

With so many eminent persons deprived of their careers, all of them fervent Anti-Nazis and certainly neither spies nor Fifth Columnists, one must ask if the policy of Internment was a cost-effective war operation in England. If I could only mention a few good friends here, who were prominent in post-war England, many others were so embittered by their treatment, that they never returned from Canada or Australia, emigrated to the USA or stayed in the Southern Hemisphere, where they also achieved distinction, as for example Heinz Arndt, Founder Professor of Economics at the Australian National University in Canberra. He also was a good friend.

Max Perutz—in his above quoted article—summarised the Policy of Internment as:

*“It is a disheartening story of official callousness, interdepartmental intrigue, newspaper hysteria, public lies, lies told to Parliament and to the Governments of the Dominions and... decisions taken on grounds other than the real merits of the case.”*

Apart from a very few cases of brutality by the soldiery, almost always immediately punished, there was a total absence of official cruelty or intentional infliction of any suffering. In fact in a printed notice, issued on 1 July 1940 by Lt. Colonel S.W. Slater, Commandant of the Isle of Man Internment Camps, stated explicitly: “A man’s internment is not regarded here as a reflection on his character.” and “That every man interned on this Island shall be assured that nothing avoidable will be done that might add to his discomfort or unhappiness.”

This was official. But fate decided otherwise. The first great tragedy was the sinking by a German U-Boat of the *SS Arandora Star*, which left Liverpool at the same time as her sister ship the *SS Etrick*. The only difference being that the *Arandora Star* was carrying German and Italian Prisoners of War and not German Jewish refugees to Canada. Unknown thousands were drowned through the action of a German Submarine—‘friendly fire’. This tragedy was known to us aboard the *Etrick* and did not improve our morale. No official numbers of those who sailed on either of these two ships, were ever issued.

The second tragedy I know, which occurred during internment, concerned me personally. I was in Canada by then, Camp L in Quebec, and was one day, early in July, called to the office of the Camp Commandant and officially informed that my father, Dr Walter Michaelis, had died in London. [See Title 21]