

Dunera News



A publication for former refugees from Nazi and Fascist persecution (mistakenly shipped to and interned in Australia at Hay and Tatura, many later serving with the Allied Forces), their relatives and their friends.

No.111 October 2021

Interned until further order Date 6th October 1939

MALE ENEMY ALIEN - INTERMENT

(1) Surname (block capitals) FRENKEL
Forenames Erwin
Alias _____

(2) Date and place of birth 28th December 1921
(3) Nationality Austrian

(4) Police Regn. Cert. No. 710274 Home Office n
Special Proce _____

(5) Address prior to Internment Flat 12, 21, Ashurst

(6) Normal occupation scholar
(7) Occupation prior to Internment trainee - cabinet
maker

Sailed for Australia
in s.s. "DUNERA"
on 10th July, 1940.

until further
order.
Collection
No. _____

Any communication on the
subject of this order should be
addressed to—
THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,
HOME OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.1.
and the following number quoted—
Gen. 200/6/72.



144

HOME OFFICE,
WHITEHALL.

21st June, 1940.

INTERINED CIRCULAR 21.6.40

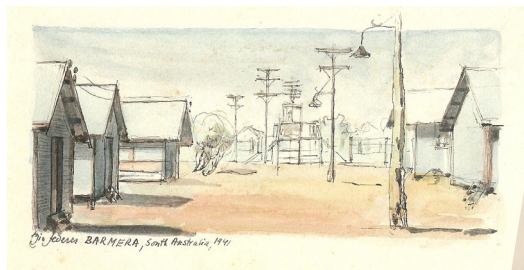
SECRET.

Sir,

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State to say, for your confidential information, that, in view of the present emergency, His Majesty's Government have decided to adopt a policy of interning, subject to certain exceptions, the male Germans and Austrians now at large in this country. Accommodation is however not immediately available for all these persons (approximately 25,000 in all) and accordingly it is proposed to proceed in the following stages:

INTERINED (20)

INTERMENT - REFUGEE (B) INTERINED



LOVEDAY



TATURA



ORANGE



HAY

Foundation Editor:

The late Henry Lippmann OAM

Editorial responsibility:

The Committee of the Dunera Association

The views expressed by writers of particular articles in this publication are the responsibility of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Dunera Association.

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Unless otherwise stated.

Cover:

Illustrations from the Dunera Remembered Event (see page 5) including documents explaining the internment policies in Britain in 1939/40 and also illustrations from Hay, Tatura, Loveday and Orange which were the four main internment centres in which the Dunera Internees were held.

Enemy Alien Tribunal Card TNA HO/396

Home Office Circular 21st June 1940

Hay - Heinz Federer (Private Collection) Orange

- Erwin Fabian (British Museum)

Loveday - Heinz Federer (Private Collection)

Tatura - Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack (National Gallery Australia).

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Many thanks to all the contributors

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Ron Reichwald

President
Dunera Association

From the President

I am pleased to present you with issue 111 of Dunera News. Unfortunately, many of us in Australia are beset by COVID restrictions and lockdowns. As a result our 2021 Sydney, Hay and Melbourne events have been cancelled. However, we are holding an online event on 24th October in conjunction with the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) in the UK featuring fascinating insights on internment in the UK and Australia from Dr Rachel Pistol and Alan Morgenroth. (See cover and page 5)

In this issue we include: Michelle Felder's piece on Adi Felder and the Mayfield Lamps generational business, a *From the Archives* column featuring the documentary *When Friends Were Enemies*, and from Elisabeth Lebensaft and Christine Kanzler an article on Fritz Sternhell. There is also Walter Kaufmann - *The Life of an Exile* from Inside Story. Additionally, you will read about *X Troop – Secret Jewish Commandos*, and *Stateless Refugees in Asia and the Pacific during WWII*.

Our next AGM will be held on 21st November at which time a new committee will be elected. A notice for this AGM as well as a nomination form for committee members and office bearers are also enclosed. I would particularly urge younger members to nominate as we need to put in place succession plans over the next few years for the Dunera Association to continue in existence. Our dear Dunera Boys have succumbed to the ravages of time and only a handful is left worldwide. We owe it to them to make sure our Association survives.

I also urge you all to become members of our Facebook page, 'Friends of the Dunera Boys'. A lot of fascinating and historical information is disseminated from all over the world and the exchange of such information really enriches all of us.

I wish you all health and a happy conclusion to 2021 and let us all hope and pray for a better 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ron Reichwald'.

Save the Dates 2022

Melbourne 13th March (to be confirmed)

Tatura 10th April

Sydney 28th August

Hay 2-4th September

The event in Melbourne scheduled for 7th November 2021 has been cancelled.

From the Archives

In 1990 at the time of the 50th reunion, film maker Judy Menczel made a documentary for SBS television. It featured interviews with Dunera Boys as well as historical photographs and footage. This letter to the Committee is from her, one year later.

"When Friends were Enemies"- 29 September 1991

Dear Duneraites

It is difficult to believe that a year has passed since I began to make "When Friends were Enemies" for SBS TV.

I am writing to formally thank everybody I had dealings with during the project, and acknowledge the many wonderful letters I received after the program went to air.

Also I would like to thank the committee and in particular Mr Henry Lippmann for presenting me with the fascinating history book. Chronicle of the Twentieth Century, as a memento of my Dunera experience.

The film has been a great success, it recently won an award in the United Nations Media Awards, and has been nominated for an Australian Film Institute award. I share any accolades the film has received or will receive with all the people in the film and all Dunera men.

Last week it was shown at the Biennial Oral History Conference held at the University of Queensland, people commented that it was the highlight of the conference.

On a personal note, I have been very busy since completing the film, and have completed some smaller projects. Among them is Freshwater, a film about teenagers and the environment which won a major award in the Children's Section of the United Nations Media Peace Award.

On a sadder note, my father-in-law, Mr Henry Dreyer passed away. As many of you who knew him know, it is a heartfelt loss of a very jolly individual. As well, Mr Dally Wright the wood chopper from Hay Camp passed away suddenly in December 1990, after the reunion.

I send greetings to all my friends and hope this letter finds you all in good spirits.

Judy Menczel

Bondi Beach Films, Sydney.

Letters to the Editor

The Dunera Association welcome letters and feedback on Dunera News articles which may be reproduced in future issues. We also welcome contributions on any aspects relating to the Dunera, Queen Mary and internment in Australia. Contributions should be 250 to 500 words plus some illustrations if appropriate. Please email these to: duneraboys@gmail.com



The Dunera Association
in partnership with **The AJR** invite you to a



'HMT Dunera Remembered'
Online 81st Anniversary Event with
Dr Rachel Pistol and Alan Morgenroth
Sunday 24th October 2021 - 11am London - 9pm Sydney

Rachel Pistol - The Lottery of Internment and Deportation in the UK.

An outline of the British Government's policy of internment of 'enemy aliens' and how this played out from the outbreak of war to the deportations to Canada and Australia in June and July 1940.

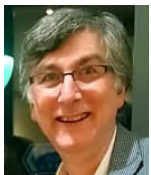


Rachel is a digital historian and researcher working at Kings College London where she is on the management team of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI). Rachel has published widely on internment, including her book *'Internment during the Second World War. A comparative study of Great Britain and the USA'*.

www.rachelpistol.com

Alan Morgenroth - Dunera Movements around Australian Internment Camps.

A description of the various internment camps occupied by the Dunera internees, from their arrival in Australia and their journeys through to release including Hay Camps 7 and 8, Camp Orange, Tatura Camps 1 to 4, and Loveday Camp.



Alan is the son of Dunera internee Kurt Morgenroth and has been researching internment and the Dunera internees' experiences for the last 14 years. Rachel and Alan met in 2017 through their mutual research interests and were married in July 2019.

This will be a virtual ZOOM event hosted by the AJR and will be recorded for those unable to attend the live event.
Scheduled for 1 hour including Q&A's.

To register for this FREE event click here:
<https://ajr-org-uk.zoom.us/j/85849734897>

The AJR is a UK Charity representing and caring for Britain's Jewish refugees and survivors of Nazi oppression. It commemorates their experiences and contributions to society and combats antisemitism by supporting teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

www.ajr.org.uk

The Dunera Association is based in Australia and connects the families and friends (from around the world) of the refugee internees who arrived in Australia from the UK, aboard HMT Dunera, and from Singapore aboard the RMS Queen Mary, in 1940.

www.duneraassociation.com

In Memory...

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Dunera Internee Vernon Dwelly (Werner Goldschmidt) and we offer our sincere condolences to his family.

Vernon Dwelly (Werner Goldschmidt)

born Mannheim, Germany 29 October 1921

died Walcheren, Novota California USA 20 April 2021

Werner was 18 years old when he boarded the Dunera. When in Australia he was interned in Hay Camp 7 where he resided in the illustrious 'Roebuck' Hut 26 which housed many of the camp's movers and shakers including Werner's uncle, Richard Stahl, who was the camp bank manager and the camp spokesman Andrew Eppenstein. After Hay he spent time in Tatura Camp 4 and Loveday before returning to the UK on the SS Ceramic to join the Pioneer Corps. He then joined the special No.10 X troop rising to the rank of Major. After the war he had a long career with American Express. Below is the article he wrote for Dunera News No.79 in 2010.

My "War Career" By Vernon Dwelly

Reproduced from Dunera News 79 June 2010

My "war career" was an interesting one. Once out of the Pioneer Corps, I attempted to join the RAF. However, there was an abundance of volunteers against a shortage of planes. Winston Churchill and Lord Mountbatten were considering the use of German and other foreign refugees in Britain to serve the cause in specialised units. Their language abilities and generally high standard of education should prove productive.

I interviewed for the Special Services/ Commandos, wherein an international Commando (No.10 Inter-Allied Commando) was created with special "troop" units – French, Dutch, Norwegian, Belgian, Polish, etc., and #3 Inter-Allied Commando, primarily German/Austrian, largely Jewish, and partly political refugees. Once approved, a very severe training and testing process followed and only a relatively small percentage of the group "survived" to form No. 3.

We had to change our personal identities in order to have the best chance of survival. I still have a copy of a document signed by Hitler, which commanded any Commando or Special Services member captured to be shot on sight.

To quote from the internet: "The largest, but least-known of all Britain's elite wartime Commando raiding units, No.10 (Inter-Allied) was recruited from volunteers of many nations who had fled to Britain to carry on the fight after their own countries fell to the Nazis. Alongside Poles, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Belgians, Norwegians and patriots from even further afield, the unit even included a small number of remarkably brave German and Austrian refugees from Nazism. These commandos took part in daring raids, intelligence missions and conventional infantry battles in North-West Europe and in the Mediterranean theatre. They earned many decorations and several battlefield commissions for gallantry and leadership; and after the war, some national contingents formed the nucleus of the new special forces of their liberated nations."

Training included, close combat, weapons use, parachuting, cliff climbing and abseiling, intelligence work, interpreting, interrogating, night landings from submarines and dinghies and more. We were told that we were about the most highly trained unit in the armed forces. Once qualified we had privileges such as not living in barracks but in "private digs" where families had been asked to help the war effort. They had no idea who we were but many turned into long time friends. I had a lovely family in Eastbourne, Sussex where I shared digs with Peter Wells. He and I became very close friends.

The concept was that we kept up the training, but were then called from there into action – attached to other army units as intelligence, interrogators or experts in night landings and enemy area penetrations. My friend Peter was the first to be called to action, a landing into Italy. He never returned, he was hit by a sniper. That was my first exposure to the shocks of war. There would be many more. Our casualty rate was high. I missed D-Day through a mistake by the RAF. We knew quite a lot about the V-1 (Buzz-Bomb) – I remember when on leave in London, we dove into the nearest cellar when the noise of the motor cut out. That is when it would stop moving forward and drop. However, we knew little about the V-2 which was an actual rocket – both created by Wernher von Braun and "Hitler's Last Hope".

A few of us were trained intensively for D-Day to be dropped in France behind the German lines, investigate a battery of V-2s and communicate certain information back to circling planes. Our communications were almost childish, compared to today's technology. We would then try and rejoin our invading armies. We were up in a remote corner of Scotland when the operation was cancelled because the RAF had accidentally bombed our target. There were some tears on D-Day, as we saw waves of bombers and fighters fly over us into the invasion areas. The cancellation probably saved my life! A number of our No.3 troop and of the other foreign commando troops were killed or injured in the invasion.

I went from trainee to Captain, being awarded a Battlefield Commission and was also involved in training some of the other countries' Commando units. My last action was in the invasion of the Island of Walcheren to clear the Port of Antwerp. It was late in 1944 and turned into a hard-fought battle. I was attached, with a few of my troop to a Marine Commando unit serving with the Canadian Army. My landing craft was blown up by a mine, I landed in the water, and though wet through, was miraculously not injured. The following fighting days, wet and cold, gave me a double dose of pneumonia so I was evacuated to Knocke, Belgium for medical care.

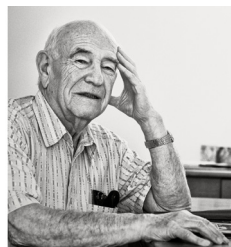
These are just a few highlights of my war. I stayed on to do Intelligence work and commanded a small unit on the Dutch border. We tracked Nazis but actually spent most of our time tracking Russians infiltrating into the West. It was the time when Churchill recognised the Russian danger, as he had recognised the Hitler menace long before the start of the war.

As a Major, I was offered a military career but declined. I was also interviewed by the "Foreign Service", the British version of the State Department. The "internationality image" intrigued me. A friend gave me good advice, asking me if I was financially independent. I answered "Hell No". He said that if that is the case, "you'll just become a 'Yes, man', owned by the government". That led, through indirect routes, to my international career with American Express.

Fritz Sternhell - 22 Apr 1924 to 29 Dec 2020

By Christine Kanzler and Elisabeth Lebensaft

First published in Spectrum - The Age, Sydney Morning Herald and Canberra Times. July 2021



On December 29 last year (2020) Dunera Boy Fritz Sternhell passed away in Oxford, Great Britain, only three days after his beloved wife Lore, née Zimmermann. They had been married for seventy-two years. When Covid 19 had broken out in spring 2020, Fritz moved into the nursing home where Lore had been hospitalized after a stroke. He did not want to be separated from her. Both became victims of the terrible disease.

When we first visited Fritz and Lore Sternhell in their lovely home in Oxford in September 2014, it was a very charming meeting with a very hospitable couple, open to tell the stories of their lives.

Both were refugees from Nazi oppression: Lore was born in Thuringia into a Communist family and had to leave her homeland when the Nazis took over. She went to Prague where she had the opportunity to join Sir Nicholas Winton's Kindertransport.

Fritz, six years older and Jewish by religion, had come to Great Britain with a Kindertransport as well, arriving at Liverpool Street Station on 15th March 1939 from Vienna by train. Talking to him you could still notice his Viennese origin, with a very cultivated pronunciation and a deep love for Vienna, albeit all the cruelties he had to suffer through Austrian and especially Viennese people: "Vienna is my home town and I have remained Viennese through and through", as he put it.

His background was different to Lore's. Until the Anschluss he had led the carefree life of a bourgeois middle class child in Vienna. He attended the renowned Gymnasium in the Wasagasse in his local district in Vienna but did not like school too much. Instead, he preferred to stay away whenever possible and roam through the streets of his hometown.

Life for the Jews in Vienna changed dramatically after the Anschluss and became more and more dangerous. Fritz' father agreed to send the fourteen-year-old boy to Great Britain with a Kindertransport.

Nobody was waiting for Fritz Sternhell when he arrived at the station. Foster parents were very difficult to find for teenagers, especially boys. Instead of being enrolled in school he was sent to work in a leather processing factory. He was fired for encouraging his fellow workers to fight against the poor working conditions – which he did not regret at all.



Shortly after his 16th birthday, in May 1940, Fritz was interned as an enemy alien in Huyton, and then on the Isle of Man. When he learnt that transports of internees to Canada were organized, he tried to get on a ship to Canada, hoping to be able to reunite with his brothers who had fled to the US.

Already on the gangway, he was refused because the SS Sobieski was overcrowded. Instead he was put on the HMT Dunera which set out for Australia on 10th July 1940. Due to his youth and the fact that the German paediatrician Dr Ernst Wasser took care of him, Fritz did not really feel the hardship of the harassment and inhumane treatment by the British guards during the journey. After arriving in Australia he was interned at camp Hay, where Dr Wasser continued to be a substitute father to him. Despite being a prisoner behind barbed wire and the extreme climate conditions in the outback, Fritz had good memories of his time in the camp, remembering especially everyday life with its cultural and sporting opportunities and, last but not least, the good and abundant food. He worked as a gardener and in the laundry. In May 1941 he was transferred to a camp at Tatura and, following the change in the British refugee policy, was able to return to England in May 1942.

Fritz was now eager to make his contribution to the fight against fascism. Too young for the military, he was assigned to digging ditches around airfields for the Ministry of Agriculture. In 1943, at last, he could volunteer for the army, spending the following years in the Middle East theatre and as an interpreter in POW-camps following his return to England. He was demobilized in 1947.

A year later he got married to Lore whom he had met during his service in the army. It was time now to re-integrate into civilian life and establish an existence. Fritz did not give in to his brothers' urging to join them in the US, because Lore preferred to stay in England. He never saw his brothers again, nor his parents who had fled to Hungary from Nazi-occupied Austria and disappeared without a trace. It is assumed that they were murdered on their way. Fritz found work in a toy factory, where he was eventually promoted to technical director. He retired shortly before his 60th birthday.



We knew Fritz as a man who looked back on his life with satisfaction, despite all the blows of fate – a dedicated Viennese who would have had never left his home town voluntarily. Despite being rather distanced from organisational and institutional contexts, he was nevertheless willing to share his experiences of discrimination, expulsion, deportation and resistance with anyone who was interested. In particular he liked to share his experiences with the students of his former school whenever he visited Vienna. Of great importance to him was the re-acquisition of the Austrian citizenship alongside his British citizenship, which enabled him to vote in every election in his former homeland.

He explained his attitude towards life in an interview with the photographer Marion Trestler: "I say, why should I be bitter? Several reasons: Firstly, it is useless to be bitter, you only hurt yourself. And the other thing is, in many ways I have achieved much more here than if I had stayed in Vienna."

Portrait © Marion Trestler. Historic images and portrait are taken from Vienna – London: Passage to Safety by Marion Trestler 2017.

Mr Adolph (Adi) Felder (9th June 1914 – 22nd June 2001)

by Michelle Felder

Born Adolph Kahn in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, Adi's father, Simon Kahn, died when he was just 20 days old. His mother Blanka, three years later, re-married Walter Felder (a non Jew) with Walter adopting Adi as his own son. Blanka and Walter had a second child, Hans (Henry) Felder in 1922.

In the mid to late 1930s, fear and anticipation swept through Germany and Europe as the Nazi regime's power and intentions grew. In 1938/9 Blanka sent Adi and Henry to England to escape the increasing restrictions on the freedoms of Jewish people in Germany. Blanka sent Adi off with the instructions to always look after his younger brother, and he never forgot this. Adi and Henry would never see their parents again. In mid-1943, Blanka was sent to Auschwitz and some months later, a devastated Walter became sick and passed away.



On arriving in England at the age of 24, Adi took a job with the English arm of Fred Lehmann Co, which he had worked for previously in Germany. Shortly after, all Germans residing in the UK were classified as 'Enemy Aliens' and, at the age of 25, Adi and Henry were interned. In July 1941, Adi and Henry Felder were sent to Australia aboard the HMT Dunera, as prisoners of war.

The trip on the HMT Dunera was gruelling. While Adi would never speak of it, other accounts have documented the three-month journey with descriptions of appalling conditions, beatings, abuse and malnutrition.

Adi and Henry arrived in Sydney in September 1940 and were immediately transferred by train to Hay internment camp 8, in NSW, where conditions were far improved from those of their Dunera journey. He remained there, residing in Hut 9, for just over eight months, before being moved to an internment camp in Orange, NSW, and then to a camp at Tatura in Victoria.

In April 1942, Adi was released from internment and enlisted with the Australian Army, 8th Employment Company, residing at Camp Pell in Melbourne's Parkville, helping to load and unload supplies at the Port of Melbourne.

It was while posted there that Adi met Annelies Strauss through Melbourne's Jewish community. In January 1943, they were married at St Kilda Synagogue, with Adi in his army uniform.

With the end of the war in 1945, Adi was released from the Army with his salary and plans to start his own business as a means of supporting his young family. In November 1945 Adi, along with his wife's cousin Edgar Mayer, started the Mayfield Lampshade Company in Melbourne.

In post-war Melbourne, there were great shortages of just about everything from materials to suitable buildings. It was difficult to get started, but with a little help from the local greengrocer, Mr Dickens, a humble factory shell was built in Melbourne's Glenferrie markets and in late 1945, with just £200, Adi and his partner began to make their first lamp shades, sewn by hand and fixed to wire frames that Adi made himself with a second hand welding machine. Some were then hand painted with Australian bush scenes, sailing ships, horses and farm yard scenes. Adi showed these early lamp shade samples to retail stores Vealls, Danks, Guests and Sun Electric, who were among the first to place orders.

With Adi's sales experience and understanding of customer relationships, the business was soon established and grew quickly in Australia's post war expansion. Through all of this, Adi continued to look out for Henry, while developing a sense of great satisfaction from hard work and an appreciation for his adopted country, Australia. By the late 1950s, the business' staff and product lines had expanded and in 1960, Adi and Mr Meyer moved to a purpose-built factory in Hawthorn, Melbourne.

In the 1960s with Mayfield's continued growth from a strong customer base across the country, Adi's eldest son Ron joined the business, starting in production before moving into sales. Later, Adi's youngest son, John joined the business and in 1980, Adi retired, leaving Ron in sales and management roles and John overseeing operations.

In June 2001, Adi Felder passed away after living a long, healthy and happy life, leaving behind his beloved wife Annelies, two sons Ron and John, and their children and grandchildren. Adi's journey from leaving Germany to eventually settle in Australia was unimaginably difficult and he chose to never speak of those times, but instead to work hard and relish what lay ahead with his growing family in Melbourne. Annelies passed away in 2009.

In 2004 and 2007, it was John and Ron's time to retire from Mayfield, allowing the business to flourish into its third generation with Ron's son Mark Felder and the business's long term General Manager, Fiona Millar, leading Mayfield's continuation. With a wide lighting range and a mix of local and overseas production, Mayfield moved to its fourth factory in Melbourne's east, allowing for a fresh course to be set, whilst carefully respecting the heritage values of this now third generation family business.

Today, Mayfield continues the legacy that Adi started in 1945, specialising in custom made and ready to purchase lighting. Creating quality, customisable lighting in collaboration with designers, makers and buyers.



How Dunera Boy's tale became a bestseller

by Gideon Haigh

**First published in *The Weekend Australian Magazine* August 13-14, 2021
excerpts from a *Dunera Boy* Memoir**

On September 6, 1940, a grey steamer docked at Sydney's Circular Quay. Among the passengers was Ulrich Boschwitz.

At 11.30am on Friday, September 6, 1940, HMT Dunera docked at Sydney's Circular Quay(sic). The 2000 bedraggled figures now crammed into adjacent railway carriages had never wanted anything to do with the war: they were refugees, mainly German, mainly Jewish, who had fled the continent for Britain, only to be interned in the national panic that followed the Nazi sweep through Europe.

They have since been grouped in Australian history by the name of their ship as the celebrated Dunera boys – perhaps our most gifted assemblage of new arrivals, including athletics coach Franz Stampfl, composer Felix Werder, photographer Henry Talbot, artist Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack, philosopher Peter Herbst, economist Fred Gruen, political scientist Henry Mayer and physicist Hans Buchdahl. Also on the Quay that day was an author whose book *The Passenger* would, 80 years on become a global best seller.

On his hastily scribbled internment papers, Ulrich Boschwitz gave his occupation as “author”, although he was little known. Other features are notable also. Despite his Jewish father Sally and Zionist older sister Clarissa, he gave his religion as Protestant, which he had been raised by his mother Marta, and his features would have passed as such in Germany: he had blue eyes and blond hair, and stood a slim 182cm. Otto Silbermann, Boschwitz's benighted protagonist in *The Passenger*, has the same hybrid identity. “And let me tell you, old boy, for me you are a man,” says his Nazi business partner loyally as the novel begins. “A German man, not a Jew... I'm convinced there's been a mistake and that you're actually an Aryan.”

“But I am a Jew,” Silbermann insists obstinately in the face of Kristallnacht. There is a big red J on his passport to prove it. So when Nazi thugs come for him, the only place Silbermann feels at all safe, and then never entirely, is on the move. His life becomes one headlong train journey after another, interspersed with encounters that dramatise how his previous wealth and position no longer protect him. I am no longer in Germany, Silbermann reflects. I am in trains that run through Germany... I am safe, he thought, I am in motion... Am I travelling? No! I'm stuck in the same place.



For 73 years after his death, Boschwitz's manuscript lay forgotten. But since its rediscovery six years ago by Peter Graf, of the German publisher Metrolit Verlag, it has been published to acclaim in 26 countries, and has at last reached Australia.

Ulrich Boschwitz. Picture: supplied

The Boschwitz story is very nearly as remarkable as the novel. The family was well-to-do, despite Marta, a painter and aesthete, being widowed soon after Ulrich's birth. The Nazis coming to power when Ulrich was 17 changed everything. When their residual Judaism was denounced by a disgruntled housemaid, the family was classified "first degree mixed race". Clarissa rebelled, and fled for Palestine. Ulrich's uncle Alexander Wolgast, a judge, was murdered in the street for his criticism of the Nuremberg Laws, by which in September 1935 the Nazis established anti-Semitism as a pillar of their rule. Rather than suffer his conscription into the Wehrmacht, Ulrich and Marta left, beating an orderly retreat over the next four years through Scandinavia, France, Luxembourg and Belgium until they reached the UK. At the outbreak of war, mother and son were among 75,000 German and Austrian refugees from Nazism in London. Along the way, Boschwitz released two novels under the pseudonym John Grane: including his initial version of *The Passenger*, published in the UK as *The Man Who Caught Trains* (1939) and in the US as *The Fugitive* (1940). The publications slipped readily into obscurity, which Boschwitz did not begrudge: he was a perfectionist as well as a prodigy, and fantasised of a better version of the latter book, which had poured out of him in the four weeks after the chaos of Kristallnacht, when 30,000 Jews were arrested, 7000 Jewish businesses were ransacked and 300 synagogues burned.

Time, however, was running out. On May 11, 1940, as the Wehrmacht stormed France, military authorities called on the newly formed Churchill government to begin internment "enemy aliens" between the ages of 16 and 70. By the time Ulrich and Marta Boschwitz were arrested on June 28, it was privately known that at the very least the men would be serving their time behind barbed wire in the dominions. Getting there would prove desperately dangerous. There was the sinking of the *Arandora Star*; and then *Dunera* itself narrowly escaped a U-boat, a wave fortuitously lifting the ship over two torpedo attacks in the Irish Sea.

It wasn't the Germans who proved the captives' greatest menace. Rather was it their British captors, guards heavily drawn from "soldiers of the king's pardon" – men released from prison to swell the ranks. They relished their new role as jailers, confining the internees to below decks in unlit, stifling, stinking conditions, brazenly thieving such possessions as the internees carried with them, arbitrarily disposing of much else: among items tossed over the side was the manuscript for Ulrich's third novel. Yet the internees, including many professionals and intellectuals, did more than survive. They developed a collegial, improvisatory spirit – teaching, writing, singing, whistling, even designing their own constitution, chronicled on a toilet roll.

Interned in Hay, Boschwitz found himself in Hut 36, Camp 7, whose occupants elected as their hut captain Peter Stadlen, one of his generation's most gifted interpreters of Beethoven. Stadlen was at the centre of the camp's musical activities.

After a while, official attitudes to the internees softened. Boschwitz managed to make contact with Marta, still penned up on the Isle of Man, who wrote to the Society of Friends on his behalf pleading for writing paper and a second-hand typewriter: "He wants nothing more than to work as a writer in the internment too, so that when he will be free again, he has not lost his whole time, sitting and lounging round... It is necessary that useful work is done even in a prisoners' camp."

When the exiles were moved to second camp at Tatura in July 1941 Boschwitz managed to finish a second novel, *Dreams of Day*. The itch to publish reinforced his urge to return to England- and when some did like Stadlen, he successfully sought permission.

Boschwitz knew the journey home would be as perilous as the journey out. He explained to a fellow internee that he had "taken precautions" with the manuscript 'in case of accident'. He issued Marta instructions for preparation of his surviving work "In case you get this letter, you probably know why, I took my chance and failed."

The precaution was justified. The unescorted liner MV Aboisso was just 1000 km north of the Azores when it was torpedoed by a U-boat and sank with loss of 362 lives. Boschwitz and his final manuscript were lost but his memory not completely. Before her death in 1953 Marta bequeathed a typescript for *The Passenger* to Cologne's Germania Judaica. It was sister Clarissa's older daughter Ruella who in 2015 read an interview with Peter Graf. She alerted him to the manuscript which was by then in the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek in Frankfurt. Graf spent two days reading it, growing astonished by its power. The book was published in Germany in 2019 and multiple translations have followed.

At the end of *The Passenger* the merchant Otto Silberman says "The state has murdered me it might as well bury me". Australia, where Boschwitz spent two of his 27 years could not protect him . But he was not destroyed.

The Passenger was released in German in 2019 and hailed as an incredibly gripping re discovery. It is published by Pushkin Press and distributed locally by Allen and Unwin.



Walter Kaufmann - The Life of an Exile

By Klaus Neumann

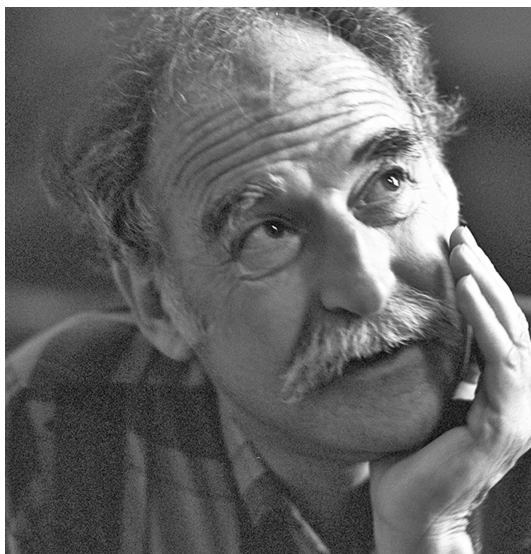
Reprinted with permission from *Inside Story* 20 April 2021

A Jew in Nazi Germany, a communist in Robert Menzies's Australia, an Australian in East Germany: The remarkable life of Walter Kaufmann who died on 15 April 2021.

Film makers Karin Kaper and Dirk Szuszi's recently completed feature-length documentary *Walter Kaufmann: Welch ein Leben!* (*Walter Kaufmann: What a Life!*) will hit cinemas in Germany - pandemic permitting.

Kaufmann had turned ninety-seven in January 2021. Virtually anybody who reaches such a ripe old age has led a life worth making into a film — or writing about, for that matter. Kaufmann's story, that of a refugee from Nazi Germany who became an Australian writer and then moved to the old East Germany, was particularly rich. In Kaufmann's case, much could be made of the thick files created by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation in the 1950's, and those of ASIO's East German equivalent, the Stasi, between the 1950's and the 1980's. Kaufmann also wrote at least a dozen books that could be classified as either autobiographical fiction or memoir.

Kaufmann was born Jizchak Schmeidler on 19 January 1924 in Berlin's Scheunenviertel, a neighbourhood dominated by Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe. His mother Rachela, originally from Poland, was among them. Aged seventeen when Jizchak was born, she was working as a shop assistant at a department store. When Jizchak was three, she gave him up for adoption. His new parents were a couple from far-flung Duisburg, a city in the Ruhr Valley in the west of Germany. His adoptive father, Sally Kaufmann, practised as a lawyer and notary. Sally's wife Johanna had been to art school. Jizchak became Walter upon his adoption, and grew up in this well-to-do bourgeois household. Like his biological mother, his adoptive parents were Jewish. The family observed the high holidays, young Walter was required to take Hebrew classes, and Sally for many years chaired Duisburg's Jewish congregation. Like many German Jews, the Kaufmanns were not overly religious.



Although pogroms in Germany were not unknown, the systematic discrimination against Jews, and their exclusion from public life in Nazi Germany would have come as a shock to the Kaufmanns. In early November 1938, during the so-called Reichskristallnacht pogroms, Sally Kaufmann was taken to the Dachau concentration camp and the Kaufmanns' house was ransacked while Walter and his mother hid in the basement.

The violence convinced the Kaufmanns that Walter, at least, needed to be sent to safety, and in January 1939, on his fifteenth birthday, he left on a Kindertransport to England. In June 1940 Walter was among the many recently arrived "enemy aliens" to be arrested. Then, together with more than 2000 other German and Austrian refugees, he was sent on the infamous HMT Dunera and interned in camp in Hay. Released from Hay in March 1942, Kaufmann joined the 8th Employment Company, which provided an opportunity for "refugee aliens" to contribute to the war effort.

Still with the army, he applied for an Australian entry permit for his parents; by then, however, they had been deported, first to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, and then to Auschwitz, where they were killed. They shared the fate of hundreds of Jews from Duisburg who became victims of Nazi persecution. (The letters Johanna and Sally Kaufmann wrote to their son in England and in Australia are about to be published)

In 1944 Kaufmann married Tasmanian-born Barbara Dyer, who was eleven years older than him. They had met while she was working as an officer for army intelligence, a job she lost because of the relationship. (Kaufmann may have been in the army but he was still an alien from Germany) He was naturalised after the war was over, in 1946.

Kaufmann had begun to write fiction, in English, while he was still with the army, and by the end of the war was already a published author. In 1944 his short story *The Simple Things* won him the first of many literary prizes.

While he continued to write, Kaufmann worked in a wide range of jobs, including as a wedding photographer and seaman. In 1955 the Seamen's Union sent him to the fifth World Festival of Youth and Students in Warsaw. There he met an East German publisher who convinced him that his writings, including *Voices in the Storm* would find a receptive audience in communist East Germany- the GDR.

Kaufmann found himself attracted to the prospect of becoming a writer in a country where people tried to live according to the philosophy he and his Australian comrades were preaching. For the first time since 1939, a return to Germany presented itself as an option. After a lecture tour in which Kaufmann talked about his European travels, he moved to East Germany, or, in his words "returned home to foreign parts."

So began Kaufmann's writing about foreign places. His style was that of reportage in the tradition of the "racing reporter" of the 1920's and 1930's, which married social critique with travelogues. And his growing occupation as a travel writer and foreign correspondent at large was also an opportunity, albeit temporarily, to escape the confines of East Germany's insularity. He let his readers share in these escapes and they loved him for it.

Back in Australia Kaufmann had been a member of the Communist Party but he recalled neither wanting nor being able to join East Germany's Socialist Unity Party. One prerequisite would have been taking out GDR citizenship, which he declined to do. Retaining his Australian citizenship meant he could travel the world. And he did: to Western Europe, Asia and the Americas, including several times to the United States. As a roving reporter he covered the Cuban revolution and the court case against American civil rights activist Angela Davis in the early 1970's. His journeying provided him with the material that helped him become arguably East Germany's most widely read travel writer.

He also wrote short stories, novels and books for children. By the time the Berlin Wall came down, Kaufmann had published twenty-six books in German and was part of the country's literary establishment. His standing is evident in the fact that in 1984 he was able to publish *Flucht*, a book about a medical doctor who left the GDR for West Germany.

When all his publishers went out of business after reunification, the sixty-six-year-old Kaufmann began a new career, as a German, rather than an East German writer. Much of Kaufmann's post-1990 writing is autobiographical. There was a market for that too, but he didn't enjoy the same success that had marked his career in the GDR. Kaufmann had felt less at home in the GDR than in Australia. But, he told an interviewer, the GDR "became my home when it had gone." He reasoned that this was because he felt he had been taken care of there, both as a person and as a writer. A Jew in Nazi Germany, an enemy alien in wartime England, an Australian in East Germany: throughout his life Kaufmann did not quite belong. He may have identified as an Australian writer for much of his life but the Australian reading public did not warm to him. Kaufmann was a communist and therefore a person of interest to ASIO. When asked eight years ago to sum up his life, he said, "Life has been good to me. I'm not a victim and I don't feel like a victim."

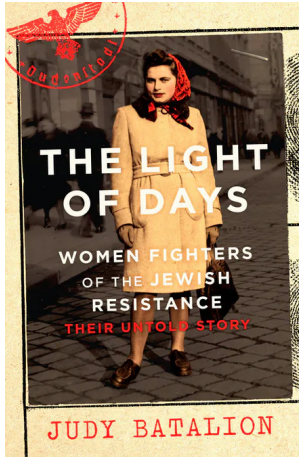


Book Reviews...

First published in Spectrum - The Age, Sydney Morning Herald and Canberra Times. July 2021

The Light of Days: Women Fighters of the Jewish Resistance. Judy Batalion. Virago Press.

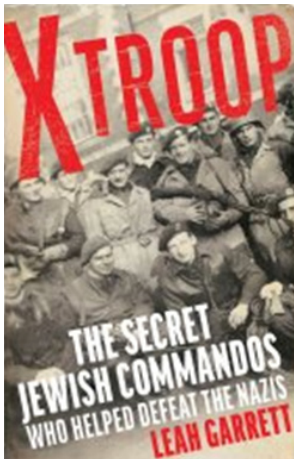
X-Troop: The Secret Jewish Commandos Who Helped Defeat the Nazis. Leah Garrett. Chatto & Windus.



There is a persistent myth that European Jewry meekly acquiesced in their own annihilation during World War II. That iconic photograph of a Warsaw ghetto boy surrendering with his arms raised is remembered more than the context: the heroic but doomed ghetto uprising of April-May 1943. The misconception that Jews were submissive or compliant was assisted by Zionist politicians in Israel during the early post war years. They sought to distinguish European Jews from Israeli Jews: the former were physically weak and passive, and embodied the past; the latter, who fought for Israel's independence, represented the strong wave of the future.

In other countries to which they emigrated, Holocaust survivors remained silent, usually self-imposed, due to survivor guilt, the suppression of painful memories

or simply a desire to assimilate quietly. *The Light of Days* and *X Troop* rescue unknown stories of resistance from this historical amnesia. One focuses on young Jewish women in Poland who played an important role in opposing their oppressors; the other on German and Austrian Jewish refugees in England who became Britain's secret shock troops of World War II. Neither story has previously been told in such detail.



The brutal Nazi occupation of Poland and the implementation of the Final Solution provides the overarching context to the profoundly unsettling and often riveting *The Light of Days*. Judy Batalion draws on overlooked, untranslated Yiddish memoirs, supplemented by recorded testimonies, to reconstruct the wartime lives and ground level exploits of a remarkable cadre of Jewish women ghetto fighters. They were all single, all young (some as young as fifteen) and all unsung heroines.

Most were *kashariyot*, or couriers, who carried food, weapons, medicine and messages to and from the barricaded Polish ghettos in support of the armed underground resistance. All means were pursued: grenades were smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto in

menstrual pads and revolvers inside teddy bears. Those with Aryan appearance and Polish accents were especially favoured for these highly dangerous missions. Armed with fake IDs, fake background stories, bleached hair and steely nerves, they disguised their Jewishness, beguiled the Gestapo and travelled to surrounding Polish towns to save other Jews, conduct sabotage or, as human radios, transmit the latest reports of Nazi atrocities. Most were blackmailed or betrayed, captured and murdered. But they embodied hope and the will to survive. They were a backbone of the resistance, playing a critical role in ghetto uprisings and death camp rebellions. And they countered the myth of Jewish passivity. None went to their death like sheep.

Forthcoming Book...

Eva de Jong-Duldig, Founder, Duldig Studio Melbourne

STATELESSNESS: REFUGEES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR. Edited by Kolleen Guy and Jay Winter
Publisher: Duke Kunshan University, Shanghai

A number of historians and writers from China, Israel, USA, Great Britain and Australia have been invited to contribute essays to a book on refugees in the Pacific region during the 2nd World War. The book will be edited by Kolleen Guy (Duke Kunshan University, Shanghai) and Jay Winter (Yale University, New Haven). The latter previously worked with the late Ken Inglis and others on 'Dunera Lives – A visual history' and 'Dunera Lives – Profiles' published by Monash University in 2019 – 2020.

Contributors include Seumas Spark, who is writing about 'Internees, refugees, citizens: German and Austrian emigrés in Australia', and Eva de Jong-Duldig, whose chapter is titled 'Families, internees, refugees: from Singapore to Australia'.

This book will highlight how refugees responded to the restrictions and hardships they faced in Asia and the Pacific during the 2nd World War. It will introduce the concept of statelessness to the research. German Jews after 1935, and Austrian German Jews after the Anschluss in 1938, became stateless and were deprived of all political and civil rights. This study will research the agency of the stateless themselves and their remarkable record of activity in retrieving their right to have rights.

Especially in Australia, the stateless refugees from the Dunera and Queen Mary created a kind of sociability with formal and real rights. In the Tatura internment camp they reconstructed forms of social and political rights in a world of incarceration. In no danger of attack and no claim on their time, and with their material needs being met by their jailers, these prisoners had the opportunity to fashion their own social world, which to a degree they ran by themselves.

At a recent online Conference thirteen contributors presented a summary of their proposed chapters. It is anticipated that the book will become available within the next 18 months.

The Dunera Association Inc

Visit our website: www.duneraassociation.com

All correspondence to: The secretary - Dunera Association

NEW ADDRESS

**PO Box 4104, Frankston Heights,
Victoria 3199 Australia**

Email: duneraboys@gmail.com



First published in 1984 this is a unique resource of information relating to the internment of refugees from Nazi oppression deported to Australia from Britain and Singapore in 1940.

PDFs of back issues can be found on the Dunera Association website.

The association welcomes contributions of letters or articles for future issues of Dunera News: Please email duneraboys@gmail.com



Facebook

**Friends of the Dunera Boys
Public group with 483 members**

Admin and Moderators: Nathan Oppy & Michelle Frenkel

This group is an international forum for discussing all things Dunera. The group would love to hear your stories or associations with the Dunera or Queen Mary internees. If you have any questions about your families' connections to this subject then this is the place to post your query; the group members have an unequalled knowledge between them.

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