



L. Mack 1941

Orange

# THE DUNERA BOYS SEVENTY YEARS ON



## Transcriptions

In this booklet are transcriptions of some items in the exhibition and related Library material that is not in the exhibition. Some items on display may be difficult to read in their original form or cannot be displayed in their entirety. Transcripts follow the originals as closely as possible but have been reformatted for consistency and ease of reading.

# THE DUNERA BOYS

## SEVENTY YEARS ON

### Transcriptions

#### Contents

Extract from Ernst Fröhlich's diary

Memorandum to the British High Commissioner

Extract from *The Boomerang*

Bern Brent's letter to his mother

Letter from Walter Steinhardt (not on display)

Theodor Engel's letter to Rabbi Falk

Rabbi Falk's draft memorandum to the Jewish Welfare Society

Rabbi Falk's letter to Camp Spokesmen (not on display)

Spokesmen's letter to the Commanding Officer of Hay Camp No. 8

Karl Glass' letter to Rabbi Falk

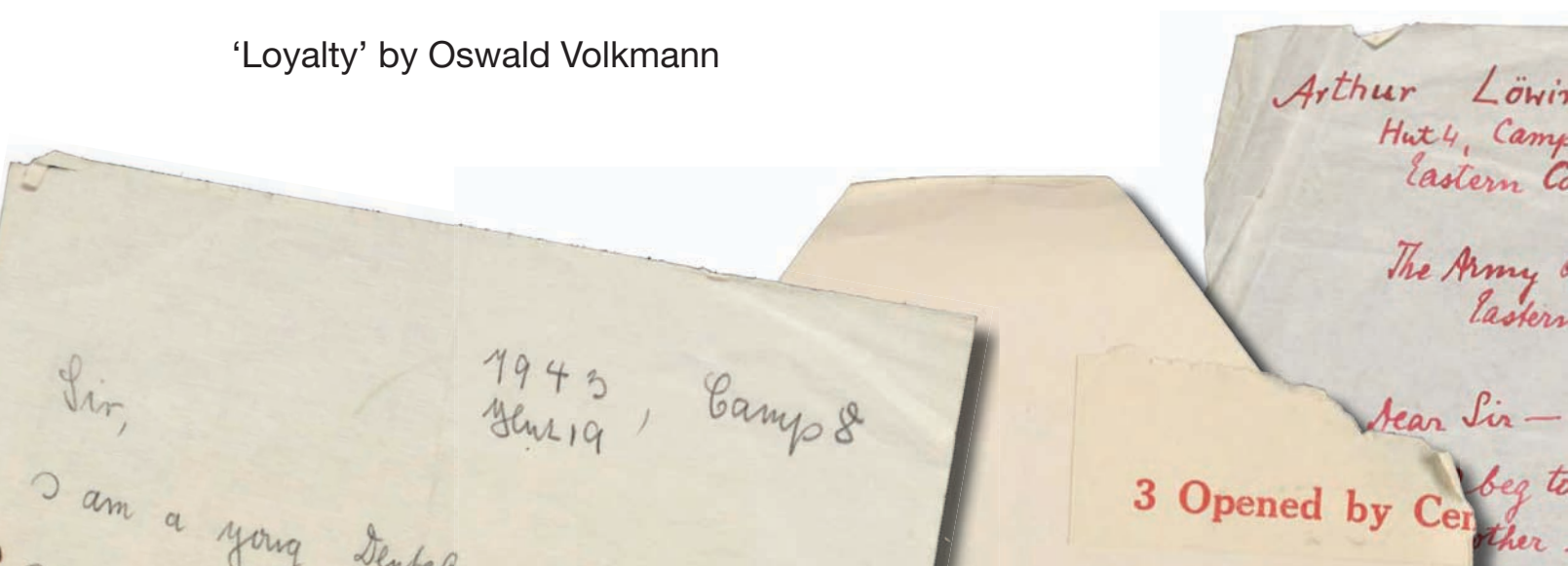
Arthur Löwinsohn's letter to Rabbi Falk (not on display)

Governor-General's letter to King George VI

Major Julian Layton's evidence to the Aliens Classification Committee

Victor Edward Twigg's letter to Dr H.V. Evatt

'Loyalty' by Oswald Volkmann



**Ernst Fröhlich** (1917–2008)

**Diary: Dec. 1940 to Nov. 1941** [extract]

ink on paper; 22.8 x 18.0 cm

Manuscripts Collection, MS 9520

[Page 1—not on display]

Dec. 1940 – Dec 1941

The following lines are meant to remind me once on the time

I have spent in an internment camps.

ERNST FRÖHLICH INT 54888

Camp 8, HAY, N.S.W.

Hut 27

HAY, 23rd Dec 1940

I'll try to recollect here everything of any importance that happened since my internment on the 26th June 1940. Denmark, Norway, Holland Belgium France have been overrun not to speak of Poland. Great Britain seemed to be given granted only a short time of breathing space whereafter the German onslaught was thought to be directed against it with all its might. Considering the fact that Chamberlain & his Government had pursued [sic] the war pliticy [sic] very halfheartedly during the first 10 months of war it can be but little surprising that the Government & the General staff were very nervous about the likely progress of the war.

At ½ 8 a.m. on the 26th of June a number of detectives came to the hostel & brought me, Peter Huppert, Harry Tripp, H. Federer, K. Guttman, P Hoffmann to the Commercial ... Police station. Franz Kaiser was not at the hostel at that time as he had having gone to Oxford the day before. In the police station we were locked up in the bunker & waited there till noon. A police care [sic] gave us a lift. Then we were handed over to the military authorities who were ... not by far as friendly as the police. Bussess bid us to the Compton Park, race courts. There we were thoroughly searched, all my money was taken away including stamps, razor blades etc. By 7 or 8 pm of the same day we got our first meal consisting of chees bred [sic] & tea in very little quantity. We slept in a hall on the floor with ... a mattress [sic] & 1 or 2 blankets. We were not allowed to write home. I was most anxious about my jewels. We stayed there for 3 or four days. From Compton Park Race Court we were transported to HUYTON near Liverpool. We were driven like sheep from the station at Huyton to the internment camp. In the camp four people were assigned to one tent were [sic] we were to sleep for a fournight [sic] or so. The food was pityful, [sic] accomodations [sic] very poor. After a weeks starvation



[Page 2—on display]

we got a little money for which we could buy if lucky enough some cigarettes sweets etc. We still could not write for a long while. At last we were allowed to send two letter 25 lines each. That was all the mail we could send from Huyton. There were a good many Nazis in Huyton. I felt obliged to watch very closely. One day was the 8th or 9th of July all people wishing to go overseas were asked to register. Before that we had to fill in a form where we were asked to give the reasons for us a) to get released (b) not to be sent overseas. I stated that I was not willing to go overseas unless I knew definitely that mother & sister ---- would follow in 2 or three days time. We were not used to have rôle calls in that camp. On the day of registration we were suddenly ordered for rôle-call. I could not imagine [sic] that the C.O. would pick out men & force them to go overseas & I stared at those who anticipated it. The C.O. indeed picked me out & I objected to him on the ground that I had my mother & sister here whom I cannot leave alone. He promised [sic] repeatedly that they'll follow me in a short time. [...]

Believing in the word of an English Officer, hard pressed by the political events, assuming that all the internees will be deported sooner or later. I did not raise any objections packed my suitcase & went off. I took all the jewels with me as I did not know what else to do with it. I did not consider it safe to hand them over & without receipt. Only the I sent only the money to mother. Brought to Liverpool the next morning we were searched by robbers in uniform. They took away not cigarettes chocolates, money, watches, jewels fountain pen, everything they could get hold of. Yet we could not possibly possess anything dangerous as we had been searched before in Compton Park. In darkness, without sufficient food or light + sun we made a little voyage of 8 weeks. In the Irish sea two torpedos of a German U boat missed touching our boat "Dunera" [?].searches During repeated searches more things were robbed. I gave my Pt plate voluntarily into a bag of together with many others of my comrades. That bag was handed over voluntarily to Lft Tiunnig [?]who promised [sic] to return it at the end of our voyage.

[Page 3]

Nothing whatsoever was returned. We landed at Freetown (Siera Leone) Ahra, Cape Town, Fremantle, Melbourne, Sydney. People were badly treated during the short & few deck exercises. Some officers did not only shut their eyes to that. The ship was vastly overcrowded. Hygienic conditions were simply appalling.[sic] No toothbrushes, nor toothpaste, no soap & softwater for a great part of the journey. The suitcases were opened forcefully by soldiers. Many things, some times everything were taken out, put into the pocket or thrown over board. Arrived in Sydney on Friday 9th Sept. 1940 at noon. we on the lower troopdeck No 3 of the foreshipp [sic] were waiting until 6 or 7 pm for our disembarkation. Lightheartedly but fearing to get searched again we left the "Dunera" with the last lot to be put into the ... train with which we followed four other trains packed with internees

to HAY N.S.W. We travelled for 18 hours. The night was terrificly [sic] cold, the day full of sunshine. The journey was extremely interesting. We met kangaroos, ostrich, ...& many other exotic animals trees etc. A breakfast with sandwiches, apple, orange & bana & coffee improved our moods greatly. A curious crowd watch us in HAY being led to our internment camp. We must have looked pale, unshaven, under nourished & untidy like a crowd lot of gipsies or criminals. The whole lot of 1900 internees were housed & fed in one camp which was orriginally [sic] meant only for half that number. The other camp was not finished. Many of us slept on the floor of the huts. The nights were terribly cold, the days extremely hot. Our hunger surpassed all expectations. Normal army rations did not satisfy us. It took us more than a month to get normal again. P O'Noel [sic] came to see the camp, the very officer who treated us worse than animals, insulted our comrades forcfully & with words. He was terrifcally bood [sic] by us so that much that he thought it wise to to leave the camp as quickly as possible. Australian officers & men treated us nicely. We were allowed to send cables & airmail letters. Mr Brand of the Jewish Comm. Judge Jordon, Jugd Judge Davids came to enquire about our situation. Applications were made by [...]

**Spokesmen of Compound II, Camp No. 7, Eastern Command  
Memorandum submitted to His Excellency the High Commissioner of the  
United Kingdom in Australia by the internees from England at No.7 Camp,  
Eastern Command, Hay N.S.W 1940**

carbon copy of typescript on paper; 26.0 x 20.0 cm

Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

Manuscripts Collection, MS 5392

**MEMORANDUM**

Submitted To His Excellency The High Commissioner Of The United Kingdom  
In Australia By The Internees From England At No.7 Camp, Eastern Command,  
Hay, N.S.W.

The following gives a short account of the treatment which the 962 internees now in No.7 Camp, Eastern Command, Australia, experienced during their voyage to Australia on board H.M.T. "DUNERA". The full complement of internees arriving on the "DUNERA" is made up by those in No. 8 Camp to whom all conditions of treatment as set out below apply automatically.

All persons here were interned between May and July 1940 in consequence of general internment orders, and are practically all refugees from Nazi oppression, on account of their Jewish descent, their political conviction or their religious faith. Nearly all are classified as "C" class cases by the Special Aliens Tribunals set up in England, declaring them officially to be "refugees from Nazi oppression" and freeing them from most restrictions.

Conditions determining internees to go overseas.

Before their transportation overseas these internees were in various English camps and were either sent overseas voluntarily on the strength of certain promises made, or were compelled to go.

a) The internees coming from the temporary camp Lingfield (about 350 on board H.M.T. "DUNERA") were informed that they were going to a more permanent camp in England. They were accordingly in no way prepared for a long journey overseas. [...]

[Page 3]

It will be clearly observed from the above that the internees arriving on board H.M.T. "DUNERA" were in the great majority men who had volunteered for this transport and had done so on the strength of promises which appeared to give an infinitely greater chance of helping in the fight against Nazi Germany than sitting behind barbed wire in England. They were men with great hopes and bright spirits who arrived at Liverpool for their embarkation overseas on 10th July, 1940.

### Embarkation.

A. As far as is known the first transport to arrive were about 500 men from Huyton. They were kept waiting on the embarkation pier for the boat to make fast and had then to proceed through a narrow doorway on to the landing stage. Behind this door soldiers were posted and subjected everybody to an exceedingly rough search. Everything carried in hand or loose in the pockets was taken off the internees. All less valuable effects like gloves, toilet utensils, eatables, pipes, etc., were thrown disorderly on the ground. Valuables were stuffed into sacks or disappeared openly into the pockets of the searching soldiers. Soon rows of emptied wallets were lying on the floor, the contents of emptied attache cases were roughly thrown about, and the officially provided kit-bags could be seen all over the place. Valuable documents, identity and emigration papers, testimonials of all kinds, were taken away, thrown on the ground or even ostensibly [sic] torn up before the eyes of their very owners.

No receipts were given, except by one single searching group. Appeals to the officers standing by were fruitless. Attempts of protest were roughly suppressed.

A dazed crowd of men found themselves hearded together in the lower and upper No. 2 Mess Decks on board H.M.T. "DUNERA". Of all the articles taken away on the landing stage only a very few were ever seen again. [...]

### Treatment during the voyage.

#### I. Hygienic Conditions.

1) a) The internees' decks were without exception overcrowded by at least 50%. The lower No.2 Deck provided for 228 men. It became accommodation for 354 men. This proportion was true of practically every deck.

b) The congestion was such that people slept at night on messtables and on the floor during the whole voyage, whereas during the day when no hammocks were allowed, staircases and every available inch of floor space was constantly packed. In the event of any accident the congestion alone would have made an attempt of life- saving impossible.

2) On the first evening it was forbidden to leave the decks. Buckets for urine were provided. The buckets were soon overflowing and sewage flooded the decks as the ship rolled. In the midst of it men were lying on the floor to sleep, for at first there were neither hammocks nor blankets.

3) a) For weeks the hatches were kept battened down. Neither daylight nor natural air ever reached the decks. For weeks one was dependent on electric light and artificial air-supply through ventilators – and that in overcrowded decks on a journey through the tropics. Later the hatches were opened periodically where it was possible. The port-holes remained closed the whole time.

b) No inoculation against typhoid and cholera was administered in spite of circumstances obviously favouring an epidemic of this kind. Although the most essential medicaments were lacking, vital medicines like Insulin were thrown overboard when discovered to be owned by internees. False teeth were removed, destroyed or thrown overboard.

[Page 8]

4) The upper parts of the ship where one would have been in the fresh air were absolutely out of bounds. The ways of access were barred by barbed wire and sentries with bayonets. On many days, however, “exercise” was ordered.

a) “Exercise” lasted 15-25 minutes a day on such days as it took place

b) For the longest part of the voyage the upper parts of the ship could be entered only with bare feet. On one occasion a sergeant threw an empty bottle in among the passing internees. The bottle broke and the internees were driven over splinters with bare feet. The grinning lascars looked on as the white internees were subjected to that treatment.

c) The order had been issued to run or walk fast during these exercises. Those who did not walk fast enough were driven along by the sentries with rifle-butts or were bruised by blows. At the ends of the decks Lewis-Guns loaded and completely manned were kept trained on the internees in readiness to shoot. At times officers and sergeants assaulted the passing internees, pushed them, beat them and insulted or swore at them whilst hitting them. A Roman Catholic Priest was among those pushed and beaten in this manner.

d) In the beginning it was not permissible to evade these exercises. During the absence of the internees created in this manner the decks were searched by sergeants for valuables.

5) There were open portholes at the kitchen, in the washrooms and in the latrines. Around all these portholes – including those in the latrines – closely packed groups would stand trying to obtain a little fresh air. At 4 o’clock in the afternoon these portholes too were closed. The air in the internees’ quarters defies description, especially in the washplaces where the steam



from the hot salt water showers mingled with the perspiration of the crowded men.

6) From the first landing in North-West Africa to the first landing in Australia—i.e. during the whole voyage through the tropics—there was fresh water only two or three times a week. During the stops in the African ports where the use of salt water was forbidden because of the danger of contagion, there was no water at all for the cleaning of crockery, washing or bathing—and that in the tropics.

7) There were approximately two dozen seats in the latrines for 1600 internees. As the constant stream of salt water rinsing them was much too violent, a number of these seats were constantly smeared with a mixture of salt water and excrements, making the use impossible. In front of the remaining seats queues of waiting men would assemble during the rush hours, so that nature had to be relieved in the full view of many impatient witnesses. In addition, a large part of the internees suffered from violent dia rrhoeas [sic]—in others sea-sickness took the form of chronic indigestion. Owing to the motion of the sea, the floor of the latrines was almost always flooded with sewage. On days, when the sea was rough, the state of the lavatory could hardly be described. There was a constant shortage of lavatory paper, with rarely more than two sheets per person. Other paper was not available, newspapers were forbidden. [...]

**The editor, Hut 24, Hay Internment Camp No. 7**  
**The first issue of *The Boomerang*, 9 February 1941**

litho print on paper; 33.0 x 21.0 cm

Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

Manuscripts Collection, MS 5392

[Cover]

The Boomerang: No. 1

To call a spade a spade

HAY. 9th FEBRUARY 1941. CAMP 7.

Hallo Everybody, This is “The Boomerang” The Boomerang intends to be a permanent part of this camp. This is its visiting card.

Actually the boomerang is an Australian weapon. Australians throw it onto an object and wherever you throw there are two possibilities: a.) you hit, b.) you miss. The boomerang that hits its object is the boomerang we hope to give you. Should the boomerang miss however, it has the habit of hitting its thrower. In other words, should our paper not be up to camp standards the Editor will suffer substantial damages. To this, gentlemen, we object. We are of the opinion that a camp paper is needed. but since we are at it we might as well give you a decent camp paper. We will therefore compile a fortnightly review of camp-life. We will also cater for your entertainment and give you articles and various features of an instructive and diverting nature.- Last not least, we will print contributions from you. We hope that thus our boomerang will be a fillip and a diverting guide.

Thus clad in our Sunday thoughts the “Boomerang” takes its bow. Please remember that your mind is not interned, nor is it confined to this camp.

Therefore we are confident not to miss our object.

“The Editor”

Contents

Current Affairs—Judaism in its Working—On Debating Societies  
The Comet—Sports—Gardening—Library

**Bern Brent** (b.1922)

**Verso of letter to Lola Bernstein, 25 April 1941**

ink, stamp ink and pencil on paper; 33.7 x 20.3 cm

Papers of Bern Brent

Manuscripts Collection, MS 8869

Gerd Bernstein, 35023

25.IV.1941

Dear Mum,

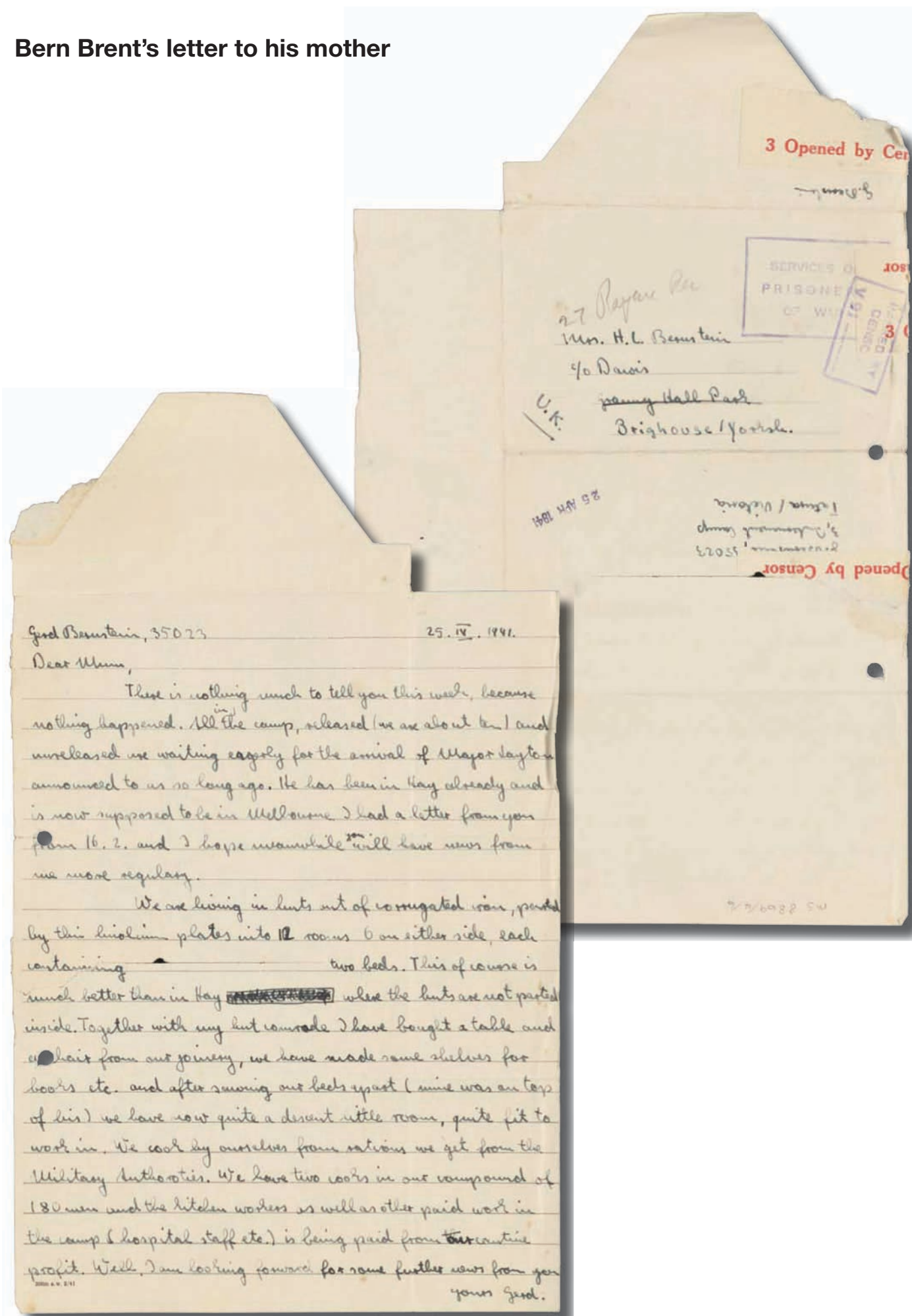
There is nothing much to tell you this week, because nothing happened. All in the camp, released (we are about ten), and unreleased are waiting eagerly for the arrival of Major Layton announced to us so long ago. He has been in Hay already and is now supposed to be in Melbourne. I had a letter from you from 16.2 and I hope meanwhile you will have news from me more regularly.

We are living in huts out of corrugated iron, parted by thin linoleum plates into 12 rooms 6 on either side, each containing two beds. This of course is much better than in Hay where the huts are not parted inside. Together with my hut comrade I have bought a table and chair from our joinery, we have made some shelves for books etc. and after sawing our beds apart (mine was on top of his) we have now quite a descent [sic] little room, quite fit to work in. We cook by ourselves from rations we get from the Military Authoroties. [sic] We have two cooks in our compound of 180 men and the kitchen workers as well as other paid work in the camp (hospital staff etc.) is being paid from our cantine [sic] profit. Well, I am looking forward for some further news from you.

Yours Gerd.



## Bern Brent's letter to his mother



Good Bernstein, 35023

25. IV. 1946.

Dear Mum,

There is nothing much to tell you this week, because nothing happened. All the camp, released (we are about ten) and unreleased are waiting eagerly for the arrival of Major Layton announced to us so long ago. He has been in Hay already and is now supposed to be in Melbourne. I had a letter from you from 16. 2. and I hope meanwhile will have news from you more regularly.

We are living in huts out of corrugated iron, partitioned by thin linoleum plates into 12 rooms 6 on either side, each containing two beds. This of course is much better than in Hay ~~where the huts are not partitioned~~ where the huts are not partitioned inside. Together with my hut comrade I have bought a table and chairs from our joinery, we have made some shelves for books etc. and after sunning our beds apart (mine was on top of his) we have now quite a decent little room, quite fit to work in. We cook by ourselves from rations we get from the Military authorities. We have two cooks in our compound of 180 men and the kitchen workers as well as other paid work in the camp (hospital staff etc.) is being paid from ~~the~~ the camp's profit. Well, I am looking forward for some further news from you

yours  
Bern



**Walter Steinhardt** (b.1915)

**Letter from Walter Steinhardt to an unknown correspondent** 1943  
in Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

pencil on paper; 23.0 x 17.0 cm

Manuscript Collection, MS 5392/5

1943, Camp 8

Hut 19

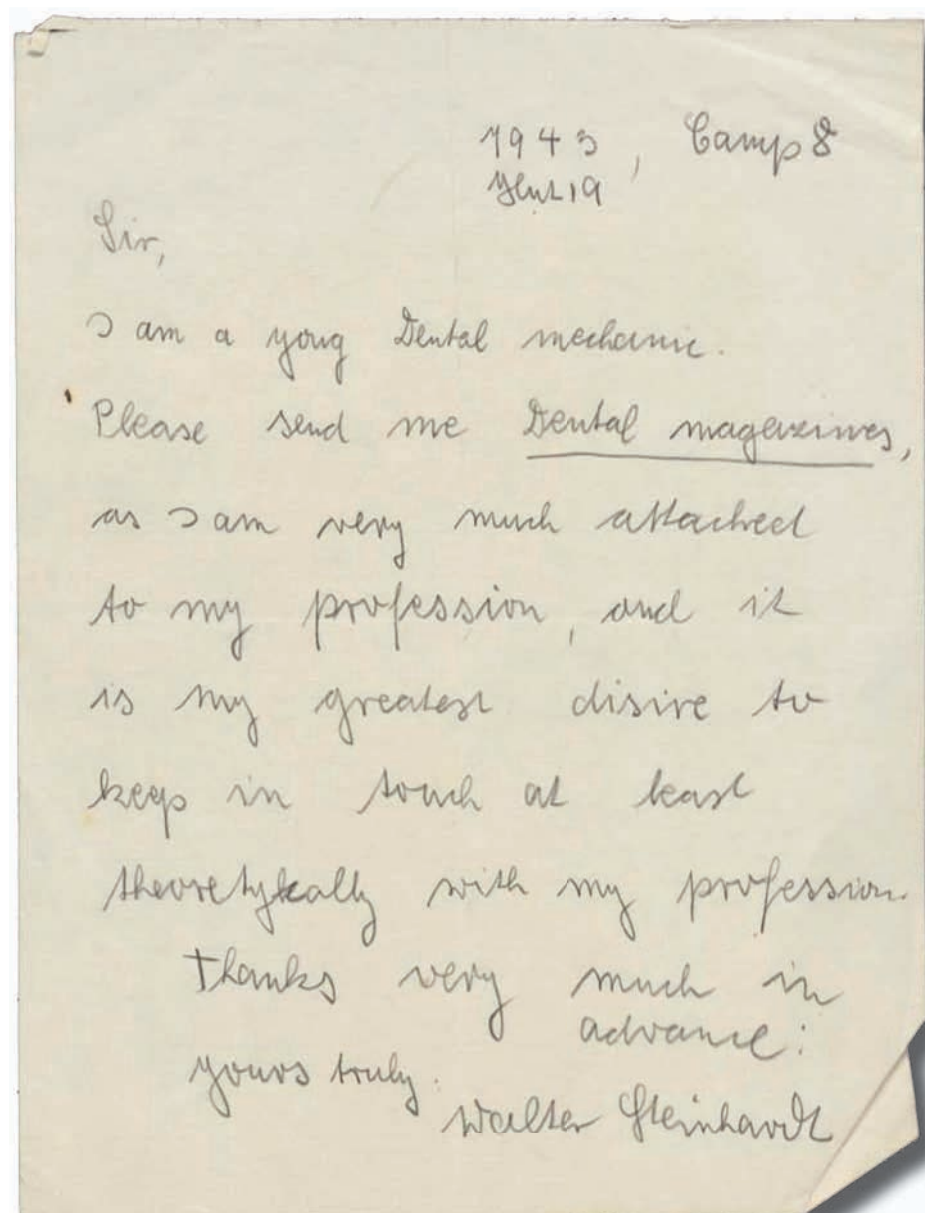
Sir,

I am a young Dental mechanic. Please send me Dental magazines, as I am very much attached to my profession, and it is my greatest disire [sic] to keep in touch at least theoretycally [sic] with my profession.

Thanks very much in advance:

Yours truly:

Walter Steinhardt



1943, Camp 8  
Hut 19

Sir,

I am a young Dental mechanic.

Please send me Dental magazines,

as I am very much attached  
to my profession, and it  
is my greatest disire to  
keep in touch at least  
theoretycally with my profession.

Thanks very much in  
advance:

yours truly:  
Walter Steinhardt

Letter from Walter Steinhardt (not on display)

**Theodor Engel** (1886–?)

**Letter to Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk, 15 August 1941**

ink on paper; 33.0 x 20.5 cm

Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

Manuscripts Collection, MS 5392

15th AUG 1941

Dear Sir,

On the 13th of June I asked you whether you have received the watercolour painting which I have sent to you with the consent of the Commandant of Hay, Internment Camp.

As I have not received an answer yet, I have to assume, that my letter went astray. Will you kindly let me know, whether you have received the painting and how you like it.

When you visited Hay in April 1941 you kindly promised me to send paper and watercolours. As I am in great need of painting-material. I should be very thankful to you if you would be kind enough to let me have them. Painting is the only help for my depressed mind. Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours faithfully  
Theodor Engel

**Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk (1889–1957)**

**Draft memorandum to the Jewish Welfare Society, December 1940**

typescript and pencil on paper; 26.0 x 21.0 cm

Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

Manuscripts Collection, MS 5392

**MEMORANDUM**

**submitted to the Jewish Welfare Society,**

**by Rabbi L.A. Falk,**

**on his official visit to Hay the Jewish internees at Hay**

**9th-12th December, 1940.**

On my arrival at Hay I reported myself to the Commanding Officer, Colonel C.S. Phane, who after hearing the object and purpose of my visit requested me to visit the internees within the camp.

It gives me much pleasure to state that the Commanding Officer is a sympathetic administrator who is ever anxious to improve the lot of the internees. The same spirit prevails among his men. The internees themselves conveyed to me that they have every confidence in the Commanding Officer and are fully aware that any representations they make to him receives his considered attention.

The camp itself is well laid out and provides ample accomodation.[sic] The food is quite good and no complaints were heard received by me on this matter. Improvements in the camp are daily being effected to make the life of the internees as comfortable as is possible under the circumstances. I was particularly pleased to note that large numbers of the internees are taken each day for a swim in the river.

During my three days visit, apart from rendering spiritual administration, I had many conferences with the official spokesmen of the internees as well as with a large number of individual internees. These interviews enabled me to acquaint myself fully with all the problems which confronts [sic] them. They requested me to submit to the Commanding officer and to the Jewish Welfare Society these problems, with the object that immediate consideration be given and thus effect a decided improvement in their unfortunate Fragile position in having fled from Nazi persecution and now, owing to the War, having been interned—torn away from their families and transported to a far-off land.

I have carried away the impression that any effort for the amelioration of the conditions under which they live must depend largely in effecting a radical change in the application of the Government policy appertaining in relation to the particular class of C internees who are at present at Hay. I shall first deal with this aspect.

## POLITICAL

As you are already aware a radical change has taken place in the attitude policy of H.M. Government with regard to the policy of internment of aliens, as is outlined in the "White Paper" (July 1940) and as amplified in the House of Commons by the statement of Sir John Anderson on 22nd August, 1940. Most regrettable and deplorable things have happened. stated when reviewing the policy of internment that They have been partly due to the inevitable haste with which the policy of internment had to be carried out. They were, however, due in some cases to mistakes of individual stupidity and muddle."

This change in policy has resulted in a As a result of this change of policy, H.M. Government has decided to send having sent to Canada and proposed to be sent to Australia to investigate into the who [sic] problem of the internees. This policy has already brought about the release of a number of internees at Hay but with the proviso that they must return to England. This particular proviso is one of the principal worries of the internees at Hay.

1. There are internees who have already visas and affidavits to emigrate to U.S.A., other dominions or neutral countries. There are also internees whose families have already emigrated to other countries. Their contention, which I fully support, is that undue hardship would be inflicted upon them, if on their release here in Australia they are compelled to return to England.
2. There are also a number of men who are anxious to remain in Australia when their release is affected. Amongst these are men who by virtue of their training, character and profession would be a distinct acquisition to Australia.
3. There are amongst the internees a number of Polish and Czech nationals who do not come within the category of enemy aliens and hence their release should be expedited.
4. There are a number of young men who have been brought to England by the Zionist Organisation to proceed to Palestine. These men have been expressed a desire to enlist in the Jewish units within the British Army in Palestine. Their case also deserves consideration.
5. The internees are anxious that the Commission which is to come to Australia to review their cases be not unduly delayed.

It is my considered opinion that the Jewish Welfare society which is recognised by the Australian Government as the body authorised to speak and act on behalf of the Jewish refugees should continue to make representations to the Australian



Government which has been so sympathetic to meet these just claims of these internees. It is inconceivable to me that the Australian Government which has been so sympathetic towards the tragedy of the "refugees" would not give consideration to these just claims.

[Page 3]

I am fully aware that the Jewish Welfare Society has not been slack in its efforts to ameliorate the conditions of the internees. But it is the general opinion of the internees that the Jewish Welfare Society has not made sufficient representation to the Government on the particular problems of the release in Australia and transmigration.

As a mandate has been given to me by the internees to speak on their behalf, I respectfully ask you to give immediate consideration to these problems, and to find ways and means to bring home to the authorities the necessity to act in the spirit of British justice by reviewing these claims. As a loyal British subject who is a returned soldier, and who is still serving in the Commonwealth Forces and who has two sons serving King and Country, I, unhesitatingly, say that among these internees are a large number of men whose loyalty to the British cause is undoubted. I would personally vouch for these men who would be an acquisition to the progress and development of Australia.

## AMELIORATION OF PRESENT CONDITIONS

### 1. Hospital and Dental Needs.

The present accommodation in the hospital camp is insufficient for the number of patients, and the hospital is rather overcrowded. This could be improved by erecting a larger hut in each camp; which I believe is under consideration by the Commanding Officer. Requests were made to me by the internees for bandages, trusses and certain dental instruments. The establishment of a central hospital would obviate the necessity of sending comforts etc., to each hospital camp.

### 2. Recreation.

The internees have expressed a wish to have a recreation hut, which I understand will soon be built. We will, however, have to supply books, magazines, games etc. At present the books sent to one camp are not at the disposal of the second camp and hence a central library should be established so as to obviate the necessity of sending separate quantities of books to each camp. The Concert Committee requested me to secure for them a few musical instruments, particularly a viola. The concert given by internees during my visit showed a remarkable display of talent and every encouragement and help should be given to this Committee as it brings so much comfort to the internees.

### 3. Workshop.

The workshop in each camp is of considerable importance. I have been requested for a sewing machine and any carpentry tools or boot-repairing tools which are urgently needed.

[Page 4]

### 4. Clothing.

Many of the internees who lack funds and have no friends in Australia are in dire need of clothing and footwear. Their needs should be seen to immediately.

### 5. Religious.

One of the burning questions in the Camp was the demand of the orthodox group, some two hundred men, which includes some well known Rabbis, for the supply of Kosher meat. The Government has granted their request.

I have been in conference with the Rabbis on this matter and I fully agree that we must support this group in the maintenance of their religious principles which are so dear to them. So far the supply of Kosher meat has not begun, because of the lack of separate utensils which are necessary according to Jewish Law. On this point I told the committee that the Government could not be expected to supply a second set of cutlery and dishes. This should be the responsibility of the Sydney Jewish Community. I would like to add that the Commanding Officer, at my request, kindly granted two additional containers for meat to the Committee.

### 6. Conversionist Activity.

The religious representatives of the Camp conveyed to me the distressing fact that attempts have been made by visitors of the Christian Church to influence some young members of the Camp to embrace the Christian faith. The Rabbis told me they were greatly perturbed and sought my advice as how to counter such activity. I hardly need say how deeply grieved I was about this matter. Action of such a nature is contrary to the British spirit. I discussed this matter with the Commanding Officer who was incensed at such activity and promised me that he would take drastic measures to prevent conversionist activity among the internees. At the same time, I wish to be frank in saying that the internees in the Camp, place the blame at our door for not having visited them as regularly as the religious leaders of other denominations.

I urgently, therefore, recommend that more frequent and regular visits should be made to the Camp.

## 7. Cripples and Aged People.

A pathetic feature in the internment camp is the presence of three cripples and a number of aged men over sixty. These cases suffer acute physical hardship and it is only just that these unfortunate people, if they cannot be released should be transferred to a more suitable climate and better conditions.

[Page 5]

## 8. Censorship.

My attention was also drawn to the strict censor regulations. In many cases it causes unnecessary grief. There was a case where an internee received a cable from his wife that she had given birth to their first child. Yet owing to the censorship, this man was told that he could not cable back to his wife, stating that he was well and thus ease the mind of a young mother in delicate health.

## CONCLUSION

I am fully aware of the tremendous good work that is done by Mr. Brand of the Jewish Welfare Society but it is my considered opinion that it is a physical impossibility for one, with all his best intentions and good will, to carry satisfactorily such an arduous task as is required in giving full attention to the needs of the internees at Hay. I would, therefore suggest that auxiliary committees be formed to help Mr. Brand in this difficult and laborious work. There are a number of men and women who are willing to help.

Delay in this matter would not be in keeping with the aims and ideals of the Jewish Welfare Society, whose purpose is to alleviate suffering amongst our unfortunate brethren, who are victims of Nazi persecution.

**Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk (1889–1957)**

**Letter to Mr A. Eppenstein and Dr Wiener, Spokesmen of Camps Nos 7 and 8, explaining his Memorandum to the Jewish Welfare Society 1941**

in Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

typescript on paper; 26.0 x 21.0 cm)

Manuscript Collection, MS 5392/1

*Rabbi's copy*

W. Brand

28th January, 1941.

Mr A. Eppenstein and Dr. Wiener  
Spokesman of Camp No. 7 and 8  
Eastern Command  
c/o The District Censor  
45 Reservoir Street  
SYDNEY

Dear Sir,

Owing to indifferent health and other circumstances, I was unable until now to write to you with regards to the various points we have discussed together during my visit at Hay. Soon after my return I have drawn up a memorandum wherein I outlined all the questions you have asked me to bring before [sic] the notice of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society.

I wish to inform you that this memorandum has been discussed at a special meeting of the Welfare Society; many of the subjects have already been taken up by the General Secretary Mr. Brand. Nevertheless additional representations were made by Mr. Brand to the right authorities to give every consideration to the points which you have particularly asked me to press home, viz: I. the matter of granting permission to internees to proceed to countries where their families are already domiciled or have permits to go there. II. To ask the Government Authorities to facilitate the early arrival of a commission to Australia. III. to investigate the possibilities of granting release to those internees who in the opinion of the government may be able to render services of national character. IV. with regard to religious requirements and comfort, I wish to assure you that Mr. Brand is very alert and everything possible is done by him to bring your justifiable cases before the notice of the Government. I understand that many of these points have already taken a favourable turn.

In your last letter to me you put before my notice the question of having separated fathers from sons and ask me to intervene of your behalf. This very important matter has already been attended to by Mr. Brand and I have every hope that your case will be favourably considered. I would as one who is



deeply interested in your wellbeing counsel you to cultivate patience. I do understand the

[Page 2]

circumstances under which you labour; yet I say that —taken in consideration the fact that your presence here in Australia is a direct outcome of war conditions, all these questions must be handled in a spirit of understanding conditions. I would further say that in my opinion there is much overlapping by approaching different Societies and individuals who have no authority to approach the Government on your behalf. Of course, every individual has the right to write to his friends, but when individual internees approach different organisations and persons on major policy which comes strictly under the jurisdiction of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, no good purpose can be served. It is only by centralising all this work, that greater results can be achieved.

I would suggest to you as Spokesmen of the Camp to impress upon the internees to place their individual cases of importance before you, so that you may be able to bring all these matters before the notice of Mr. Brand or, if you care, also to me. The Australian Jewish Welfare Society is the sovereign body who does really splendid work on your behalf, and should be the only organisation to receive all comforts for distribution. All applications of this matter should be made to them and by doing so, they should be in a position to know what has been done and what is to be done.

With regard to the library, improvements have already been effected and additional books will be sent on. I am making every effort to send you the Hebrew Textbooks required by the students. Of course, it is not very easy to secure at present in Australia these educational Hebrew books.—With regard to dental care, I hope you will receive very soon a large number of dental instruments as requested.

I am also attending to the requests of some internees to go [sic] in touch with relatives and friends; you must understand that in my position I cannot do anything contrary to the regulations; if there is delay on my part, it is because I have to ascertain whether it is in the ambit of correct procedure and in keeping with the regulations.

I can assure you that nothing will be too hard for me to render my services on your behalf and in presenting your case always to Mr. Brand who gives me every sympathetic consideration. I hope that I shall be able to pay you another visit before Pessach.

Yours sincerely  
Rabbi L.A. Falk, C.F.

Rabbi's Copy.

-----  
W. Brand

28th January, 1941.

Mr. A. Eppenstein and Dr. Wiener  
Spokesman of Camp No. 7 and 8  
Eastern Command  
c/o The District Censor  
45 Reservoir Street  
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Yours sincerely

Rabbi L.A. Falk, C.F.

**A. Wiener** (1906–?) and **P. Auerbach** (1900–?)

**Note to the Commanding Officer, Hay Camp No. 8, 13 December 1940**

typescript on paper; 17.0 x 21.0 cm

Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

Manuscripts Collection, MS 5392

COPY

(9)

Spokesmen

Camp 8

Dec. 13th 1940

The Commanding Officer,

Camp 8

Hay N.S.W.

Sir.,

We beg to refer to the visit of Rabbi L.A. Falk, Chaplain of the Australian Military Forces. We are very thankful to the Rabbi for having visited our camp. Already his short visit had a most heartening effect upon our comrades. May we apply herewith that he should be appointed official Rabbi to the camp?

We have our own Rabbis but after all the disappointments we have been through the feeling to be connected with the outer world means a lot and is very suited to keep up the spirits of our comrades. Furthermore Rabbi Falk would be able to represent our case to the Aistralian [sic] Jewish Welfare Society better if he had permission to visit this camp in [sic] regular intervals.

Hoping that our application will be granted

We are,

Yours very respectfully

(Dr. A. Wiener) (P. Auerbach)

**Karl Glass** (1886–?)

**Letter to Rabbi Leib Aisack Falk, 8 April 1941**

ink on paper; 32.5 x 20.5 cm

Hay Internment Camp Records (1940–1941)

Manuscripts Collection, MS5392

April 8 1941

From: Karl Glass E39578

Hut 2 Camp 7

Dear Sir,

I, Karl Glass, am enquiring into the whereabouts of my relations in Australia. My uncle, a brother of my father's immigrated into this country about fifty years ago and is not likely to be alive any more. He was born at either "Schrimm" or "Schönlanke" in the province of Posnania.

My father's christian name was Bernhard. I am aged 54, my wife and my two children are living in London, protected and partially supported by a guarantor. Since 1939 a cousin of mine „Martin Selley," is living in Sydney, 296 Moore Park Rd, Paddington. Though so far unsuccessful, he is carrying on enquiries about my uncle.

A letter concerning the matter addressed to Miss Barkman in Melbourne, has not yet been answered. I would be most grateful endeed [sic], if you could help me with the clearing up of the question.

Sincerely yours

Karl Glass



**Arthur Löwinsohn** (b.1888-?)  
**Letter to Rabbi Falk c.1941**  
in Hay Internment Camp Records (1940-1941)  
ink on paper; 25.0 x 20.0 cm  
Manuscript Collection, MS 5392/5

Arthur Löwinsohn, Int. No. 56501  
Hut 4, Camp 8  
Eastern Command

The Army Rabbi  
Eastern Command

Dear Sir –

I beg to refer to our conversation about my sister and brother living in Tel-Aviv, Palestine. They are Rahel and Alex Löwinsohn c/o Baschkin 29, Sirkinstreet Tel-Aviv As I was unable to restore contact with them for more than one year and a half, I take the liberty to ask you to write them, perhaps through the mediation of the Rabbinate over there, as I am not absolutely sure that the address is still correct, and to let them know that I am here. In the same way, I beg to ask you to inform once more my fiancée Miss Minna Weitzner, 40 Birkenheard Str. London WCI, from whom I had no news whatsoever since my internment five months ago. I am sorry to tell you that I am without any means, having lost my property in Nazi Germany (I was manager of a theater in Danzig), and I therefore would be very grateful for any kind of support you think available or suitable for me. Thanking you very much in anticipation,

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully  
A. Lowinsöhn

Arthur Löwinsohn, Int. No. 56501  
Hut 4, Camp 8  
Eastern Command

The Army Rabbi  
Eastern Command

Dear Sir -

I beg to refer to our conversation about my sister and brother living in Tel-Aviv, Palestine. They are

Rahel and Alex Löwinsohn  
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Thanking you very much in anticipation

I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully A. Löwinsohn <sup>u.c.</sup>

**Alexander Gore Arkwright Hore-Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie (1872–1955)**

**Letter to King George VI, 4 November 1940**

carbon copy of typescript on paper; 25.8 x 20.5 cm

Papers of Alexander Gore Gowrie

Manuscripts Collection, MS 2852

[Page 9]

We have received a large number of internees from England. A shipload of 1900 arrived a few weeks ago I am afraid they were despatched in a great hurry and a good many unfortunate mistakes were made. Some, apparently should never have been sent out at all, and were sent back again at once. The whole question of the treatment of internees is far from satisfactory here, and some real injustices have been committed. There is a school of thought which insists that every alien should be interned, no matter what their previous history may have been, and that it is better to allow a certain number to be unfairly treated than that any potential enemy should remain at large. This is all very well up to a certain point, but if carried to extremes, will lead to grave injustices, and it constitutes an admission of weakness in our organisation, which surely ought to be capable of separating the wheat from the chaff in a sparsely populated country like Australia.

[Page 10]

But spy mania is a fashionable disease at the present time and one of our most esteemed bishops who pressed for a more thorough investigation into some obviously hard cases, has been interrogated by the police and warned as to his future activities. I understand that a thorough reorganisation of internment methods is being carried out at home. I am hopeful that a similar action will be taken here.

***Transcript of shorthand notes taken of evidence given by Major Layton to the Aliens Classification Committee at Anzac House on Tuesday, 27th October, 1942***

typescript on paper; 43.2 x 34.3 cm  
Papers of Arthur Calwell (1905–1973)  
Manuscripts Collection, MS 4738

**Transcript of shorthand notes taken of evidence given by Major LAYTON to the Aliens Classification Committee at Anzac House on Tuesday, 27th October, 1942.**

I am a representative of the British Home Office, in Australia and I came here with full authority to negotiate with the Australian Government with regard to a number of German Jewish people sent here on the “Dunera”. Two and a half thousand sent on the “Dunera” and subsequently arrived here from the Malay States.

Mr. Calwell M.P. You have been in Australia for 18 months?

Yes.

Mr. Calwell M.P. You know this problem of refugees?

The problem of refugees is not new because I came out in 1936–37 and I was interested at that time on those two visits.

Mr. Calwell M.P. You have made a number of visits to Germany?

The Home Office and the Refugee Committee, nationally known as Bloomsbury House. I am a member of Bloomsbury. I went fifteen times to Germany, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia on behalf of the Home Office. I kept on going over regularly. I brought a number of people out. I had a great amount to do when the ..... came over. Three and a half thousand refugees pending immigration to other countries. These people were welcomed into England, but not to remain in England but they were to migrate again to the United States of America and Central America and the United States [sic] would absorb them, fifty thousand a year. We kept these people in England until the quota was reached. We also brought over a considerable number en route for Australia. They were taught English.[sic] That is the way they came, worked on at Rushbay. That is the principle the English Government worked on. On the day War was declared, about 79,000 refugees from Nazi oppression were in the United Kingdom. The government had started a landing policy and we had sufficient material to certify who was who. I would enlarged on that. Every refugee brought to the United Kingdom was brought xx by an individualxx person or society and that society had to guarantee the welfare. Therefore we had a pretty good knowledge of who was who on the alien problem. Everything went alright until Dunkirk fell.



[Page 2]

Layton.

Until the Government could not continue that liberal policy and twenty three thousand were interned. They were interned mainly as a precautionary measure and not on security grounds. Then their cases were dealt with fairly rapidly.

Mr. Caldwell MP. How did you distinguish?

We had about nine hundred before the fall of Dunkirk. Nine hundred were interned straight away of enemy aliens living in England, Germans and Austrians. Their cases were heard. It was not difficult to distinguish between the refugee type because we had their records from Germany.

Mr. Barry K.C. You said that they were interned on a precautionary and not security grounds. I understand from a gentleman from Security that they were given the benefit [sic] of their views. The purpose of all security restrictions is precautionary.[sic]

Mr. Barry K.C. You are talking now of before the fall of Dunkirk?

After. After the evacuation of Dunkirk, the Government could not pursue that policy because of the Fifth Column Movement that had taken place in France and they felt that there was a minority at large who were not safe to be at xlarge. Therefore the bulk of the men were interned.

Mr. Barry K.C. As a security measure, they were all interned, time not permitting examination.

Before the fall of Dunkirk, they had all appeared before the Tribunals. It did not mean that because they interned Mr. X – it was not that they had something on Mr. X. It was a precautionary measure.

Mr. Barry K.C. I am very interested in the distinction of security that while we do not know anything about these persons, we xxxx think it is alright but we have to keep restrictions on them because he is a potential danger. What I want to know is, can you make any distinction between the restrictions imposed as a precautionary measure?

Yes, because it was not as though you were interning an individual. They were vetted the second time, noting that you knew nothing against the individual. That is the distinction.



Layton.

What lead up to that was that confusion prevailed at the Home Office when they handed over to the War Office. The War Office decided that they would send a number of dangerous enemy aliens in the United Kingdom, presumed Nazi Agents, and that type of person. Arrangements were made to send five thousand of them to Canada and five thousand to Australia. At that time I was acting as Liaison Officer between the War Office and the Home Office. I said that while I did not know the figures of the prisoners of war in the United Kingdom, there was not that number of refugees considered dangerous. The actual number of dangerous was nine hundred and the actual number of prisoners of war, about the two thousand mark.

Mr. Dovey K.C. You did the job of repatriating these?

Of the two thousand—that problem with the co-operation of the Commonwealth government, I went a long way to solving the entire problem. five hundred enlisted here in the Eighth Labour Unit—seventy have been released for national important work in factories—hundreds to the country centres and the rest at Tatura. It is not a big problem now. I have had my U.K. ones in a separate camp all the time. The Pioneer Corps was founded in England at the start of the war. The new Corps founded and the original called the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps, and it is now permanent. It is referred to as the Pioneer Corps. The Guards that came out here were in the Pioneer Corps. It was not a creditable performance what happened on that ship.

Mr. Barry K.C. Is La Fitte's account of how they were shipped off at that time, accurate?

Yes, I must admit that there was confusion prevailing and it was handled in rather a bad manner. Sons were sent out here without parents. Some to Canada and some to Australia. Awful confusion.

**Victor Edward Twigg (1904–1977)**  
**Letter to Dr H.V. Evatt, 26 May 1941**  
typescript on paper; 20.8 x 13.2 cm  
Papers of Victor Twigg  
Manuscripts Collection, MS Acc 09/24

26th May 1941

Dr. H.V. Evatt,  
Federal Members' Rooms,  
Sydney.

Dear Dr. Evatt,  
In reply to your enquiry of the 17th inst.

The whole affair is most involved and simply bristles with difficulties, however, I will endeavour to state the case as clearly and concisely as possible. I had thought that Mr. McKenzie would be seeing you. I had enquired from him about the attitude of your party on the question of the "Refugees from Nazi Oppression" interned last May in England and who are now interned in Australia. He was very interested and wanted me to get in touch with you. There is so much to tell that it is difficult to know just where to begin. To my knowledge there are about 2,000 such people interned in N.S.W.(possibly another batch in W.A.) These people were victims of a wholesale internment in England last May and were sent to Australia by the British Government and are being guarded, fed and clothed under the Army Department which has no further interest in them. The Australian Government took them on the understanding that not one should stop in Australia and that on their release they should be sent back to Britian [sic] or the country of their choosing if that country would have them. They are kept behind barbed wire, not allowed parole, only allowed to see visitors through canary cage wire and no matter how responsible a citizen of this country the visitor may be, he has to sign a paper that he has only discussed matters relating to their spiritual and personal welfare. I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not making any criticism of the administration of the camps, they are well conducted, the internees are well fed, clothed, housed, and

[Page 2]

guarded by a kindly garrison who can only carry out orders. One thing that I regard \_\_\_ most serious is the number of boys who have been placed in the Compounds with men of every class and shade of political opinion in Europe. I believe these figures are substantially correct, 700 lads 21 and under, of which 35\*were under 18. It needs little imagination to see the folly of this.

Major John Layton, from the Home Office is in Australia investigating the whole

affair, recruiting for the Pioneer Corps, and arranging for the Transmigrants to go to America. His task is tremendous. Now this is where, I think, the Federal government should reconsider their attitude. British doesn't want these people back, she made a muddle of their internment and is doing her best to make atonement. Those who go to U.S.A. will have a\* sorry tale to tell about Britian and Australia and we will be letting depart from our shores people who would be most valuable to us. We are appealing for doctors for the A.I.F.; there are many in the Camps. We want fighting men, there are hundreds interned who have every reason to fear a victory for Hitler and want to do something to prevent it. We need skilled men and men of science; there are many behind barb wire. Meanwhile, a perfectly good garrison is being wasted to guard men who have no desire to escape and whose most fervent hopes are in a British Victory.

I am not suggesting that the Australian government should release the lot and recruit them to our war effort but I do suggest that the matter be investigated. Many have had their release for months but must stay interned until shipping space is found to take them back to England or elsewhere. They are under guard until their ship clears the la\*

[Page 3]

port in Australia, then they are free. Some of these lads were trans-migrants in England for Australia but will have to go back to England first an begin again. Why? I believe that there are men who are wanted by Commonwealth Departments because of special knowledge and skill; they must leave Australia. An investigation of the men interned would amaze you.

In Sydney Morning Herald 17th inst., the Minister for the Army said that none of these people would be permitted to remain in Australia. I'm hoping that the Prime Minister will have something to say on this matter when Parliament opens. A question in the House. [sic] as to whether the Government had considered the question of releasing in Australia those Internees whom the British Government had now considered loyal to our cause might help to bring matters to a head. Public opinion is so ill-informed that it might however bring down a torrent of abuse upon the questioner.

I am taking the liberty of sending you, under separate cover, Penguin S79 "The Internment of Aliens". If you haven't read it, you should find it most interesting, a sequel could be written on the "Dunera" which brought them to Australia. Court martials are now being held in England over it (Sydney Morning Herald 16/5/41.)

I regret that I am not able to discuss this matter with you personally but hope that I've told you sufficient to rouse your interest and cause you pursue enquiries. I don't want to embarass [sic] the Government in any way but I do feel that they should be stirred to action. Sending those people back to England means waste

of shipping space and more mouths to feed in war-time England. The whole problem needs a man of commonsense and vision who will break

[Page 4]

through red-tape, like a modern tank breaks through barbed wire, and give these people a "fair go" and let them see what we mean by British justice.

The lack of any clear statement by the Government has led to a perplexed and unsympathetic public opinion in Australia, which, at present, is not helpful in dealing with this problem. Why we should have been led to believe that these people were dangerous prisoners of war, I find it hard to understand.

I have not heard from Hay since the beginning of this month (letters take 2 weeks to reach me owing to censorship) but local rumours say that all the "Interned Refugees" were moved to Tatura or Orange last week in order to make room for the Italian Prisoners of War. "Mulga wire" in the west are usually fairly reliable. I gather that most of them have gone to Tatura (Victoria). Wherever they are, the problem has to be dealt with.

Bishop Pilcher is keenly interested and may be able to help you.

Hoping that I have been use.

Yours sincerely,

**Oswald Volkmann** (1899–?)

**'Loyalty'**

from *Under consideration: Poems of an interned German refugee, Tatura, 1941*

carbon copy of typescript on paper; 21.7 x 13.2 cm

Papers of Bern Brent

Manuscripts Collection, MS 8869

[Page 22]

LOYALTY.

We have been Hitler's enemies  
For years before the war.  
We knew his plans of bombing and  
Invading Britain's shore.  
We warned you of his treachery  
When you believed in peace.  
And now we are His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.

We left in search for liberty  
The country of our birth.  
We thought to live in Britain was  
The finest thing on earth.  
You gave us hospitality  
(When we gave guarantees).  
And now are His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.

When war broke out we tried to help  
The British war effort.  
We could not join but volunteered  
For jobs of any sort.  
In our registration book  
They stamp: REFUGEES.  
That's why we are His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.

When Hitler's troops in Rotterdam  
Came down by parachute  
And everybody panicking  
The thing became acute:



[page 23]

We were, with wives and families,  
Arrested by police.  
So we became His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.

They told us not to be afraid,  
We might be back at night,  
We were not prisoners at all  
And would be soon alright.  
But after weeks of promising  
They sent us overseas  
Although we were His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.

The Censor hinders me to tell  
The story of our trip.  
It is sufficient when I say  
"Dunera" was the ship.  
M.P.s discussed in Parliament  
How we had sailed the seas.  
Yet we remain His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.

And here we are, without the means  
Of proving our case  
Behind a strongly guarded fence  
In a forgotten place.  
We wait while the authorities  
Consider the release  
Because we are His Majesty's  
Most loyal internees.