCE
 DIEU. NOUS SOMMES AVEC
 LES PRISONNIERS POLITIQUES
 DE FRESNES - POURQUOI ?
 ESSAYEZ D'AGIR POUR NOUS
 VIA R. INTERNATIONALE -
 VOYEZ LE PRÉSIDENT DE
 PARIS. A DIEU A BIENTÔT
 PENSEZ À NOUS PRÉVENEZ
 TOUS LES AMIS. ET L'ENTREPRISE
 QUE J'ADMINISTRAIS

MONSIEUR
 PRIÈRE À LA PERSONNE
 QUI TROUVERA CETTE
 LETTRE DE LA METTRE À
 LA POSTE

CETTE CARTE-LETTRE

Adressée à Mr. ROBERT CARRE, Secrétaire
 29 bis rue Doudanville à Paris XVIII^e arr
 fut glissée par une fente du plancher du
 wagon de déportation par ARMAND KOHN le
 17.VIII.1944. tomba sur la voie à la hau-
 teur de VILLERS-COTTERETS (AISNE). Elle
 fut heureusement ramassée par un homme
 scrupuleux qui porta le message au domici-
 le du destinataire en évitant de se faire
 connaître.



Camp d'internement
 DRANCY près PARIS



ICI PUREMENT INTERNÉS
 PAR L'OCCUPANT HITLÉRIEN
 DE 1941 À 1944
 120 000 VIEILLARDS HOMMES FEMMES ET ENFANTS
 FINANÇÉS ÉTRANGERS DE RESCUE OU DESZIGANES JUIFS
 TOUS DÉPORTÉS COMME JUIFS
 DANS LES CAMPS D'EXTÉRMINATION EN ALLEMAGNE
 DE LA PLUS GRANDE MAJORITÉ À TROUVE LA NOÏTE

Georges-André Kohn

Letter to Armand Kohn from French former prisoner Louis Micard, 1946.

The writer of this letter was able to give Armand Kohn some information on the fate of his son Georges-André and tried to console Kohn.

“Dear Sir,

Georges Kohn, your son, was on a transport from Drancy which arrived at Birkenau in early September 1944. Almost immediately, he was sent to Camp D (a labour camp), where my comrades and myself were imprisoned. Do I need to tell you that we all welcomed him warmly? Every one of us went to great lengths to make him forget the place he had come to and to shield him from what was going on as much as possible. Most of all, we tried to ease his sorrow about being separated from his mother, who was imprisoned in the women’s camp, along with his grandmother, aunt, and, I think, several other relatives of his. The women’s camp was located opposite our camp, on the other side of the ‘ramp’ (train tracks). Some managed to get letters across, and thus Georges was able to correspond with his mother for a few weeks. Then one day, the messages from the women’s camp ceased. Georges despaired. We tried to comfort him as best we could, but we also had a sense of what the silence meant.

Weeks passed. A selection was held among the children. Georges appeared a little weak, even though he was healthy, and we therefore feared he would be picked. Comrades of ours, French doctors working at the infirmary, helped him make it through the selection.

The terrible days of winter came. The snow, the wind, the cold, so many enemies. But Georges was fine. He wore warm clothes, and – a rare thing indeed – had sturdy shoes to protect his feet from getting wet. He worked on the trolley. This meant, maybe you

know of this, that he had to push or draw a trolley, in which refuse, firewood and sometimes coal was transported. The kapo was a noisy German, but he wasn't too strict and didn't beat the prisoners.

December came, and then January. The Russians' rapid advances forced the Germans to evacuate the camp on 18 January 1945.

I lost sight of little Georges. After my return to France, I met a doctor in Paris who had also been in Birkenau, and he told me that Georges had died in Germany.

That is all the information I can give you about your son. He was a lovely little boy, and he was like a little brother to my comrades and myself. His passing, if that was his fate, will pain more than just one of us."

From a private collection

Georges-André Kohn

Philippe Kohn during the ceremony for the naming of Georges-André-Kohn-Straße in the Hamburg district of Burgwedel, 21 April 1992.

In the 1990s, the streets of a new residential development in the Hamburg district of Burgwedel were named after the Bullenhuser Damm children.

Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial, Günther Schwarberg Collection, 2002-1224



Georges-André Kohn

Henri Morgenstern, Denise Kohn, Professor Otto Prokop and Philippe Kohn (from left) at the Neuengamme Memorial, circa 1981.

Philippe Kohn, Georges-André's brother, and Henri Morgenstern, Jaqueline Morgenstern's cousin, visited Hamburg and the Neuengamme Memorial on several occasions.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 1999-387*



Georges-André Kohn

Philippe Kohn in front of the plaque he dedicated to his brother's memory in the Bullenhuser Damm Memorial's rose garden, 20 April 1999.

*Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial,
Günther Schwarberg Collection, 2002-1224*



